

Jimmy Carter Takes a Stance against South Korea's “National Security Law” and Imprisonment of Rep. Lee Seok-ki

Statement from The Carter Center on Conviction of Republic of Korea National Assembly Member

By [Carter Center](#)

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The Carter Center notes with concern the conviction of Republic of Korea incumbent lawmaker, Lee Seok-ki, a member of the National Assembly, by the Seoul High Court on a charge of insurrection conspiracy based on taped remarks he made to his political followers and for which he has been sentenced to nine years in prison.

The Carter Center will not comment on the merits of the facts presented in this case, which is currently on appeal before Korea's Supreme Court or interfere in any other way in the internal affairs of the Republic of Korea. We note, however, that Mr. Lee's conviction is taking place under the provisions of a highly restrictive National Security Law, established during the pre-1987 era of autocratic military rule, that appears to contradict both the Republic of Korea's international human rights treaty obligations and the nation's global reputation as a highly successful prosperous democracy.

“If Korea is to extend its essential role as a human rights leader in Asian and world affairs, there should be a fully transparent democratic debate open to all Korean citizens about current and potential risks to human rights under the terms of the National Security Law,” said former U.S. President Jimmy Carter.

At a time when Americans are urgently debating congressional findings on the official use of torture, The Carter Center believes all nations are capable of protecting their national security while remaining faithful to their commitments under international human rights law.

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