



INTERNATIONAL
TRANSPORT
WORKERS'
FEDERATION



EUROPEAN
TRANSPORT
WORKERS'
FEDERATION

Dear President Yoon Seok-yeol, President of the Republic of Korea; Won Hee-ryong, Minister of Land, Infrastructure and Transport; and Chung Jinsuk, Interim Chief, People Power Party

RE: SAVE LIVES, MAKE SAFE RATES PERMANENT IN KOREA

We are writing to call on you to uphold the promise your government made on 14 June 2022 by supporting legislation that would make Safe Rates permanent and expand coverage to more sectors.

The decision of your government to break its commitment has forced the hand of the truck drivers' union – the Korean Public Service and Transport Workers' Union Cargo Truckers' Solidarity Division (KPTU-TruckSol) – and unlimited national strike action will commence on November 24 for the second time this year.

Regrettably, your government has failed to prevent a strike that will cause enormous short-term damage to the Korean economy, to critical national and global supply chains, and to Korea's global reputation.

But the impact of failing to expand and make Safe Rates permanent in Korea is far greater.

Safe Rates systems set standards for safe and fair pay and working conditions through social dialogue and make large companies that contract for road transport services responsible for ensuring that these standards are met throughout their supply chains.

International research demonstrates that Safe Rates systems in Korea and elsewhere significantly increase road safety, reduce accidents, and save lives by alleviating the economic pressures on drivers that force them to engage in unsafe on-road practices.

More lives will be lost on Korean roads if your government does not remove the sunset clause in the Safe Rates legislation. And more drivers will be forced to continue working long hours, driving while fatigued and engaging in other dangerous on-road practices such as speeding and overloading if Safe Rates isn't expanded and made permanent.

Countries around the world are looking at the Korean Safe Rates system as a model to follow. It is hard for us to understand why you would want to abolish a system that is setting a global standard, one which is recognised by the International Labour Organisation through its Guidelines on the Promotion of Decent Work and Road Safety in the Transport Sector.

In the wake of the tragic accident in Itaewon that resulted in the death of 158 people, and a seemingly endless series of industrial accidents, many of them as a result of budgetary and workforce cuts to rail and metro services – questions are being asked about your government's commitment to protecting human life and public safety.

As unions that represent transport workers globally, we are shocked by reports that your administration intend to weaken the existing Safe Rates system so much that it will become unenforceable or simply allow it to expire at the end of this year. A system that saves lives.

We call on you to stop this blatant disregard for human life and uphold your promise and make Safe Rates permanent and universally applicable in the road transport sector.

Signed,

Stephen Cotton
General Secretary
International Transport Workers' Federation

Livia Spera
General Secretary
European Transport Workers' Federation

Alongside 65 affiliated unions in solidarity with Korean truck drivers and their union

ACOD/CGSP Telecom Vliegwezen/Aviation
Action Syndicale Pour Le Developpement
ACV Transcom
All India Railwaymen's Federation
Amalgamated Transit Union
Amalgamated Transport and General Workers' Union
Amalgamated Union of Seafarers, Hong Kong
Asry Labour Union
Australian Rail, Tram & Bus Industry Union
Belgische Transportarbeidersbond Union Belge du Transport et de la logistique
Bermuda Industrial Union
Cambodian Transportation Workers' Federation (CTWF)
Centralorganisationen Søfart
Deniz Çalışanları Dayanışma Derneği (DAD-DER)
Marine Employees' Solidarity Association (MESA)
DHL World Wide Express (I) Pvt. Ltd. Employees' Union
Dighi Port Sthanik Kantrati Kamgar
Fagligt Fælles Forbund (3F)
Fédération Général des Chemins de Fer Tunisiens
Federation of Oil Unions in Iraq
Federation of Transport Trade Unions in Bulgaria
Federazione Italiana Lavoratori dei Trasporti FILT-CGIL
Finnish Transport Workers' Union
FNV
General Federation of Bahrain Trade Unions
General Federation of Private Railway & Bus Workers' Unions
General Union of Port Workers
General Workers' Union (GWU)
Georgian Railway Workers New Trade Union
Georgian Seafarers' Union
Independent Transport Workers' Association of Nepal
Karachi Port Trust Democratic Workers Union (KPT DWU)
Kenya Bodaboda, Tuktuk and Taxi Workers Union
Kenya Hotels and Allied Workers' Union
Lebanese Cabin Crew Association
Maharashtra State Transport Kamgar Sanghatana
Matatu Workers Union
Merchant Navy Officers' Guild - Hong Kong
National Confederation of Transport Workers' Union (NCTU)
National Road Transport Section NSZZ "Solidarity"
National Union of Hospitality, Catering & Tourism Industries Employees
National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers
National Union of Seafarers Sri Lanka
Nepal Transport Labour Association (Nepal Yatayat Mazdoor Sangh) (NETWON)
New Maritime & General Kamgar Sanghatana
Nigeria Merchant Navy Officers' and Water Transport Senior Staff Association
People's Unity of PIA Employees
PISTON Land Transport Coalition
Public Transport Operators Union
Seafarers' International Union of Canada
Shivsangram Taxi and Rickshaw Union
Shree Kutch General Mazdoor Sangh
South Asia Pakistan Terminal Ltd Democratic Workers Union (SAPTL - DWU)
State Railway Workers' Union of Thailand (SRUT)
Swedish Transport Workers' Union
Syndicat des Travailleurs des Compagnies de Navigation Maritimes, Aériennes et de Transit du Togo
Syndicat National des Travailleurs de la Marine Marchande (SNTMM)
Trade Union of Georgian Railwaymen
Transport Workers' Union of Australia
Transport Workers' Union of Fiji
Türkiye Denizciler Sendikası (Seafarers' Union of Turkey)
Tuticorin PSA SICAL Container Terminal Staff Union
Unifor
Union des Syndicats UMT des Transports
United Workers' Union of Liberia
Workers Union & Affiliation of Iraqi Ports Company