

Statement

We denounce the Saenuri Party's illegally appointed human rights commissioner!

This is the NHRCK that kept silence on the Anti-Terrorist Act!

Today (March 3rd) the ruling Saenuri Party unilaterally selected the former prosecutor Jung Sang-Hwan as a standing commissioner of the National Human Rights Commission of Korea (hereafter the NHRCK). After the Saenuri Party nominated candidate Jung Sang-hwan this past February 22nd, Korean civil society criticized the lack of participatory and transparent selection process, as well as disregard for the gender quota system. The Saenuri Party's decision to unilaterally pass the motion for Mr. Jung's appointment for the standing commissioner at the National Assembly clearly shows a complete disregard for citizens' voices.

The bigger issue is that the Saenuri Party has clearly displayed an unwillingness to improve civil society's participation in the selection process of commissioners and an ignorance of an international call to secure the independence of the NHRCK.

Thus, the NHRCK has remained silent on the government legislation and execution of policies that violate basic human rights. There has been no opinions expressed by the NHRCK on serious human rights violations such as the arbitrary arrest and detention of citizens grieving for the Sewol Ferry victims, and using water cannons at rallies that caused Mr. Baek, Nam-ki to lose consciousness and left many people injured.

The NHRCK expressed no opinions or policy recommendations on the Anti-Terrorism Act, a clear violation of human rights, from its inception to its passage, yesterday. The chairperson of the NHRCK did not even issue a statement. According to a headline from a newspaper (Kyeonghyang News), external consultants for the NHRCK, present at a meeting discussing information and human rights policy (January 24th) stated that the Anti-Terrorist Act the ruling party was pushing for had a high possibility of violating human rights and urged the NHRCK to issue a statement or policy recommendation. However, there was no response from the NHRCK. In 2003, the NHRCK already issued its opinion on the Anti-Terrorist Act, claiming that it would be an infringement on citizen's basic rights. Therefore, going from NHRCK's own logic, issuing a statement now, is not a controversial or difficult task.

In the end, the Saenuri Party has exposed itself to be in disregard of democracy

through the illegal selection and appointment of Jung Sang Hwan as a standing commissioner.

Korean civil society, including the NHRCK Watch, strongly denounce the ruling party's illegal nomination and appointment of Mr. Jung. We want to let it be known that not only was the recommended selection procedure set forward by the ICC not followed but also that civil society's participation was deliberately excluded.

March 3rd, 2016

The NHRCK-Watch (Korean NGOs' joint network)

Women's Association, Gwangju Women's Association United, Korean House for International Solidarity (KHIS), Disability Discrimination Act of Solidarity in Korea, Center for Military Human Rights, Korea Association of Christian Women for Women Minjung, Dasan Human Rights Center, Daegu Kyoungbuk Women's Association United, Daegu Women's Association, Disabled People's International Daegu (DPI Daegu), Daejeon Women's Association for Democracy, Democratic Legal Studies Association, Busan Counseling Center against Sexual Violence, Busan Women's Associations United, Busan Women Education Center, Buddhism Human Rights Committee, Saewoomtuh, National Solidarity for Solving Prostitution Issues, Suwon Women's Association, Korea Women's Center for Social Research, Ulsan Women's Association, Ulsan Solidarity for Human Rights, Korea Center for United Nations Human Rights Policy, Human Rights Education Center 'Deul', Protesting against Poverty & Discrimination Solidarity for Human Rights, Sarangbang Group for Human Rights, Disability and Human Rights in Action, Information & Culture Nuri for Disabled Koreans (South Korea), Solidarity against Disability Discrimination, Jeonbuk Women's Associations United, Solidarity for Peace & Human Rights, Jeju Women's Association, Jeju Women's Human Rights Solidarity, Jeju Human Rights Center, Korean Progressive Network Jinbonet, National Association of Parents for Cham Education, Korean Catholic Women's Community for a New World, Catholic Human Rights Committee, Youth Human Rights Action Asunaro, Network of Youth Human Right Activists, Chungbuk Women's Association, Women Making Peace, Pohang Women's Association, Korean Gay Men's Human Rights Group Chingusai, Korea Sexual Violence Relief Center, Korean Women Workers Association, Korean Women's Association United, Korean Womenlink, Korea Women's Studies Institute, Korea Women's Hotline, Korean Differently Abled Women United, Women Migrants Human Rights Center, Korea Human Rights Foundation, Housewives Meeting Together Hamjumo, etc.

The Minority Rights Committee of Minbyun-Lawyers for a Democratic Society