

ASIAN WORKERS NEWS

NO. 204 아시안 워커스 뉴스

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Law court refuses to constitute Migrants Trade Union

The Migrants Trade Union(MTU) submitted to the Ministry of Labor(MOL) a declaration to notify the establishment of the labor union, insisting that "our labor union including some undocumented members should be recognized as a legitimate union."

However, the MOL rejected their demand because most of union members were not undocumented workers and MTU didn't file required documents.

After that, the union filed a lawsuit against MOL's decision to make their union accepted legally, but the law court gave a decision that the plaintiff lost the suit.

The judge said, "To find out whether this union is qualified to be a legal labor union, the authorities demanded, based on lawful foundation, the name lists of the labor union members and their workplaces. However, the plaintiff didn't submit the lists, so the declaration was rejected. I followed the legal steps and nothing is wrong with it."

The judge added, "Even though the plaintiff claimed that the undocumented can set up a labor union, but undocumented migrant workers are not qualified workers to establish a labor



photo from voice of people

union according to the law now in force."

The MTU was first established for migrant workers last April, and reported the establishment to the government. However, the government responded, "Since most unions members are not qualified to join the union because they are undocumented, it can't be regarded as an acceptable lawful union."

The government had refused the request for the approval for a legitimate union, so the Union filed the lawsuit.

Hankyoreh, February 7, 2006

Detained Uzbekistani worker released from Immigration finally

On Feb. 13, civil groups in Asan announced a statement and insisted that "it must be human rights infringement on Mr. Jon by the police which handed him over to the Immigration Office. He is an Uzbekistani migrant worker and had worried about nonpayment. It is an unreasonable law enforcement carried out by tempting him to be cracked down."

Mr. Jon has about 5 million won of uncollected salary and couldn't get back 2 million won from his boss that promised to send money. Therefore, he visited the Asan Migrant Workers' Center, and filed a letter of complaint at the Asan Police Station to report the boss who embezzled 2 million won from him.

The police person in charge of the case said he would rescue Mr. Jon from human infringement in regardless of his status. He trusted his words and appeared at the police station, but the police handed him over to Immigration Office because he is undocumented.

After that Mr. Jon was released on Feb.16 after he had forcefully been detained at the Immigration Office for 10 days. The Daejeon Immigration Office clarified on Feb. 20 that the office took the measure to temporarily release him for 3 months to solve the problem of Jon's nonpayment.

Insisting that this case is surely human rights infringement caused by excessive law enforcement, human rights groups are demanding the protective countermeasures from the police. **AWN**



photo from Yonhap News

EXCHANGE RATES

Date : March 2, 2006

US Dollar is ;

Country	Currency	Rate
Korea	Won	970
Philippines	Peso	51.36
Thailand	Bhat	39.00
Indonesia	Rupiah	9183
Sri Lanka	Rupee	102.52
India	Rupee	44.00
Bangladesh	Taka	67.87
Pakistan	Rupee	59.85
Nepal	Rupee	71.15
Russia	Rouble	28.04
Burma	Kyat	1,163
Vietnam	Dong	15,914
China	Yuan	8.03
Nigeria	Naira	128.50
Ghana	Cedi	9,102
Mongolia	Tugulik	952.83

Voice of FWR

Labor without permission, is it really guilty?

By Kim Min-jung, Secretary general of FWR

A few days ago, a tragedy happened again.

An undocumented Turkish who had been confined at Suwon Immigration Processing Center jumped from the 6th floor of the building. However, this incident was not the first time.

A mere three months ago, a Chinese woman in her 40s also jumped down from the same Immigration building and died at once. When will these disasters finish?

I had a chance to join a survey on the situation of crackdown against undocumented migrant workers and Immigration Processing Center were conducted by the National Human Rights Commission last year. I had visited the Immigration office several times for handling counselling cases or for meeting controlled undocumented workers, but I hadn't gotten the experience to enter the Immigration Processing Center. That's why I shouted for delight when I joined the survey team.

At that time, we could enter the detention rooms of the Immigration Processing Center as 'inspectors of NHRC' and we

also could demand their closed data creditably from the Immigration officials who have had a cat-and-dog relationship with us.

However, we could not meet many detained undocumented workers there because the Immigration already deported most of them before our visit. Therefore, we were only able to meet few undocumented workers there.

The detained undocumented workers were behind prison bars like the ones I see in movies and received food through a small hole at the bottom of their door. There were no windows or sunlight. Moreover, the air smelled bad due to insufficient ventilation.

It was my first time to enter the Immigration Processing Center after 6 years of joining migrant support activity. At the place, I got goosebumps because I witnessed human beings bind other human beings' freedom without proper reason.

Laborers should be given freedom for living and even for laboring in this world. It is hardly necessary to say that all laborers should be able to work freely and proudly. **AWN**

Day Breaking

Toe Thuya, a young man from Myanmar



At 30 years old I would say Toe Thuya is an old chonggak (bachelor). Small, but with bright eyes and black curly hair, I felt as if he was my little brother when we met for our interview. And, I was right.

"Yes, I have two older brothers. I am the youngest, Maknae," he told me.

"You do know Maknae," I said in amazement.

We laughed. It was only the beginning.

Toe Thuya loves samgyeopsal (pig back fat), which Myanmar people don't eat, and raw fish. He is also a fan of singer Yun Do-hyun.

From his voice, I can feel that Toe Thuya is a youthful man. I can understand when he says he feels much more comfortable working and earning money alone in Korea, without interference from either his parents or brothers.

"But, don't you feel any homesickness whenever you need the help of other people," I asked him.

He said he feels sad whenever he thinks about 'home', the military still having political power there and causing the people to suffer.

I wanted to know what this thoughtful young man's dream is.

He told me, "At first, I wanted to open my own pharmacy. Hire a doctor and I run the pharmacy. You know like a clinic. But now, I want to do business that sees me travelling between Myanmar and Korea. I think that would be more fun."

Toe Thuya works in a rubber factory in Sasang, Busan, from 8 in the morning until 6 at night.

"Do you save much money?" I asked him.

"When I first arrived in Korea, I spent around ten thousand won per month and saved the rest. While reading a Buddhist book, I found this, 'Don't spend too much or too little. Take the middle'. So now I spend more than that. I go to the PC Bang and chat with my friends. I go to movies time to time. I think my time in Korea is easier if I go out and enjoy myself," he answered. I nodded. Naturally, he is right.

Like most Myanmar people, To Thuya accepts Buddhist

philosophy body and soul. It could be what gives him such energy, youthfulness, and dreams for a better future, despite being away from his motherland and living alone. I assume he is also a very healthy person, mentally and physically.

However, nobody knows what will happen to Toe Thuya because of his visa. Partly due to this, he complains about the Korean government's policies regarding migrant worker related issues.

He said, "I don't think Immigration officials arresting and detaining undocumented migrant workers is wrong." The problem is because of the law. I guess the trainee system is not a good one, allowing three years of work and then having us return to our homeland. After three years of working here we can speak better Korean and have better work opportunities, but the law forces us to go back."

Toe Thuya says the reason why the law provides only three years of work is because wages would have to be increased.

He noted, "We do dangerous, tough, and dirty work. It is definitely bad."

With help from an English-Myanmar dictionary, Toe Thuya answered my questions thoughtfully and eagerly. Sometimes, he even talked about migrant worker issues without me having to ask questions.

"I don't understand. If we wish to keep working, I think it would be wise to for the government to have us pay tax and extend our visas, like Singapore or Britain. Why isn't it possible in Korea? I just can't understand," he commented.

However, the reality is, he's in Korea during a transition period in migrant worker policy. And yes, Toe Thuya is right. Even as a Korean, I don't see the point of the policy.

It is a hard thing to judge how the situation can change and Korea can move to becoming a mature society. I wish I could have just a little bit of Buddha's wisdom under such social conditions. Perhaps he will give me his bright smile, as he usually does to us, and tell me to just keep going on with what I'm doing to help have changes made.

By Kang Moo-ji, staff reporter **AWN**

EPS should allow change of workplace

By Seon-kyong, FWR counselor

The movie, 'The Island', is about people who are born to provide organs. A terrible thing in this movie, is that people are considered a fixed resource, with others thought of as an alternative resource.

Although there aren't any people as a fixed resource here, and nobody has commercial purposes for them, there are Korean employers who still think that workers have no purpose other than to just work.

Nowadays, EPS allows migrant workers to work in the construction industry, agriculture, the dairy industry, and the refrigeration industry. However, migrant workers don't know what fields of work they are allowed to work in, and it's impossible for them to change workplaces if they don't like the industry they are placed in.

The Ministry of Labour (MOL) says that there are many reasons why migrant workers can't change workplaces, such as quotas, worker efficacy, imbalance of work, etc.

If the number of migrant workers is fixed, (MOL doesn't allow workers to change workplaces), MOL has to guarantee consistency of work. Nevertheless, except for the manufacturing industry, workers in other industries have to withstand harsh conditions.

Moreover, it's hard to understand that the fixed number is for one reason only. MOL may allot the number of workers

annually for each industry, but wouldn't it be more efficient to fix numbers for each company?

Efficacy is also a problem. Although two companies may both be in manufacturing, they don't necessarily have the same kind of work. So, why can't workers change employers in the same industry, but not to other industries?

If MOL truly considers efficiency to be of importance, it has to withdraw the 3-year short term work system.

The reasons that MOL gives are just excuses. Perhaps, the most honest reason is to prevent workers from changing to 'easier' work.

The reason of 'imbalance' may be all very well, but for workers it's just an order to work, whether the work is convenient or not. Korean workers have abandoned some industries because the work is too difficult, dangerous, and dirty. Why then does MOL emphasize that migrant workers should stay in these harsh industries?

It means that MOL won't improve wages or harsh working conditions for the minimum criteria; i.e. labour standard law.

MOL didn't allow migrant workers to unite under one labour union. This means that the MOL won't make any improvements to Korean work conditions, especially for migrant workers who don't have any 'power'.

MOL has to guarantee workers' freedom. **AWN**

Korean language, intensified for children of MWs

The Ministry of Education & Human Resources Development is planning to make several tries to improve Korean education for the children of migrant workers this year.

Korean classes will be installed and managed in elementary and middle schools. The policy of training the teachers in charge of educating the children of migrant workers will be arranged. With examining the actual conditions, they will grasp the problems and necessity and will make countermeasures to collectively support them until this August.

MOJ launches committee to protect HRs of foreigners

The MOJ embarked upon "the committee for foreigners to protect their human rights and improve their interests" on Jan. 10.

The committee is for migrant workers, and will consist of 13 members; 6 nongovernmental members, 6 government officials, and the vice-minister of the Ministry as the chairman. The nongovernmental members are Seo Kyeong-seok (minister in Chosunjok Church), Kim Hae-seong (representative of Migrant Worker's Center in Korea), Park Cheon-ung (Ansan Migrant Center), In Won-jae (Lawyers for Democratic Society), Lee Cheol-seong (representative of Joint Committee for Migrant Workers in Korea), Yang Hae-woo (chief of Network for Migrants Rights). Human rights groups can participate in the conference that the Ministry will push on, and can actively make opinions.

However, some worry that human rights groups might serve as a setoff for the policy of migrant workforce the Ministry is unilaterally planning.



Plan to issue 'visiting-working visa' for overseas ethnic Koreans

The MOJ revealed on February 18 that they decided to qualify ethnic Korean residents in China and the CIS for obtaining a visa to freely visit or get a job in Korea starting in July.

This visa is valid for five years and can be extended for a maximum of two years, and those holding it are able to become employed, except in some decadent entertaining businesses.

According to the MOJ, overseas Korean residents who do not have relatives in Korea would also be included, and by order of their Korean language proficiency they would be allowed to enter Korea.

As of today, overseas Korean residents over 25 years old are registered in the census registration in Korea, and those who are invited by their relatives in Korea are entitled to work in Korea by changing their visit visa to an employment visa. The types of businesses where they are allowed to work are also limited to manufacturing, construction, agriculture and fisheries, and service businesses.

In the long term, the MOJ decided to introduce this "Visit-Employment System" later this year, and they are considering a plan to grant overseas Korean residents in China and the CIS "Overseas Korean Resident Qualification" status.

In addition, to minimize confusion and disorder in the domestic labor market, a visa quota system limiting the number of visas issued to a certain level will be introduced.

However, the MOL shows its negative attitude to this decision for the reason of reducing local workers and worsening labor conditions. <Donga Ilbo> February 14, 2006

AWN

What happens during crackdown and inside the Immigration?

- Investigation on Crackdown against UMWs and the Immigration Processing Center's Actual Condition -

The National Human Rights Commission(NHRC) held a discussion to announce the result of a 'Research on Actual Human Rights Condition in the Immigration Processing Centers and Regulating Undocumented Migrant Workers' on January 25, 2006.

The research carried out in the second half of 2005 focused on finding out problems and their solutions by investigating the process of cracking down on and detaining migrant workers. It was carried out not only by researchers and lawyers but also by counselors for migrant workers around Korea and offices for international migrant organizations. The research would offer a base for abolishing compulsive regulation posed on undocumented migrant workers in an inhumane and reckless way and for improving the condition of the facilities and treatment within the facilities.

1. Goals, contents and ways of the research

The goals of the research are :

1) Understanding present legislation on the process of regulating undocumented migrant workers, the detention facilities for migrant workers, the compulsive screening for deportation and its execution process.

2) Understanding the actual condition and finding out its solution.

3) Setting up a detailed way for improvisation, making a policy for detaining, regulating and deporting undocumented migrant workers, and finding out problems and realities through a research on staff of the emigration and immigration office.

For investigating the actual condition on operating and checking the processing center's facilities for migrant workers, we visited the Immigration Processing Centers in Hwaseong and Choengju and 16 other emigration and immigration offices. We investigated the centers and carried out a survey and interviewed the foreigners and staff. We then collected back the survey papers from 891 foreigners and the intensive interview with 73 detained foreigners. Meanwhile we analyzed 84 cases of the survey and 9 intensive interviews.

2. Legislations in regulating, detaining and deporting undocumented migrant workers.

Emigration And Immigration Controlling Act poses different legal meanings on the administrative crime considered as a crime and on unlawful act not considered as a crime but as an object of administrative measure. Both are not supposed to be considered.

An article for respecting human rights of the detained foreigners and forbidding discrimination was newly inserted in the Emigration And Immigration Controlling Act in September 2005, but the act does not have practical enforcement ordinance and rules on execution of the article suggested.

3. Problems on of the processing and duty of notifying

1) Problems on investigation process:

51.4% of detained foreigners answered they needed interpreters during the investigation. 37.1% answered they had troubles due to communication problem. 81.3% of the foreigners could not see the investigation paper and 35.8% were asked to sign documents they did not know what the contents were.

2) Duty to notify

3) Asylum seekers are even arrested in the processing centers, while listing them as refugees.

4. Actual conditions and problems of detention

1) Accepting more foreigners than the facilities can handle and the problems of the place for accepting foreigners: the fact that one detainee is arrested in the space of 1.84 pyeong on average shows a lack of space. It is not appropriate for prisons and jails to accept and detain foreigners.



2) Problems of the type of accepting and the period for detention:

Allowing unlimited measures for detention which has a strong nature of restriction is not fitted in with warrant. Therefore when detention is needed over a fixed period, systemic improvement like allowance of the court of justice is needed.

3) Notifying on their rights and the fact of detention:

69.7% of foreigners answered they heard about the right to make a call and 52.9% answered they heard about the right to write a letter. But only a few people answered they were notified the right to ask help from a lawyer or a consul of their country(19.8%), the right to raise objection about arrest(17.6%), and the right to make a representation on the human right violation. Meanwhile only 38.8% answered that the staff of the emigration and immigration office notified most of the facts about the detention of foreigners.

4) Process of raising objection on detention:

48.5% of detained foreigners did not know of the fact that they can raise objection, so they could not do so.

5) Facilities and sanitation: the highest number of dissatisfaction was that air was too unclear.(50.5%) 66.5% answered they could not get fresh clothes offered to detained foreigners, 30.7% answered the food was not delicious, 26.6% answered there was not enough food. 21.3% answered the food offered was only Korean food.

6) Exercise and religion: 54.0% of the foreigners answered they could not be allowed to exercise in the processing centers, 27.7% answered they were allowed to exercise only once or twice a week and 45.5% answered 'religion can not be allowed, impossible in the facilities.'

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G1 visa holders not allowed to work or get medical insurance



Mr. L, a Bangladeshi, entered Korea in November last year with a 6 month G-1 visa to nurse his sick brother. His brother is receiving treatment for severe spinal damage after being hurt in a elevator accident five years ago. He was working in a dyeing factory at Bucheon, Gyeonggi-do.

The brothers are very worried about the burden of living expenses because Mr. L cannot get a job with a G-1 visa, and they are barely surviving on the industrial accident compensation Mr. L's brother receives, which is about 700,000 won per month.

Mr. L said, "My brother just endures the sickness after he has paid for expensive treatment fees and drugs without medical insurance."

Most migrant workers who stay in Korea on G-1 visas for unavoidable reasons, such as pursuing law suits for delayed payment, are suffering because they cannot be guaranteed the same status as other legal residents. This visa, also called a 'rest qualification' visa, does not fit the common qualification, like permanent residence or employment visas, is given when people have to stay for uncontrollable reasons, like Mr. L. The visa is issued in 3 month and 6 month blocks and can be extended, but employment during this period is banned. Those caught doing so are immediately deported.

Ms. B, an Uzbek who returned to her homeland last month, had planned to return to Uzbekistan in the first half of 2005. However, the clothing factory in Euijeongbu where she was working did not pay 5,000,000 won of her wages, and she had to get G-1 visa to pursue her legal suit. But because she could not work and had no income during this time, Ms. B suffered from the excessive rigors of life. She did get a part-time job in a restaurant, but when she finally attained her delayed wages, she returned to her homeland.

According to the Immigration Bureau in the Ministry of Justice, people who had G-1 visas numbered 2915 in the last half of 2005, most of which are migrant workers who have to stay for lawsuits regarding industrial accidents or delayed payment.

These people cannot get a job or medical insurance, but can get industrial accident insurance. Since they cannot get medical insurance through their workplace because they are no longer working, they have to join the local insurance program and cannot fit any qualification for residence: i.e. D (study abroad, training, etc.), E (professor, professional occupation, etc.) or F (visit, residence, etc.); due to National Health Insurance Law.

One National Health Insurance Corporation officer explained that, "Those with G-1 visas do not qualify to join due to the regulation that we basically give it to foreigners who stay for more than one year."

Because of these strict regulations, there is a considerable amount of foreign workers who give up their legal status, and degrade themselves by becoming undocumented residents.

Mr. C, a Chinese who entered Korea 4 years ago and is now living in Yangju, Gyeonggi-do, gained a G-1 visa, extending his stay for three months, due to pursuing a law suit for 7,000,000 won in delayed payment, after his legal residential period finished in October last year. However, Mr. C stays as an undocumented resident and won't request an extension of his visa, even though the law suit is still pending.

This is because he needs a job to survive, so he has to risk prosecution and deportation.

Mr. Seonghwan Lee, counselling secretary at the Seoul Migrant Workers Centre said, "Because of the many limits of a G-1 visa, there are many migrant workers who choose undocumented status."

He also claimed that, "There is a need to lift the limitations if workers have to extend their stay because of uncontrollable circumstances, even though they want to leave Korea".

<Segye Ilbo, Feb. 2, 2006> **AWN**

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7) Using handcuffs : 68.1% answered they had worn handcuffs.

8) Problems of women, children and family : 41.9% of the detained foreigners were forbidden to watch television, 29.9% received order not to lie on the floor. 26.5% were not allowed to have conversation and 24.8% answered writing was not be allowed. Meanwhile 71.8% of staff of the emigration and immigration office answered they have had lack of workers. And 35.6% answered the number of workers should be increased by more than 100%.

5. Conclusion

1) Regulation : defining clearly the conditions and process of the regulation is the most important thing. Staff regulating undocumented migrant workers need to carry out public service on the basis of the law.

2) Protection : international standard on ensuring human right of the undocumented migrant workers and foreigners are needed to be reflected on the law of the country. Contents relating to the detention should be defined by independent law in detail. The period for detention needs to be limited reasonably, and addressing mental suffering like delayed payment of wages and compensation for industrial accident needs to be strengthened to avoid withholding foreigners for a long time. Detention centers should be equipped with appropriate space and facilities not to force to treat foreigners inhumanely. Reorganizing the operating system is also needed to make foreigners live in a humanitarian way with sanitation, proper food and public health. Using handcuffs and compulsive power should be limited.

3) Compulsive expulsion: articles of the expulsion should be revised reasonably by principle of the definitude and principle of excess prohibition

4) Emigration and immigration controlling administration: it needs to reorganize the working process of expulsion in a humanitarian way-increasing the number of staff, including Korean female staff in charge of the detained female foreigners. **AWN**

Arroyo's State of Emergency in the Philippines

Arrogant abuse of power says Filipino migrants' group in Korea

By Mark Padlan, member of KASAMMAKO

KASAMMAKO, Alliance of Filipino Migrants Associations in Korea composed of Filipinos and their families in Korea, express outrage at President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo's derision of the people's power. Mrs. Arroyo should be ashamed because it was the people's power that catapulted her to the presidency, and yet, during her leadership, she has relentlessly ignored and disregarded the welfare of millions of ordinary citizens.

Today KASAMMAKO is alarmed with Arroyo's declaration of a National State of Emergency; the curtailment of civil liberties, including the 'no rally announcement' is unconstitutional, self-serving and draconian. We are deeply concerned for the wellbeing and safety of all Filipinos at this time.

On the 20th Anniversary of the EDSA Uprising that successfully overthrew the Marcos fascist dictatorship and ended 14 years of martial rule. Gloria Macapagal Arroyo once again showed her arrogance to the entire nation by declaring a State of Emergency. This authorizes warrantless arrests, dispersal of people's assemblies and systematic suppression of Filipinos.

There is little doubt that the primary objective of this declaration is to stifle growing public protests against the current government. It comes at a time of planned rallies to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the toppling of the authoritarian Marcos regime: the most important landmark in the country's modern struggle for democracy and human rights. These gatherings have been planned as a way to reinvigorate people with the spirit of 1986, and to nurture the values embodied by the 'people power' uprising.

Arroyo's 1017 Proclamation is an arrogant abuse of power and the height of fascist desperation. For overseas Filipinos and their families, the proclamation just shows the increasing isolation of a disintegrating regime. Arroyo's days are surely numbered.

This move has absolutely no constitutional basis and is clearly meant to shore up Arroyo's grip on power and stranglehold on the Filipino people. But we will not be intimidated. KASAMMAKO commits to intensifying efforts for Arroyo's ouster. Through mobilization and other mass actions at the Philippine Embassy here in Korea, we will unmask and expose this latest dictatorial scheme in the international arena.

The only thing that should be forbidden is Arroyo's continued stay in Malacanang. She is the bane of the Filipino people. Our civil and democratic rights remain intact. She has absolutely no basis for disallowing rallies and other forms of dissent. The Proclamation does not give Arroyo any additional powers nor allows for warrantless arrests and the curtailment of civil rights.

The only emergency we face today is the horror of Arroyo in Malacanang. She takes our economic hardship and political repression to new heights. The declaration of a National State of Emergency during ceremonies to mark 'people power' is the latest affront to our national consciousness. We vow to maximize all forms of protest to ensure that our, "Oust

Gloria", cries reverberate throughout Korea, the world and the Philippines.

To our friends and partners in the international community, we urge you

to speak and act in solidarity with the Filipino people in this challenging period of our life as a nation. To the members of the AFP and PNP, may you join the ranks of patriotic and peace loving citizens who side with the people in the quest for truth, justice and meaningful change. **AWN**



A Statement by the Asian Human Rights Commission

PHILIPPINES: State of emergency must not be used to attack human rights defenders

This Friday, February 24, 2006 a state of emergency was declared in the Philippines. Through Proclamation No. 1017 the president has banned all public rallies and greatly restricted constitutional rights, alleging that, "A tactical alliance [is engaging] in a concerted and systematic conspiracy, over a broad front, to bring down the duly constituted government". There are reports of an attempted coup, although the proclamation does not refer to one specifically.

There can be little doubt that the primary objective of this declaration is to stifle growing public protests against the current government. It comes at a time of planned demonstrations to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the toppling of the authoritarian Marcos regime: the most important landmark in the country's modern struggle for democracy and human rights. These gatherings have been planned as a way to reinvigorate people with the spirit of 1986, and to nurture the values embodied by the "people's power" uprising. The rallies were also expected to be used by many to voice discontent with the current administration.

In states of emergency the groups and persons that come under attack most are those that insist upon their rights to free expression and assembly, particularly those engaged in human rights work. Therefore, there is well-founded fear among human rights defenders in the Philippines that this proclamation may soon lead to arbitrary arrests and detention, and wanton violence.

The Asian Human Rights Commission is deeply concerned for the wellbeing and safety of all Filipinos at this time, especially human rights defenders and social activists. Its calls for firm public commitments from the president of the Philippines and other government officials that these persons will not be made targets, and those engaging in peaceful public protest will not be met with violence by the security forces. Let the spirit of 1986—a spirit of peaceful protest, not bloodshed—live on. **AWN**

Koreans' discrimination against mixed-blood people

Kim Yeong-hee, 59, mother of Hines Ward who won MVP of the National Football League (NFL) in the U.S. revealed that Koreans' discrimination against her son was the toughest part of her life. She was on the verge of tears when she repeated.

"It was the hardest and toughest time when my son was excluded from Korean students in high school because he looked different from the others." She added, "When I heard that Korean fellow students went to a Korean restaurant without Ward, I told him not to get along with them anymore."

A success story of this Korean-American football star aroused attention to rebuild an attitude toward second-generation, multi-cultural Koreans.

Migrant workers in Korea exceed 430,000, and during the past ten years 200,000 couples married inter- racially. Laws and regulations such as the Korean nationality act being bound by Jus sanguinis should be drastically revised.

Even though a half-century has passed, starting with the mixed-blood children who were born between Korean women and American soldiers fighting in the Korean War, to more recent "Kosian" children born between Koreans and Asians, discrimination against multi-cultural families still hasn't changed. Moreover, there are multi-cultural children of 115,000 interracial couples married since 1999. These children are still under-age for schooling: when they do go for schooling, a new educational task, centered in primary schools in factory-clustered urban areas and farming areas, is expected to be aroused.

According to Pearl S. Buck International, a recognized center for the support of multi-cultural people, as of February 8 five thousand American-Koreans and thirty thousand Kosians are estimated to live in Korea. There are two thousand married interracial couples in the Daegu and Gyeongbuk area, although there is no exact statistic on how many multi-cultural children they have because all of those births were registered as Koreans.

The second-generation Koreans of multi-cultural families are likely to be excluded from peer activities, and many families experience confrontations, domestic violence and poverty because of communication difficulties and cultural differences.

According to Jo Jae-gyeong, a social worker at the Jeil Social Welfare Center, "In many cases, mothers of Kosian families are not good at speaking Korean and frequently do not adapt to Korean culture, and then their children at the age of five to six still do not speak Korean properly. Governmental systematic countermeasures and social care and attention are needed," she added.

Lee Jeong-ok, president of Gyeongbuk Women's Policy Development Institute, said "Inter-racial marriage is mixed with multi-culture. It is of course important for Southeast Asian women to adjust to Korean culture. However, it is more important for us to try to understand their culture, too."

Rev. Park Sun-jong of the Mission Center for Migrant Workers in Daegu thinks we should get rid of our thinking of being a racially homogeneous nation.

"In the circumstances of the numbers of interracial marriages and migrant workers increasing, we take the Hines Ward case as an opportunity to unify our society and set up a systematic policy to care for the second generation of mixed-blood Koreans," he said. <Kuki News> February 9, 2006

Disharmony among Ministries on unifying EPS

A plan to unify the migrant workforce supply and demand systems into an EPS next year could not be implemented due to a confrontation among the related ministries.

Over a period of months, the Ministry of Justice (MOJ), the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Energy (MOCIE) and the Ministry of Labor (MOL) expressed different opinions on who would take charge of managing the migrant workforce.

After an announcement last May of a plan to unify the migrant workforce EPS, the government had a series of meetings organized by the Office of Government Policy Coordination (OPC) to form a new management organization for the migrant workforce. However, related organizations could not narrow the gap of different opinions on many issues.

The MOL has an opinion that the Human Resources Development Service of Korea, which is under the MOL, should be enlarged and take charge of managing the migrant workforce because the Service currently controls the agencies which implement the present EPS.

Meanwhile, the MOCIE and the Small and Medium Business Administration (SMBA) insisted that those agencies which have managed the migrant workforce under the existing Industrial Training System for the last ten years would make the best use of their know-how.

It is desirable for them to let the Service take charge of overseas business and training related to migrant workers, and let the Federation of Small and Medium Business (KFSB) be in charge of receiving migrant workers' applications and allocating and managing them because it is an organization involved with employers.

The MOJ suggested that an oversight committee be formed to include all related ministries and organizations and to generally control the existing agencies.

Since the management business of migrant workers is divided into several organizations, the MOJ recognizes that it would not be efficient for a specific organization alone to take charge of management.

In this regard, the OPC called a meeting last week and suggested that the Human Resources Development Service be given umbrella responsibility over the migrant workforce, and let the existing agencies of the industrial training system, including the KFSB, partially participate. However, the suggestion was opposed by the MOJ and MOCIE.

Although the government planned to decide upon a final plan before the Foreign Human Resources Policy Committee meeting which will be held in mid-March, it is not clear that an agreement among related organizations will occur.

A representative of a small company pointed out "If a compromise plan is rushed through while each organization has a different opinion, it will make considerable mistakes. The government should listen carefully to the opinions of small and medium enterprises who actually employ the migrant workforce, and then set up a unifying plan," he emphasized. <Korea Economic Daily> February 13, 2006

AWN

Women's Call for Peace



Women are mobilizing women around the globe to call for an end to the occupation and the violence in Iraq. With the majority of people in Iraq, the U.S., the U.K., and around the world opposing this war, now is the time for women to step forward and make our opposition more visible and vocal.

With the launch of Women Say No To War Campaign, we are asking women around the world to sign on to the Women's Call for Peace. We hope to obtain a minimum of 100,000 signatures by International Women's Day on March 8, 2006, when US and Iraqi women will deliver these signatures to leaders in Washington DC and women around the world will deliver them to US embassies.

Women's Call for Peace: An Urgent Appeal

We, the women of the United States, Iraq and women worldwide, have had enough of the senseless war in Iraq and the cruel attacks on civilians around the world. We've buried too many of our loved ones. We've seen too many lives crippled forever by physical and mental wounds. We've watched in horror as our precious resources are poured into war while our families' basic needs of food, shelter, education and healthcare go unmet. We've had enough of living in constant fear of violence and seeing the growing cancer of hatred and intolerance seep into our homes and communities.

This is not the world we want for ourselves or our children. With fire in our bellies and love in our hearts, we women are rising up – across borders – to unite and demand an end to the bloodshed and the destruction.

We have seen how the foreign occupation of Iraq has fueled an armed movement against it, perpetuating an endless cycle of violence. We are convinced that it is time to shift from a military model to a conflict-resolution model that includes the following elements:

The withdrawal of all foreign troops and foreign fighters from Iraq;
Negotiations to reincorporate disenfranchised Iraqis into all aspects of Iraqi society;

The full representation of women in the peacemaking process and a commitment to women's full equality in the post-war Iraq;

A commitment to discard plans for any foreign bases in Iraq;

Iraqi control of its oil and other resources;

The nullification of privatization and deregulation laws imposed under occupation, allowing Iraqis to shape the trajectory of the post-war economy;

A massive reconstruction effort that prioritizes Iraqi contractors, and draws upon financial resources of the countries responsible for the invasion and occupation of Iraq;

Consideration of a temporary international peacekeeping force that is truly multilateral and is not composed of any troops from countries that participated in the occupation.

To move this peace process forward, we are creating a massive movement of women – crossing generations, races, ethnicities, religions, borders and political persuasions. Together, we will pressure our governments, the United Nations, the Arab League, Nobel Peace Prize winners, religious leaders and others in the international community to step forward to help negotiate a political settlement. And in this era of divisive fundamentalisms, we call upon world leaders to join us in spreading the fundamental values of love for the human family and for our precious planet.



By Seon-kyong, counselor

How Filipino workers to get National Pension?

Q I'm Edwin from the Philippines. I had worked as an industrial trainee in Korea for three years. I came back to my country on Oct. 25, 2005.

When I was in Korea, I paid the National Pension every month but couldn't get it because of the agreement between the Korean and the Philippine governments. However, I have heard from my friend that Filipino returnees can now get their National Pension when they return home because the National Pension Act has changed. Then, can I also receive the National Pension even though I am already in the Philippines?

A Yes, the Philippines has become a country which is possible to be repaid the sum of pension from Oct. 26, 2005. The workers who already returned to their country can demand payment through a representative in Korea. Because you must demand within 5 years from the day of the cause of payment, you must demand until Oct. 26, 2010.

You have to prepare a copy of your passport, a notarized letter of attorney in the Philippines, and your or representative's bank account number (a copy of bankbook) to demand. Because misappropriation accident can occur. Please be careful when you authorize a representative who can become untrustworthy and might demand payment or commission.

ASIAN WORKERS NEWS

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