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HTUR/JS

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### **Detention and arrest warrants against KCTU leadership**

Dear Mr. President,

The International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), which represents more than 168 million workers through its 311 affiliates in 155 countries and territories, including your own, strongly protests at the detention of Ms. Jin Young-ok, First Vice-President of the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions (KCTU), and the arrest warrants issued against several other members of the leadership of the KCTU, the Korean Metal Workers' Union (KMWU) and the leaders of Hyundai Motor Branch.

The ITUC has been informed that arrest warrants were issued on 24 July 2008 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 6 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, Mr. Jo Chang-min. Search warrants were also issued for their homes.

All warrants were issued in accordance with provisions in section 314 of the Penal Code for 'obstruction of business', in connection with their active participation in a strike on 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2008. The general strike had been organised by the KCTU to call for the renegotiation of the 18 April 2008 protocol on US beef import to include food safety concerns, put an end to privatisation, end changes to public services, stop the construction of Korea Grand Canal, and denounce soaring consumer prices. The KMWU went on strike to support the KCTU, but also to promote national-level industrial collective bargaining within their industry. The Hyundai Motor Branch leadership is part of the KMWU and had followed its call for a general strike.

Since the issuance of the arrest warrants, the headquarters of the KCTU have been surrounded, and those who enter the building are being searched.



The police have equally set up surveillance of the homes of the KCTU leaders. The police even followed family members, and thus managed to arrest the KCTU vice president Ms. Jin Young-ok when following her husband to a meeting point he had with her. She is currently detained in Youngdeungpo police station and is charged with 'obstruction of business' under the penal code.

The ITUC has already written to you on several occasions to protest at anti-union repression, notably the targeted crack-down on the leadership of the Migrant Trade Union (MTU). The ITUC is extremely concerned that your government is again choosing to target top trade union leaders exercising legitimate trade union activities and even violate the privacy of their spouses.

Furthermore, the ITUC is concerned that there have been reports by Amnesty International of excessive police violence against peaceful demonstrators during the countrywide demonstrations against the 18 April 2008 protocol on US beef import. The ITUC recalls that on many occasions Korean authorities have used violence against trade unionists as a means of trade union repression.

The ITUC would once more like to remind the government of Korea of its obligation under international law deriving from its membership of the ILO to respect core labour standards, including the right to freedom of association. Trade union repression against labour leaders exercising legitimate trade union activities, including detention and legal persecution by the Korean government have repeatedly been condemned by the Committee of Freedom of Association of the ILO.

The ITUC is urging your government to order the immediate release of Ms. Jin Young-ok and that all charges against her be dropped. It also urges you to ensure that the arrest warrants against all other labour leaders be withdrawn and that all surveillance of the KTUC headquarters and the houses of trade union leaders be brought to an end immediately.

The ITUC will be calling on its affiliates worldwide to protest against the detention of Ms. Jin Young-ok and the arrest warrants issued against other Korean labour leaders.

I trust that you will pay prompt attention to this very serious matter.

Yours sincerely,

General Secretary