



Trades Union Congress

HE Mr Sungnam Lim
Ambassador Extraordinary & Plenipotentiary
Republic of Korea
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our ref: rc/fog/ki-soo
date: 03 June 2014
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Dear Ambassador

Detention of Yoo Ki-soo

On behalf of the British Trades Union Congress and almost 6 million members of our affiliated unions and British workers, I urge your government to release Mr Yoo Ki-soo, General Secretary of the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions (KCTU).

On 24 May, 30 people, including Mr Yoo, were arrested during a demonstration organized by the KCTU and other organisations calling on the government to take responsibility for the Sewol Ferry Disaster, in which nearly 300 people died. This disaster is widely believed to be the result of deregulation and poor government oversight of industrial health and safety. The demonstration followed a rally concerning workers' rights violations at Samsung and a candlelight vigil organized by the Korean People's Council for Measures on the Sewol Ferry Disaster in which trade unions participated.

The government's decision to arrest the leader of one of its national trade union centres for participating in peaceful protest is a serious breach of the Republic of Korea's obligations under international labour standards.

Freedom of association is guaranteed by a core convention of the ILO which the Republic of Korea is bound as a member of the ILO to uphold. Your government affirmed it would commit to and effectively implement that convention by signing the EU-Korea Free Trade Agreement in 2010. Furthermore in 1996, the Republic of Korea made a commitment upon its entry to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) "to reform existing laws on industrial relations in line with internationally accepted standards, including those concerning basic rights such as freedom of association and collective bargaining." Yet, in the last year, the ILO has made urgent interventions on two occasions to raise concerns that the government is not respecting freedom of association.



I look forward to receiving confirmation from you that our concerns have been conveyed to the government.

Yours sincerely

FRANCES O'GRADY
General Secretary