

24 March 2009

Ms. Jennifer Lynch

Chairperson

International Coordinating Committee of National Institutions
for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights (ICC)

c/o The National Institutions Unit

Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)

CH-1211 Geneve 10, Switzerland

nationalinstitutions@ohchr.org

Dear Ms. Lynch,

We write to you once more regarding our deep concern about the plan of the government of the Republic of Korea (ROK) to reduce by 21.2% the staff of the National Human Rights Commission of Korea (NHRCK).

We have received information that last Friday, 20 March 2009, the Ministry of Public Administration and Security (MOPAS) informed the NHRCK that it would table the proposal of the reduction of personnel at the Vice Ministers' Meeting, which will be held on 26 March 2009, and the State Council Meeting, which will be held on 31 March 2009. We expect that the proposal will be approved during these meetings if no timely intervention is made.

The Asian NGOs Network on National Human Rights Institutions (ANNI) believes that the government's arbitrary and unilateral reduction of the NHRCK's personnel and budget in the aftermath of the NHRCK's unfavorable decisions is the most flagrant form of violating the independence and integrity of a national human rights institution.

We wholeheartedly endorse the NHRCK's position that any changes in the Commission's organizational matters, including staffing issues, should be made in accordance with a process fully respecting the independence and autonomy of the Commission. We also endorse the NHRCK's demand that the Prime Minister and the MOPAS should cease from pursuing the plan and meet with the NHRCK to discuss a rational resolution of the matter.

We have also received your letter to us dated 23 March 2009, wherein you stated that you have responded with a formal letter to the government of the Republic of Korea to voice your concerns and urge the government to reconsider the current proposal. We indeed welcome your response and support the ICC in this call.

We do urge you, however, that in addition to this, the ICC, during its 22nd Session in Geneva this week, adopt a resolution reiterating its resolve to place the NHRCK under review should the proposal to reduce its staff be implemented by the government. This, we feel, would bring forward a much stronger message to the government of the Republic of Korea.

We cannot emphasize enough the importance of protecting the independence and integrity of the NHRCK, an exemplary institution in and beyond Asia, especially during these times when more and

more NHRIs in the Asian region are struggling against efforts that threaten their capability to promote and protect human rights.

Very truly yours,

Emerlynne Gil



Coordinator

Asian NGOs Network on National Human Rights Institutions (ANNI)

For more information, questions, or clarifications, please contact us through **hrd@forum-asia.org** or **tel. no. +66 2 653 2940 local 403**.

The following are the members of the Asian NGOs on National Human Rights Institutions (ANNI):

ADVAR – Iran

Ain o Salish Kendra (ASK) – Bangladesh

Asian Center for Human Rights (ACHR)

Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA)

Cambodian League for Promotion and Defence of Human Rights (LICADHO)

Center for Human Rights and Development (CHRD) – Mongolia

Center for Organizing Research and Education (CORE)

Citizens' Council for Human Rights Japan (CCHRJ) – Japan

Commission for Disappearances and Victims of Violence (KONTRAS) – Indonesia

Defenders of Human Rights Center – Iran

Education and Research Association for Consumer Education (ERA Consumer) – Malaysia

Hong Kong Human Rights Monitor (HKHR) – Hong Kong

Human Rights Organisation of Kurdistan

Indonesian Human Rights Monitor (IMPARSIAL) – Indonesia

Indonesian NGO Coalition for International Human Rights Advocacy (HRWG) – Indonesia

Informal Service Sector Center (INSEC) – Nepal

Institute for Policy Research and Advocacy (ELSAM) – Indonesia

International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran – Iran

Japan Federation of Bar Associations (JFBA) – Japan

Judicial System Monitoring Program (JSMP) – Timor Leste

Korea House for International Solidarity (KHIS) – Korea

Law and Society Trust (LST) – Sri Lanka

Lawyers' League for Liberty (LIBERTAS) – Philippines

Maldivian Detainees Network (MDN) – Maldives

People's Watch – India

Philippine Alliance of Human Rights Advocates (PAHRA) – Philippines

Suara Rakyat Malaysia (SUARAM) – Malaysia

Taiwan Association for Human Rights (TAHR) – Taiwan

This statement is also supported and endorsed by the following NGOs:

Buddhism Human Rights Committee(BHRC) - 불교인권위원회
Catholic Human Rights Committee – 천주교인권위원회
Center for Public Interest & Human Rights Law in Chonnam National University - 전남대
공익인권법센터
CHANG: Korea Human Rights Research Center - 인권연구소 창
Daegu Differently Abled Women Solidarity - 대구여성장애인연대
Dasan Human Rights Center - 다산인권센터
Easy Access Movement for People with Disabilities in Korea - 장애인편의시설촉진시민연대
Gwangju Human Rights Activities Center – 광주인권운동센터
Imagination for International Solidarity - 경계를 넘어
Jeonbuk Education Center of Human Rights - 전북인권교육센터
Joint Committee with Migrants in Korea - 외국인이주·노동운동협의회
Korea Alliance for Progressive Movement (KAPM) - 한국진보연대
Korea Buddhist Order Association Human Rights Committee(KBOAHRC) -
한국불교종단협의회 인권위원회
Korean Council for Democratic Martyre(KCDM) - 추모연대
Korea HIV/AIDS Network of Solidarity - 한국 HIV/AIDS 감염인연대 카노스
Korea Women's Hotline - 한국여성의전화
Korean Progressive Network 'Jinbonet' - 진보네트워크센터
Korean Sexual-Minority Culture & Rights Center - 한국성적소수자문화인권센터
Korean Women Link – 한국여성민우회
LaborNet in South Korea – 노동넷
Lesbian Counselling Center in South Korea - 한국레즈비언상담소
MINBYUN-Lawyers for a Democratic Society - 민주사회를 위한 변호사 모임
MINKAHYUP Human Rights Group - 민주화실천가족운동협의회
Network for Migrant Workers - 이주인권연대
People's Solidarity for Participatory Democracy (PSPD) - 참여연대
Research Institute of the Differently Abled Person's Right in Korea
(RIDRIK) - 장애우권익문제연구소
Sarangbang Group for Human Rights - 인권운동사랑방
Solidarity for LGBT Human Rights of Korea - 동성애자인권연대
Solidarity for Peace & Human Rights - 전북 평화와 인권연대
The Korean Contingent Workers' Center - 한국비정규노동센터
The National Council of Churches in Korea (NCCK) Daegu Human Rights
Committee - 한국기독교교회협의회 대구인권위원회
Ulsan Solidarity for Human Rights - 울산인권운동연대
Youth Human Rights Action ASUNARO - 청소년인권행동 아수나로