

URGENT ACTION

TRADE UNION LEADER RELEASED ON BAIL

Trade union leader, Kim Jungwoo, was released on bail on 1 April pending the outcome of his appeal hearing. He was detained in June 2013 after taking part in protests in support of dismissed workers and their families. The international attention on his case, following the Urgent Action that was issued on his behalf, may have helped contribute to his release.

Kim Jungwoo was sentenced to 10 months in prison for after he tried to prevent municipal government officials dismantling sit-in tents and a memorial altar at a protest in Seoul, the capital, in June 2013. He completed his sentence, but is at risk of being given a heavier sentence at the High Court after an appeal by the prosecution. He was released on bail on 1 April pending the outcome of the appeal. The first hearing will take place on 4 April. There will be several further hearings, and a final decision will not be reached until later this year.

Kim Jungwoo is the former leader of the Ssangyong Motor branch of the Korean Metal Workers' Union. The protest in June 2013 was calling for the reinstatement of the workers dismissed by Ssangyoung Motor in June 2009, and in memory of the 24 workers and family members who either killed themselves or died of stress-related disorders during the campaign. All the necessary police notifications for the protest had been submitted, and the site was allowed to be used for demonstrations. Despite this, the police sent a notification banning the demonstration on 30 May 2013. The trade union filed an injunction against the ban, and this appeal was on-going when the government officials dismantled the site in June 2013.

Trade unions are facing increasing restrictions in South Korea. Several other trade union leaders have been imprisoned or are out on bail as a result of their legitimate activities. There have also been attempts by the authorities to deregister some of the major unions, and huge lawsuits have been filed against them.

No more action is required from the Urgent Action Network at this time. We will continue to monitor the situation and take further action if needed. Many thanks to everyone who took part.

This is the first update of UA 56/14. Further information: <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/ASA25/002/2014/en>

Name: Kim Jungwoo
Gender m/f: Male

Further information on UA: 56/14 Index: ASA 25/003/2014 Issue Date: 3 April 2014

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