



**22<sup>nd</sup> Regular Session of the UN Human Rights Council  
Item 6: Universal Periodic Review (UPR) Plenary on the Republic of Korea**

**Oral Statement Delivered by Ms. Pooja Patel on Behalf of  
Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA) and  
People's Solidarity for Participatory Democracy (PSPD)**

**Thursday, 14 March 2012**

Thank you, Mr. President. FORUM-ASIA makes this statement in association with its member organization, People's Solidarity for Participatory Democracy (PSPD)<sup>1</sup>. We appreciate the government's timely response on their position on the recommendations from the UPR Working Group session (A/HRC/22/10/Add.1). We regret however that several recommendations repeated from the 1<sup>st</sup> cycle continue not to enjoy the support of the government, such as the ratification of the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (ICRMW). We are disappointed at the government's position on the amendment of the National Security Act (NSA), as the number of people prosecuted under this Act far exceeds the number of convictions, indicating its arbitrary application. NSA has also been invoked to forcibly shut down an increasing number of websites and blogs.<sup>2</sup> In addition, the government rejected the recommendation to ratify core ILO Conventions Nos. 87, 98, 29, and 105, despite having made repeated pledges to this end when elected to the membership of this Council in 2006 and 2008.

Mr. President, we are disturbed by the increasing trend of judicial harassment against peaceful protesters under the charge of obstruction of justice for police officers. The use of force by private security personnel against peaceful protesters is also alarming and we remain appalled that the government has not effectively addressed this situation on the ground, rendering it complicit in the violence and coercion. In Gangjeong village, Jeju island, since 2007, peaceful protests against the construction of a naval base have faced violent disruptions both by the police and private security, as well as arbitrary arrests of at least 650 persons including the affected communities, human rights defenders, environment and peace activists.<sup>3</sup> We appeal to the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders to address such acts of harassment and intimidation during her upcoming country visit in May 2013. Furthermore, the government must exert all efforts to fully realize the right of local communities to their free, prior and informed consent on the large-scale development projects.

Finally, Mr. President, we urge the government to conduct genuine and transparent consultations with civil society organizations at all stages of the UPR process and to create an oversight mechanism on the implementing status of recommendations from the UN human rights system, involving all relevant institutions and agencies as well as the National Assembly. Thank you, Mr. President.

<sup>1</sup> 14<sup>th</sup> Session of the UPR Working Group (22 October-5 November 2012), Submission for the Stakeholder's Information, Korean NGO Coalition for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Cycle of the UPR on the Republic of Korea (Joint Submission 5), [http://lib.ohchr.org/HRBodies/UPR/Documents/Session14/KR/JS5\\_UPR\\_KOR\\_S14\\_2012\\_JointSubmission5\\_E.pdf](http://lib.ohchr.org/HRBodies/UPR/Documents/Session14/KR/JS5_UPR_KOR_S14_2012_JointSubmission5_E.pdf); Joint Statement, "Republic of Korea: Need to Show More Commitments to Improve Its Human Rights", 25 October 2012, <http://www.peoplepower21.org/English/965602>

<sup>2</sup> According to the information submitted by the Korea Communications Standards Commission (KCSC) to the National Assembly in August 2012, the number of websites shut down for violating the National Security Act were 2 websites (2008), 10 websites (2009), 51 websites (2010), 306 websites (2011) and 146 websites (as of August 2012).

<sup>3</sup> PSPD Press Release, "UN Special Rapporteurs Sent an Joint Allegation Letter to South Korean Government on Human Rights Violations in Gangjeong, Jeju Island", 13 September 2012, <http://www.peoplepower21.org/Peace/951386>; 21<sup>st</sup> Regular Session of the UN Human Rights Council, Communications Report of Special Procedures (A/HRC/21/49), Case No. KOR 2/2012