



JeonGyoJo -The Korean Teachers and Education Workers Union (KTU)

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Dear colleagues,

***** FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE *****

"The Death of Korean Democracy and Education"

The KTU was delegalized on 24th, October, 2013"

Seoul, Korea - The Park Geun-hye government issued that the Korean Teachers and Education Workers Union (KTU) wouldn't be regarded as 'a trade union' from now on 24th, October, 2013. The KTU regards this as "the Death of Korean Democracy and Education". Park Geun-hye, a daughter of a dictator, turned back on the clock of Korean democracy to the times of the dictatorial military regime 30 years ago.

"Divide and Control"

The government tried to divide teacher unionists; 9 dismissed teachers vs. 59,000 teachers. The KTU national congress asked for a general membership vote. The result of the vote was 68.59%. The majority of KTU members rejected the Park Geun-hye's order, the one-month ultimatum. It meant that KTU members decided that it would go together with 9 dismissed teachers, keeping the identity of a trade union, even if the KTU would face the bigger challenge.

The KTU was established in 1989 when Republic of Korea was under the dictatorial military regime. It was immediately illegalized and hundreds of members were arrested and imprisoned by the regime. More than 1,500 KTU teachers were dismissed. In 1999, after 10 years of fierce struggle, the KTU was legalized. Since then, the KTU has been energetically working for quality education for all students and a social justice in Korea for 14 years. The KTU has been fighting against neoliberal education policies which are jeopardizing the school community, such as the teacher-evaluation



system, high-stake standardized testing, differentiated incentive-wage, and inefficient school curriculum.

A barometer of a democratic level in a country is the right on the freedom of association. The government undermined the fundamental right in democratic society, using the provisions which are so desperately in need of revision and have been repeatedly criticized by the international organizations and the National Human Rights Commission of Korea (NHRCK). On 23rd of October, the NHRCK issued a statement urging the labor ministry to reconsider the plan. “On Sept. 30, 2010, the commission recommended the labor ministry to rewrite the clause in question, which the ministry used as the basis to characterize the KTU as an illegal union,” reads the statement. “We, the commission, said at that time that disqualifying the union because of the eligibility of its members, undermines the rights to freedom of assembly and freedom of association.”

Park Geun-hye also broke the international commitment that the Republic of Korea made when joining the OECD in 1996. It guaranteed the freedom of association and union activities for teachers and public servants internationally.

Lots of EI affiliates, international organizations, and over 10,000 international community members have sent a protest letter to Park Geun-hye. I really want to express my sincere gratitude to you, my brothers and sisters. Thank you so much for your solidarity and support! The KTU will continue to fight against this injustice and brutal attack for Korean democracy and education.

For more information:

<http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20131024000689>

(correction in this article; in the last sentence, not the country's second largest teachers' union, but the country's largest teachers' union)

http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/nation/2013/10/116_144823.html

http://english.hani.co.kr/arti/english_edition/e_national/608027.html

http://english.hani.co.kr/arti/english_edition/e_national/607872.html



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With best regards,

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