

From the Philippines: Solidarity Statement for the Release of Han Sang-gyun

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The Sentro ng mga Nagkakaisa at Progresibong Manggagawa (SENTRO) send its heartfelt congratulations to Brother Han Sang-gyun, former President of the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions (KCTU), for his release from prison last May 21. Together with KCTU we stand proud and happy regarding this positive development—a clear moral and political victory for the solidarity of the working classes.

Brother Han's imprisonment is just one of the many violations and intimidations employed against the working peoples of the world when they stand up for their rights. Accused of leading "violent action", Brother Han's only action was to lead the organizing for the mass mobilization of 130,000 people against the now-deposed government of Park Geun-hye in November 2015. The release of Brother Han is a vindication—one not written by the courts and government of South Korea, but by history, one that will look favorably on him for sparking the light of freedom in South Korea since 2016.

That said, we acknowledge that the fight is not yet over. Brother Han's fellow KCTU officer, Secretary General Lee Young-Joo, remains in prison. Many other political prisoners of the Park years remain languishing in their holding rooms. Despite the ascension of left-leaning President Moon Jae-In under the mandate of representing the Candlelight Revolution, the continued imprisonment of Sister Lee and other like her would continue to put the lie on the promise of change.

We in the Philippines share South Korea's joy in their current exercise of reforming society through democratic revolution and representation. At the same time, our country's history of reversals, witness how our own EDSA Revolutions eventually ended up with the fascist regime of Rodrigo Duterte, may serve as a warning. Indeed, popular democracy will always be a work in progress. And the working peoples of the world can only continuously rely on themselves and those willing to dream an equal and equitable world. Only by vigilance, dignified dissent and an educated people may the fruits of liberation be protected.

So we in SENTRO and the working peoples of the Philippines, while celebrating Brother Han's release, also join in your on-going calls:

Free Lee Young-Joo!

Free all trade unionists and prisoners of conscience!

Organize! Fight! Win!

Sentro ng mga Nagkakaisa at Progresibong Manggagawa (SENTRO)

P.S.

* <http://www.sentro.org>