## 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 PEOPLE POWER PARTY 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, <u>Unification Church</u> leader <u>Hak Ja Han</u> (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 <u>Yoon Yeong-ho</u> (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 <u>Family Federation</u> members into the People Power Party.

KBS World has previously reported that for <u>Hak Ja Han</u> 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 <u>Chosun Ilbo article</u>. 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 <u>Family Federation</u> / <u>Mother Han</u>, 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 <u>Mother Han</u>, 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 <u>Hak Ja Han</u> 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 <u>Hak Ja Han</u> 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.



Artistic impression of <u>Mother Han</u> in wheelchair at preparatory hearing. Illustration: Grok xAI

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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## Health Concerns: 82-Year-Old Pretrial Detainee

- November 8, 2025
- Knut Holdhus



Seoul prosecutors show no health concerns: Court denies 82-year-old detainee's medical leave extension, orders return to tiny detention cell

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The large newspaper Korea JoongAng Daily reported 7<sup>th</sup>

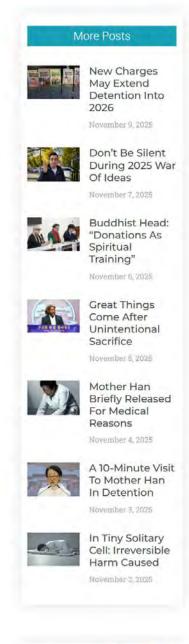
## Korea JoongAng Daily

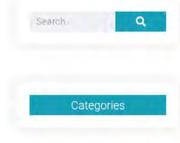
The logo of the Korea JoongAng Daily.

November that

Family Federation leader Hak Ja Han, also called Mother Han, has returned to detention after a Seoul court denied her request for a longer medical leave. The decision, announced on Friday, ended Han's 3-day temporary release, which had been granted to allow her to

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Division rejected Han's plea for an extension, ruling that the medical treatment for which she was released had already been completed and that there was no justification for further suspension of her detention.



Mother Han being brought out from Seoul Detention Center in a wheelchair to a waiting car on 4th November 2025. Photo: Masataka Asaoka

The Chosun Ilbo reported 4<sup>th</sup> November that Hak Ja Han had been released that day. According to the JoongAng Daily this was on the condition that she refrain from contact with anyone except medical personnel during her hospital stay. After successfully completing her surgery, Mother Han applied to extend her temporary release until 13th November, arguing that she required additional time to recover from the operation. However, the court turned the request down and ordered her return to the Seoul Detention Center before the 4 p.m. deadline on Friday 7th Nov.

The JoongAng Daily writes that according to the Special Counsel Min Joong-ki's investigative team, which has been leading the probe into Mother Han, her medical needs had already been met and did not warrant continued exemption from custody. The rejection of Han's request underscores the court's strict stance on detention extensions and signals that her ongoing legal proceedings will continue without further medical delays. Mother Han's brief hospital stay thus concludes amid heightened scrutiny surrounding her case and the broader investigation into the Family Federation's leadership and activities.

Adding to this, Demian Dunkley, President of the Family Federation in North America, wrote from Seoul in *The Monarch Report* on X 7<sup>th</sup> November,

"82-year-old Hak Ja Han [...]
underwent urgent eye surgery on 5<sup>th</sup>
November for her end-stage
glaucoma amid a brief suspension of
pretrial detention. Facing
embezzlement charges, Han risks
permanent blindness without
interventions every four months, yet
her release – limited to hospital
grounds – ends today, 7<sup>th</sup> November,
mandating an immediate return to
the detention center post-procedure.



Demian Dunkley, here 19th Oct. 2025. Screenshot from FFWPU transmission

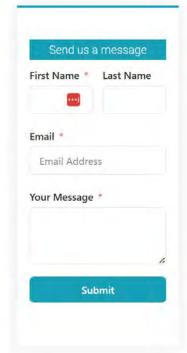
Medical experts emphasize that recovery from such glaucoma surgeries, like trabeculectomy, requires 4-6 weeks in a sterile, low-stress environment: wearing eye shields, applying drops for weeks to months, avoiding bending, lifting, straining, or irritants to prevent infections or complications that could hasten vision loss – challenges amplified for elderly patients with slower healing and higher risks.

Detention centers, often overcrowded with limited medical oversight, are unfit for this delicate phase, potentially exacerbating her condition through restricted movement and exposure risks. Critics argue the prosecution and judiciary prioritize custody over humane health considerations, raising questions about pretrial practices in South Korea."

In another post on 7<sup>th</sup> November, Dunkley reports from Seoul,

> "82-year-old Dr. Hak Ja Han – revered as the 'Mother of Peace' – is the oldest person ever in the world to be detained pre-trial.





Dr. Hak Ja Han's 8th Nov. 2025

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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