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## **Republic of Korea (South Korea): Human rights activist may be next prisoner of conscience**

A prominent human rights activist arrested today seems set to become the next prisoner of conscience in South Korea, Amnesty International said today.

“This latest arrest came as politicians argued over the exact definition of a prisoner of conscience and the government claimed there were none at all,” the human rights organization said. “If people want to know what a prisoner of conscience is then look no further than Suh Jun-sik.”

“Suh Jun-sik was arrested for organizing a human rights festival and should be released immediately. The government cannot continue to deny the existence of prisoners of conscience.”

Suh Jun-sik, director of Sarangbang human rights group and former prisoner of conscience, was arrested by the Seoul Police at around 5pm on 4 November. According to the arrest warrant, he was detained because of his organization’s human rights film festival, for “benefitting” North Korea and for failing to report directly to the police regularly under the terms of his previous release.

“This type of action flies in the face of South Korea’s pretensions to be an open, democratic and developed state.”

In a recent open letter to candidates in the Presidential election, Amnesty International urged all candidates to protect and respect the work of human rights defenders and to encourage efforts to promote human rights throughout Korean society.

Sarangbang’s Second Human Rights Film Festival opened in Seoul in October and is currently touring nine other cities. Five people were arrested during the festival after the organizers refused to submit their films for government censorship.

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