

German Lawyer Calls for Song's Release

By Na Jeong-ju
Staff Reporter

A visiting German human rights lawyer on Monday called for the release of Song Du-yul, a Korean-German professor convicted of violating the anti-communist law, whose case is currently under review by an appeal court.

“Many German government, political and academic leaders are paying attention to this case,” Hans Eberhard Schultz, 61, told a news conference at the Korea Press Center in Seoul. “All Germans hope South Korea will make proper efforts to resolve Song’s case. His case has a symbolic meaning in that it will test South Korea’s capabilities to overcome legal and ideological adversities.”

Schultz arrived in Seoul on Saturday as a representative of German lawyers’ groups to meet Song and Korean human rights lawyers. He will attend a third hearing by an appeal court tomorrow.

Song, a sociology professor at Germany’s Muenster University, is being jailed after being convicted of violating the National Security Law. He was sentenced on March 30 to seven years



Hans Eberhard Schultz

in prison for working for communist North Korea. The key charge was that he had served as a secret member of the decision-making politburo of North Korea's ruling Worker's Party, a claim denied by him.

Schultz said he visited a detention center in Seoul where Song has been held since he arrived in Korea in September 2003. The lawyer found Song's situation was much worse than he had expected.

"I can't help but point out that every condition in the detention center is not to my satisfaction," he said. "There is no chair, no convenience facilities for Song. Bulbs shed light on his room 24 hours. These conditions make Song's health worse. This is an obvious human rights violation."

Song's trial is being held as civic groups are joining hands to scrap the National Security Law with ruling and opposition politicians set to have serious debates whether to keep the anti-communist law, which has been criticized by many for oppressing democracy and human rights here for half a century. Last month, 48 German political and academic leaders delivered a statement calling for Song's release to the presidential office of Chong Wa Dae. Also, 175 Korean students studying in Germany filed a petition to the appeal court early this month to ask for his release.

Shultz pointed out that words and phrases in the security law defining acts that deserve punishment are stated too ambiguous and everyone in South Korea can be made out to be criminals at the authorities' will.

`` Laws should clearly tell citizens why they violated laws and which punishment they will get for the violations. But in the South Korean security laws, many words can have different meanings depending on their interpretation,' he said.

`` Also, the Korean court convicted Song although there is no clear evidence showing Song's role in the North Korean party. This should be dealt with clearly by the appellate court.'

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