



K G E U

Korean Government Employees' Union

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KGEU Breaking News

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Repression goes far bitterer while ILO ARM held in Busan, Korea

- Successive Forceful Closing down of KGEU Offices nation wide

The government repression on the KGEU has been continuing and even getting worse while the ILO Asia Regional Meeting is being held in Busan, Korea.

In spite of repeated recommendations and protests from the international community to stop repression and to guarantee government employees' trade union rights, the Korean government has constantly proceeded its actions to destroy the KGEU.

The Gyeongnam Officials Training Institute, an affiliated agency to the provincial government issued an official letter on August 29 informing that it would execute the administrative action to forcefully close down the KGEU's branch office at 4 o'clock pm on August 30 (Gyeongnam Officials Training Center Official Letter, Department of Education Support-1641, August 29, 2006). The warrant attached to the official letter stipulates that, According to the government instruction that prohibits providing offices to unregistered government employees' unions by the public officials trade union act, the forceful administrative action would be executed.

Hundreds of riot cops have been deployed around the union office right away. And KGEU members are prohibited from entering the union office except 4 union staffs working there.

Today, the KGEU Gyeongnam Regional Branch held a rally in front of the union office building. During the rally, all the chairpersons from the chapters of KGEU Gyeongnam Regional Branch shaved their hair in protest. Riot cops were deployed again inside and outside of the office building and blocked KGEU members from entering the union office. Several union members tried to block the forceful close down of the union office in vain.

They were oppressively moved out by the police. The union office was sealed off with thick plywood with a warning sign attached. (The pictures are attached in the end of this news.)

The KGEU Gyeongnam Regional Branch has been using the office in the Gyeongnam Officials Training Institute according to a written agreement between the union branch and the provincial government since April of 2003.

Busan Metropolitan City, the host city of the ILO ARM, is also warning with official letters that, if the KGEU Busan Regional Branch does not move out from the office in the city hall by August 31, it would forcefully execute the administrative action to close down the union office (Busan Metropolitan City Official Letter, Department of Civil Service-11316, August 17, 2006). All the municipalities under the Busan Metropolitan City have been proceeding the same actions.

- Repression steps up

These closing down of the KGEU offices nation wide is based on "the directive to promote the transformation of illegal organisations into legal trade unions (voluntary withdrawal of membership)" on March 22 by the Ministry of Government Administration and Home Affairs (MOGAHA) and another directive "to take thorough countermeasuring including forceful closing down of the illegal government employees' organisations against illegal activities" (MOGAHA Official Letter, Public Officials Organisation Supervision Team-406, August 3, 2006) is propelling this kinds of actions nation wide.

Since its directive on March 22, 2006, the MOGAHA has tightened its repressions up far bitterly to destroy the KGEU.

The MOGAHA instructed all the local governments and agencies to weekly submit "performance records regarding the directive on March 22" (MOGAHA Official Letter, Public Officials Organisation Supervision Team-1479, May 23, 2006). The records should



Doors to KGEUGyeonggi -do Chapter office are sealed with metal plates in May.

have information on "lists of the leaders of illegal organisations", and "outcomes from propelling such transformations".

On June 7, the MOGAHA asked for the local governments concerned to take disciplinary measures against the KGEU members participating in the rally in front of the Rural Development Administration on May 25 (MOGAHA Official Letter, Public Officials Organisation Supervision Team-1588, June 7, 2006). The ministry even pointed out the KGEU members concerned with an attached list. (It is provincial or metropolitan city governments that take disciplinary measures against local government employees.)

On June 21, the MOGAHA disseminated another official document, calling on local governments to execute the government directives and instructions and to take stern responses to all illegal activities (MOGAHA Official Letter, Officials Organisation Supervision Team-1771, June 21, 2006). During the campaign for the local election on May 31, several candidates answered to KGEU's policy questionnaires that they would recognise the unions and guarantee independent trade union activities when elected. The MOGAHA document asked "to discard their written pledge or promise of the governor-elected on recognition of the KGEU". The ministry claimed on the document that "connivance at activities of illegal organisations in discord of the government directive would have bad effects on establishing labour relations in civil service." Moreover, the ministry warned that "the local governments that bargain or even conclude a collective agreement with illegal organisations and give any support like overlooking of full-time union staffs, allowing of union dues check-off and providing an office to illegal organisations will be taken to administrative and financial actions government-wide for disadvantages."

The KGEU held a rally on July 8 in protest of the government repression. More than 2,000 KGEU members participated in the rally, which was legally notified to the police in advance and held on Saturday. However, the ministry requested local governments and agencies to take "thorough countermeasuring in advance against KGEU's rally on July 8^날 or it is illegal activities violating public officials act stipulating prohibition of collective activities (MOGAHA Official Letter, Officials Organisation Supervision Team-1861, June 29, 2006)". At the rally, several officers from the MOGAHA and the police videotaped and photographed the participants of the rally. Shortly after then, the MOGAHA sent local governments and agencies an official letter with the videotape and the photos requesting of the list of the KGEU members participating in the rally (MOGAHA Official Letter,

Officials Organisation Supervision Team-61, July 11, 2006).

On August 3, the ministry issued another directive "to take thorough countermeasures including forceful closing down of the illegal government employees' organisations against illegal activities" (MOGAHA Official Letter, Officials Organisation Supervision Team-406, August 3, 2006). The ministry requested all the local governments, ministries and agencies to take firm actions against KGEU. It asked "to close down all the KGEU offices in government buildings nation wide by August 31." It asked "to exclude KGEU members from personnel committees, to actively encourage all the government employees joining illegal organisations to withdraw memberships, to prohibit union dues check-off system and to blocking any financial supports like voluntary contribution or donation to the organisations." It asked for "positive efforts to stop payment of union dues through cash management system(CMS)". After prohibition of union dues check-off, KGEU encouraged its members to pay union dues through CMS from the bank account. Finally it stated that the ministry will investigate the actual process and conditions on implementing government directives and instructions together with auditing departments and it will take administrative and financial actions government wide against the local governments that don't implement the directives.

In fact, the government held a meeting of the vice-ministers concerned to deal with government employees' organisations on July 21, 2006. The meeting was presided by the Minister of the MOGAHA and confirmed that the government would take actions for disadvantages against the local governments such as Songpa-gu(municipality, district) in Seoul Metropolitan City and Anyang city in Gyeonggi-do(province) that haven't implemented the government directives and instructions. And the ministry listed up what kinds of administrative and financial actions could be taken to give disadvantages to such local governments (MOGAHA Official Letter, Officials Organisation Supervision Team-317, July 27, 2006).

On August 21, the Minister of Government Administration and Home Affairs issued and sent all the government employees a letter "demanding to withdraw from illegal organisations such as so-called the KGEU".

< Attached >



▲ KGEU members sitting in front of the door to KGEU Gyeongnam Regional Branch Office



▲ KGEU members forcefully moved out of the union office.



▲ Union Signboard taken off by an official from the authorities.



▲ Sealing off the doors to the KGEU Gyeongnam Regional Branch office



▲ As if nothing was there. Only the warning sign says there were doors to ‘a democratic and independent union’.