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2 June 2014

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Ms Park Geun-hye,  
President of the Republic of Korea  
Blue House  
Seoul, Korea

[president@president.go.kr](mailto:president@president.go.kr)

On behalf of The Swedish Trade Union Confederation (LO), I call on you to immediately release Mr YOO, Ki-soo, General Secretary of the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions (KCTU).

On 24 May, 30 persons, including Mr Yoo, were arrested during a demonstration organized by the KCTU and others organizations calling on your government to take responsibility for the Sewol Ferry Disaster, in which nearly 300 people died. We believe that this disaster was 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 trade union leaders for participation in a peaceful rally and march violates Convention 87 of the International Labour Organization (ILO). Although the ROK has failed to ratify ILO Convention 87 concerning Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise (1948), it is nevertheless bound to uphold the principles of this fundamental convention as a government member of the ILO - an obligation established in the 1998 ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work.

Union participation in the rally, march and candlelight vigil were undoubtedly protected trade union activity under international law and can therefore not serve as the basis for the arrest or continued detention of Mr Yoo. It is the long-standing view of the ILO that workers should enjoy the right to peaceful demonstration to defend their occupational interests. Peaceful picketing is also fully protected union activity. Indeed, workers may even take industrial action, including strikes, over issues of social and economic policy. Here, the ferry disaster is directly related to government

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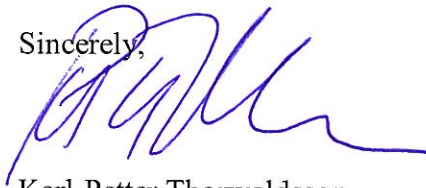
**The Swedish Trade Union Confederation**

policy concerning occupation health and safety. Indeed, deregulation in the transport sector has led to several recent accidents. Therefore, unions are well within their rights to protest over this issue.

The detention of Mr Yoo will make it difficult for the KCTU to play its important role as a national centre of trade unions. We view his arrest indeed as an effort by the government to undermine the ability of the KCTU to carry out its important work.

Therefore, I again call on your government to release Mr Yoo. Failure to release him immediately will only lead to an on-going international campaign to secure his release.

Sincerely,



Karl-Petter Thorwaldsson  
President  
The Swedish Trade Union Confederation, LO

CC:           The KCTU  
               The ICTU