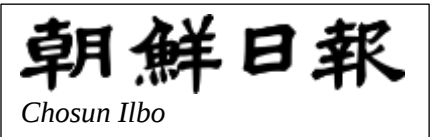


FFWPU Europe and Middle East: New Charges Threaten to Keep Holy Mother Han in Solitary Without Trial into 2026

Knut Holdhus
November 9, 2025



Posters outside Seoul Detention center November 3, 2025



Large daily the Chosun Ilbo: Special prosecutors broaden case against Mother Han as political-religious probe deepens with new charges 7th November 2025

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According to the large South Korean daily the Chosun Ilbo on 7th November, new charges have been added to the previously-filed ones in the special prosecutors' case against [Hak Ja Han](#) (한학자), also known as [Mother Han](#). A story by Kim Na-yeong (김나영) headlined "[Kim Keon-hee, Han Hak-ja Indicted in Unification Church Party Scheme](#)" reveals,



Former South Korean First Lady Kim Keon-hee, here in Washington DC July 10, 2024

"The special prosecutor's team, led by Min Jung-ki (민중기), investigating various allegations against former first lady Kim Keon-hee (김건희), announced on the 7th that it had additionally indicted Kim, [Unification Church](#) leader [Hak Ja Han](#) (한학자), and others in connection with the alleged 'collective entry of [Unification Church](#) members into the People Power Party'."

According to the [Chosun Ilbo article](#), the special prosecutor's office said that Kim Keon-hee (김건희), [Hak Ja Han](#) and others - including Jeon Seong-bae (전성배) and [Yoon Yeong-ho](#) (윤영호) - were additionally indicted on charges of violating the Political Parties Act for organising a "collective entry" of [Family Federation](#) members into the People Power Party.

The [article](#) states that Kim was already indicted in August for violations including the Capital Markets Act, the Political Funds Act, and solicitation of bribes under the

Act on the Aggravated Punishment of Specific Crimes.

The new indictments add charges under the Political Parties Act (i.e., coercing party membership, if the allegation is correct) concerning the coordinated entry of [Family Federation](#) members into the People Power Party.



KBS World has previously reported that for [Hak Ja Han](#) and others, previous indictments include offences under the Political Funds Act, anti-graft laws (e.g., embezzlement, bribery, evidence-destruction) relating to the federation's alleged favours to Kim and/or the party.

Thus the "additional" label means that these new counts build on an existing set of charges, not that they are entirely separate/unconnected.

The Korea Times Other outlets are covering the expansion or further layers of the probe, consistent with the "additional indictment" narrative of the [Chosun Ilbo](#) [article](#). A report from the Korea Times (2nd Nov. 2025) says the special counsel team cited evidence of Kim's alleged involvement in personnel-favouring at the presidential office, beyond earlier charges of stock manipulation, political funds violations, and receipt of luxury gifts.

A broader picture emerges that the special counsel's investigation into Kim, the [Family Federation](#) / [Mother Han](#), and the People Power Party is widening - from bribery, political funds and stock manipulation to alleged mass membership manipulation and party entry schemes.



Special prosecutors seem determined to keep the world's oldest female pre-trial detainee behind bars for a longer period than her health may allow. Here, artistic impression of [Mother Han](#) in detention cell. Illustration: Grok xAI.

In the case against [Mother Han](#), special prosecutors barred her on 23rd May 2025 from leaving South Korea amid investigation into alleged luxury gifts to Kim. Those early restrictions signaled a formal suspect status, not yet full indictment.

On 9th July, the investigation broadened as [Hak Ja Han](#) was formally designated by the Special Prosecutors' Office as a criminal suspect, including suspected bribery via a religious intermediary, embezzlement and interference.

The court then issued a detention warrant for her on 22nd September on charges of unlawful political funding, embezzlement, and obstruction of justice. That marked a significant intensification of charges. On 10th October, the charges against her were formalized as she was indicted.

It is quite plausible that the additional charges against [Hak Ja Han](#) will lead to both a longer investigation and extended detention.

A broader scope means more witnesses, more documents to review, more forensic and financial tracing - all of which tend to lengthen investigations. The complexity of the case - political, religious, financial - inherently slows things down. And Korean criminal-procedure frameworks allow for extensions of pre-trial detention under certain conditions (risk of flight, evidence tampering, etc.). Given the breadth of the allegations, prosecutors are more likely to request such extensions.



Of course, [Mother Han](#)'s age (82) and numerous health issues may give her defence more leverage to argue for bail or conditional release on medical grounds, which could shorten or interrupt detention even if the investigation itself is long.

Because the case has strong political-religious overtones, the authorities may seek to resolve key issues more quickly to manage public and institutional fallout, but this is highly uncertain.

It is quite plausible that [Mother Han](#) remains in detention - or under very restrictive conditions - well into 2026. The prosecutors deem the charges as serious, the investigation is expansive, and the risk of evidence tampering has already been flagged by the court - all of which support extended detention.

The fact that she was already granted a temporary medical release suggests the court is sensitive to her health. If her condition worsens, a court might convert detention to medical supervision or bail.

If the investigation drags on, the special counsel may still keep her in very restricted custody conditions (hospital ward under guard, limited contact) rather than standard prison, which could mitigate the health/detention risk but still keep her effectively immobilized.

Text: Knut Holdhus, editor

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A photograph showing a group of people, including a man in a dark jacket and a woman in a white mask, standing near a vehicle at night. The scene is dimly lit, with some light reflecting off the surfaces of the car and the people's clothing. The man in the dark jacket is looking towards the camera, while the woman in the white mask is looking down. Other people are visible in the background, but they are less distinct.



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case at age 82 is exceptional not just in South Korea but worldwide.

Pre-trial detention (i.e., held in custody during investigation before a full trial) for political crimes like bribery or corruption is rare for individuals over 80 due to humanitarian considerations, health exemptions, and alternatives like house arrest or bail.

Globally, such cases often involve former leaders from countries with aggressive anti-corruption drives (e.g., Peru, South Korea, South Africa), but documented instances peak in the '70s, with [Han](#) holding the record for age. International norms (e.g., UN Mandela Rules) emphasize alternatives to detention for the elderly to avoid health risks.

Peru leads in prosecuting ex-leaders (5 of last 6 presidents implicated in Odebrecht scandal), but even there, ages top out at 80. In democracies like the US/UK, pre-trial detention for white-collar political crimes is uncommon regardless of age – bail is standard unless flight risk is high.

Even after her recent eye surgery which requires 4-6 weeks of recovery, request for extension on her temporary release was denied by South Korean government. Today is day 46 of her detainment."

Featured image above: [Mother Han](#) returning (in the black car) to Seoul Detention Center on 7th November 2025. Screenshot from video by Masataka Asaoka.

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