



DATE  
2008-12-11  
YOUR DATE

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Mr. Lee Myung-bak, President of the  
Republic of South Korea  
Blue House  
Seoul  
South Korea

### **KCTU president arrested**

Dear Mr. President,

The Swedish Trade Union Confederation (LO), representing 1.7 million union members, strongly protests at the arrest of Mr. **Lee Suk-haeng**, President of the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions (KCTU).

The LO has been informed that Bro. Lee Suk-haeng was arrested on 5 December, at 10:40 pm, in connection with his role in organising an “illegal” general strike on 2 July 2008 and in organising a solidarity action in support of the E-land Retail Precarious workers’ strike in 2007. We understand that brother Lee Suk-haeng would be mainly charged with “obstruction of business” (provision in section 314 of the Penal Code) due to his role in these actions, and that he was going to be brought before a judge on Monday 8 December.

You will recall that on 24 July 2008, arrest warrants were issued against Mr. Lee Suk-haeng (KCTU President), Ms. **Jin Young-ok** (KCTU First Vice-president), Mr. **Lee Yong-shik** (KCTU General Secretary), Mr. **Jung Gab-deuk** (KMWU President), Mr. **Nam Taek-gyu** (KMWU First Vice-president) and all six of the top elected officers of the Hyundai Motor Branch, namely Mr. **Yoon Hae-mo**, Mr. **Kim Tae-gon**, **Kim Jong-il**, Mr. **Jung Chang-bong**, Mr. **Joo In-koo** and Mr. **Jo Chang-min**. The headquarters of the KCTU were surrounded, people searched, and the homes of the KCTU leaders put under surveillance. The police even followed family members, and in the beginning of August arrested Ms. Jin Young-ok, after having followed her husband. Mr. Lee Yong-shik was arrested at a later date, and they were brought before court on 26 November.

The LO has since been informed that Ms. Jin Young-ok and Mr. Lee Yong-shik have been kept in prison longer than necessary and there were

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**The Swedish Trade Union Confederation**

fears that their bail would be revoked. This has led the KCTU to fear that there might be problems posting bail in Mr. Lee Suk-haeng's case.

The LO is appalled that trade union leaders are being arrested and detained merely for exercising fundamental workers' rights, like the right to strike. The right to strike encompasses both the right for workers to pursue demonstrations concerning social and economic policies affecting its members, as well as solidarity actions. We are very concerned about the severe form and nature of the repression, especially the deprivation of liberty of those involved and the intrusion into the privacy of family members. The targeting of top union leaders is blatant anti-union repression and the LO is disappointed that the government has chosen to keep union leaders imprisoned for longer periods in this case.

The LO is urging your government to order the immediate release of Mr. Lee Suk-haeng and all other imprisoned trade unionists and that all charges against them be dropped. It also urges you to ensure that the arrest warrants against all other labour leaders be withdrawn immediately.

In the meantime, I trust that you will pay prompt attention to this very, serious matter

Yours sincerely,

THE SWEDISH TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION (LO)

Wanja Lundby-Wedin

President