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President: Jörg Hofmann
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Geneva 29 May 2017

H.E. Moon Jae-in
President
Republic of Korea

By email to: president@president.go.kr; carrot0330@hanmail.net; geneva.korea@mofa.go.kr

IndustriALL Global Union calls on President of Republic of Korea to protect the fundamental rights of workers and trade unions

Dear Mr. President,

I am writing this letter to you as the General Secretary of [IndustriALL Global Union](http://www.industriall-union.org), which represents more than fifty million workers in mining, energy and manufacturing sectors throughout the world, including the Republic of Korea, first to extend our congratulations to you on your election as President of the Republic of Korea. Since August 1893, when metal unions from different countries met in Switzerland and founded a section of our international, we have worked to promote industrial workers' rights and interests and to build a better world that puts people first, based on democracy and social justice.

Because of your personal history working as a human rights lawyer for democracy and human rights in Korea in the past era, I feel you must be keenly aware that Korean workers have been suffering blatant violations of human rights and fundamental trade union rights.

The Korean unions affiliated to IndustriALL have been jointly calling on your new government to reverse the accumulated abuses of the old regime (*jeokpae cheongsan*). We wholeheartedly agree with our Korean affiliates that ▽ reform of the "*Chaebol*" and a ▽ ban on union-busting activities--committed by *Chaebol* conglomerates in collusion with the previous government--are central to this reform, and IndustriALL and its affiliated unions worldwide have been standing in solidarity with the Korean unions on these issues for years.

Given that you made a public pledge to ratify ILO core conventions during the presidential election, I believe you must also be fully aware of the grave and critical awareness by the international community of past Blue House administrations' failure to ratify ILO Convention 87 (Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organize Convention, 1948) and ILO Convention 98 (Right to Organize and Collective Bargaining, 1949). The severity with which this failure is viewed has grown to such a critical level that Members of the European Parliament have been calling on the European Commission to begin negotiations with the Korean government over this violation of the "Trade and Sustainable Development" chapter (Chapter 13) of the Korea-EU Free Trade Agreement.

Thus, we hope that without hesitation, you put into practice your campaign pledge of making Korea a "normal country worthy of the name" by beginning with the following:

- South Korean authorities must immediately stop persecution of union leaders, and release imprisoned trade unionists, beginning with KCTU President HAN Sang-gyun and KCTU General Secretary LEE Yeong-Ju, who is in hiding on account of imprisonment threats. In particular, on 25 April 2017, the United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary

Detention (UN WGAD), established by the UN Commission on Human Rights, ruled that KCTU President HAN Sang gyun's imprisonment (Case No. 22/2017) constitutes a case of "arbitrary detention" under international law and has called on South Korea, as a State Party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), to immediately release him.

- Dropping of damages claims and provisional seizure against workers for their trade union activity beginning with dropping government damages claims and provisional seizure.
- Ratification of ILO core conventions with revision of the Korean Trade Union and Labor Relations Adjustment Act (TULRAA) for guarantee of fundamental trade union rights and precarious workers' rights
- Reversal of the accumulated abuses of the LEE Myung-Bak, PARK Geun-hye regimes (*jeokpae cheongsan*), and enactment of the Chaebol reform bill, Ban on union busting bill, Special Act to Develop Korea's Manufacturing Base.
- Engage with trade unions' national centers to guarantee the effective implementation of ILO conventions.

Please also note that IndustriALL Global Union's Executive Committee, at its meeting in Geneva on 27 and 28 April 2017, decided unanimously to support South Korean unions in their struggle to achieve democracy, and the full respect of fundamental workers' and trade union rights.

We hope that this next chapter of Korean history, yet to be written, will be a break from the labor repression and violation of trade union independence of the past, and lead to a new future, where strengthened collective bargaining can reduce social inequality and democratic labor relations can lay down deep roots to give rise to a new society, a new future for South Korea.

I anticipate your swift action and immediate reply.

Sincerely,



Valter Sanches,
General Secretary
IndustriALL Global Union

Cc: Mr. IM Jong-Seok, Presidential Chief of Staff,
Mr. JANG Ha-sung, Presidential Senior Advisor for Policy Affairs
Mr. CHOI, Kyong-lim, Ambassador of the Permanent Mission of Korea to the UN Secretariat and International Organizations in Geneva