

HE Mr Joonkook Hwang
Ambassador
Embassy of the Republic of Korea
60 Buckingham Gate
London
SW1E 6AJ

9 February 2018

Dear Ambassador

Han Sang-gyun and Lee Young-joo

On behalf of the British Trades Union Congress (TUC) and 5.5 million members of our affiliated unions and British workers, I urge you to convey our demand for the immediate release of Han Sang-gyun, President of Korean Confederation of Trade Unions (KCTU) and the withdrawal of the charges against the former General Secretary of KCTU, Lee Young-joo. We make this call in association with the International Trade Union Confederation.

I previously wrote to you in July last year raising our concerns around the imprisonment of Han Sang-gyun, who is still serving a 3-year sentence given by the previous Park-Guen-hye government for organising public demonstrations for workers' rights despite the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention declaring on 25 April that the imprisonment was arbitrary and recommending Han's immediate release.

The imprisonment of Han Sang-gyun and charges leveled at Lee Young-joo are contradictory to the commitments His Excellency Moon Jae-in, President of the Republic of Korea, has made to restore labour rights and dignity for working people in Korea and redress the human rights abuses of the previous government including compliance of the administration with human rights standards, and the review of the policies of the police on demonstrations.

Criminal charges against union leaders and members are a clear violation of fundamental rights and in particular the right to freedom of association. The Republic of Korea agreed in 1996, upon its entry to the Organisation 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.' The Korean government also affirmed it would effectively implement the ILO convention on freedom of association

and the other ILO core conventions when it signed the EU-Korea Free Trade Agreement in 2010.

We therefore call on your government to commit to these international obligations and restoring justice by immediately releasing Han Sang-gyun and withdrawing the charges against Lee Young-joo.

I look forward to hearing that our call for the immediate release of Han and the withdrawal of charges against Lee has been conveyed to your government.

Yours sincerely

FRANCES O'GRADY

General Secretary