

South Korea: Protecting safe rates for truck drivers

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Act NOW! A LabourStart campaign in partnership with the International Transport Workers Federation and the Korean Public Service and Transport Workers' Union (KPTU).

In South Korea, 1,000 people die annually due to truck crashes because big corporations like Samsung and Hyundai force low rates onto truck drivers forcing them to work long hours, overload their vehicles and speed, putting all road users at risk. Korean truck drivers work over twice the annual average for OECD countries, but as 'owner drivers' they are entirely unprotected by labour law.

After years of struggle, the KPTU Cargo Truckers Solidarity Division (KPTU-TruckSol) won historic Safe Rates legislation last year. Accordingly, a 'Road Freight Rates Safety Committee' was established to set fair safe rates and hold clients accountable. Recently an ILO Committee of Experts recognised the principles underpinning the Korean Safe Rates systems and others like it by adopting guidelines that outline the responsibilities of governments and transport chain parties and a sustainable payments model for owner drivers.

Now, however, Korean truck drivers are engaged in a life-or-death struggle to defend the Safe Rates system in the face of clients who want to derail negotiations, and the Korean government's lack of will. If the Committee does not agree to rates soon, the whole system will be jeopardised and more lives will be lost.

Please support the fight for Safe Rates in South Korea and globally.

Model of Letter

Dear Minister of Land, Infrastructure and Transport Hyun-mi Kim

Noting that an ILO Committee of Experts recently adopted 'Guidelines on the Promotion of Road Safety and Decent Work in the Transport Sector', which call on governments to promote sustainable payments to owner drivers, including payment for all non-driving work activities, and on transport chain parties to engage in social dialogue to this end, I urgently call on the Korean government and the client and transport company representatives of the Korean Road Safety Freight Rates Committee to take responsibility for road safety and decent work for truck drivers.

They must engage in social dialogue in good faith and agreeing with truck driver representatives to sustainable Safe Rates, which accounts accurately for drivers' waiting time and guarantee them an income that will enable eradication of long driving hours, fatigue, overloading and speeding, thereby

protecting road safety.

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