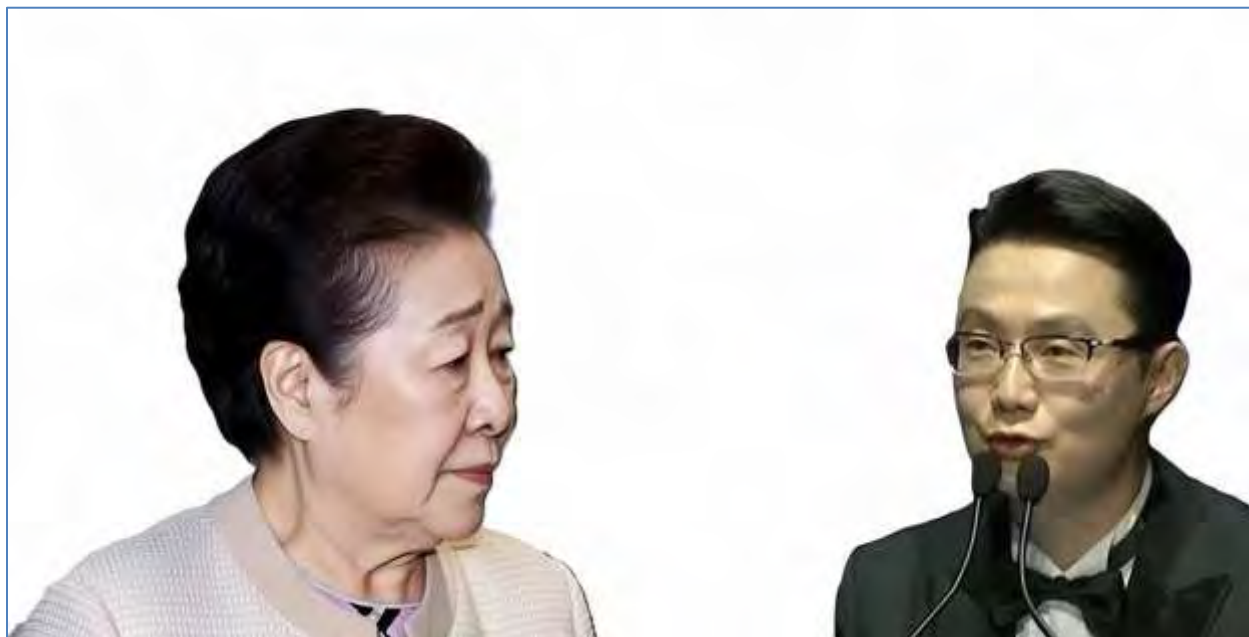


FFWPU Europe and the Middle East: Alleged Attempt to Influence Witness Statement

Knut Holdhus
March 12, 2026



[Mother Han](#) (left) and Yoon Yeong-ho. The image of [Mother Han](#) is showing how she may well appear now, illustrated by Grok xAI, The image of Yoon is a screenshot from a [FFWPU](#) transmission in August 2020.



Allegations and denial as case against Hak Ja Han takes a new turn in latest hearing 10th March: Witness claims attempt to influence testimony

South Korean [MBC News](#) and several other news outlets reported on 10th March on a high-profile court case involving the leadership of the [Family Federation for World Peace and Unification](#) - also known as the [Unification Church](#). The trial has drawn significant public and media attention and centers on [Hak Ja Han](#) - also called [Mother Han](#) - the [religious movement](#)'s current leader. She is facing multiple legal charges, including alleged violations of South Korea's Political Funds Act.

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During the proceedings, testimony from a former senior [Federation](#) official has raised new allegations about possible attempts to influence witness statements. The [Family Federation](#), however, strongly denies these claims and maintains that they are unfounded.



Artistic impression of South Korean court hearing.
Illustration: ChatGPT

[MBC News](#) reports that the controversy emerged during a court hearing on 10th March 2026, at the Seoul Central District Court, where [Yoon Yeong-ho](#) (윤영호), a former headquarters director of the [religious organization](#), appeared as a witness in [Hak Ja Han](#)'s trial. At the start of his testimony, [Yoon](#) stated that he wanted to first address what he described as an important matter concerning "the actual (factual) truth" of the case. According to his statement in court, he received several messages between 7th and 20th September 2025, from individuals connected to [Mother Han](#).

[Yoon](#) claimed that these messages conveyed personal remarks attributed to [Mother Han](#). According to his

account, she expressed sentiments such as, "I have never abandoned you," and suggested that it had been wrong for the [Federation](#) to distance itself from him previously. She also reportedly stated that if he were willing to return despite the difficulties he was facing, he would be welcomed back unconditionally.

However, [Yoon](#) testified that these messages were accompanied by a request. He said he was asked to prepare a written statement asserting that [Mother Han](#) had not ordered any unlawful acts. The proposed wording, according to [Yoon's](#) testimony, would indicate that although [Mother Han](#) may have been informed about certain activities and approved them, she had not directly instructed anyone to carry out wrongdoing.

According to the [MBC News article](#), [Yoon](#) further alleged that in exchange for writing such a statement, several forms of assistance were suggested. These included withdrawing a legal complaint that had been filed against his spouse, restoring his membership and position within the [religious organization](#) after he had been expelled, and providing financial support, including covering legal expenses.



Both imprisoned and investigated: Former South Korean President Yoon Suk-yeol and First Lady Kim Keon-hee, here in Tokyo, Japan March 16, 2023

The background to this testimony involves a broader investigation in South Korea concerning allegations of political influence and improper lobbying. [Yoon](#) had previously been questioned by a special prosecutor's team investigating claims that expensive gifts were delivered to Kim Keon-hee (김건희), the wife of former South Korean president Yoon Suk-yeol (윤석열), as part of efforts to gain favorable treatment for the [religious organization](#). During that earlier investigation, [Yoon Yeong-ho](#) reportedly stated that the actions in question had been carried out under instructions from the [Family Federation's](#) leadership. That claim contributed to the investigation expanding to examine possible responsibility at higher levels of the [organization](#).

The [Family Federation](#) has firmly rejected [Yoon's](#) latest allegations. In response to the testimony reported in the media, [Federation](#) representatives stated that [Mother Han](#) had never attempted to persuade [Yoon](#) to give favorable testimony. They described his claims as inaccurate and said that they intend to challenge them during cross-examination in court.

In an [official statement](#) 11th March, the Culture and Public Relations Office (문화홍보국) of the [Family Federation](#) in South Korea, points out,

"We ask that the following be taken into consideration in reporting, as claims appearing in some media reports stating that 'President [Hak Ja Han](#) attempted to persuade someone to provide favorable testimony' are not true.

The [President](#) did not attempt to persuade former headquarters director [Yoon Yeong-ho](#) to provide favorable testimony.

[Yoon Yeong-ho's](#) incorrect claims will be corrected through cross-examination.

Reporting that presents information in a definitive manner despite being inconsistent with the facts constitutes a serious issue that can severely damage the reputation of [this federation](#). We therefore request that reporting be conducted fairly and objectively, based on thorough factchecking."

As the legal proceedings continue, the court will evaluate the credibility of the testimony and the evidence presented by both sides. The case has become a significant topic in South Korea because it combines issues of religion, politics, and legal accountability, and its outcome may certainly influence public perceptions of the [Family Federation](#) and its leadership.

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Closing An Organization Cannot End Faith

March 12, 2026 • Knut Holdhus

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Observers argue that dissolving the religious organization called the Family Federation could create unforeseen problems for the Japanese authorities and easily make the cure more damaging than the disease



A major debate about religious

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A major debate about religious freedom, government authority, and the limits of state power has emerged in Japan following a court decision to dissolve the [Family Federation](#).
 Illustration: Chat GPT, 5th March 2026

[Family Federation for World Peace and Unification](#), formerly known as the [Unification Church](#).

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For decades, it has been subjected to a veritable witch hunt, often orchestrated by leftwing forces afraid of the [Federation's](#) growing influence with its teachings openly opposed to God-denying Communism. Other times, opposition came from nationalist forces, critical to the [international marriages](#) the [Family Federation](#) has become so famous for. Rightwing nationalists were especially hostile to Japanese citizens marrying South Koreans, from a race long considered inferior due to historical imperial ideology, pseudoscientific racial theories imported in the 19th century, and colonial propaganda.

On 4th March, a Japanese court [approved the government's request](#) to dissolve the group as a religious corporation. This [decision](#) triggered a complex process in which authorities began [closing facilities](#), restricting access to religious buildings, and managing the organization's remaining assets.

For many observers, the move represents a strong effort by the Japanese government to hold a religious institution accountable for alleged misconduct. However, others argue that the consequences of dissolving an entire [religious organization](#) may be far broader than intended.

세계일보

The logo of the [Segye Ilbo](#)

published in [Segye Ilbo](#), a South Korean newspaper, argues that the decision could have significant social, legal, and political repercussions – not only for the [group](#) involved but also for Japan's approach to religious freedom.

The [article](#) raises a fundamental question: Can a democratic government eliminate the legal structure of a religious organization without undermining the freedom of belief that its own constitution guarantees?

An [opinion article](#) 10th March by religious affairs reporter Jeong Seong-su (정성수)



Religious affairs reporter Jeong Seong-su (정성수). Photo (2025): [Segye Ilbo](#)

Closing Institutions Does Not Eliminate Belief



A closed [Family Federation branch](#) in Chiryu, Aichi Prefecture,

freedom, government authority, and the limits of state power has emerged in Japan following a court decision to dissolve a religious organization. The case involves the

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Japan's constitution explicitly protects freedom of religion. In theory, the state can revoke the legal status of a religious corporation – meaning it can dissolve the organization as a recognized institution. But belief itself cannot be dissolved through legal action. Personal faith exists within individuals and communities, not only within buildings or official structures.

The **article** argues that closing churches and dismantling an **organization** does not automatically end the religious beliefs of its followers. Hundreds of thousands of believers associated with the **group** may still want to practice their faith. If official worship spaces are shut down, they will simply look for other ways to continue practicing.

History suggests that faith communities often adapt when faced with restrictions. When public religious practice becomes difficult or impossible, believers frequently shift their activities into private spaces – homes, small gatherings, or informal networks. In this sense, attempts to suppress organized religion can unintentionally push it underground rather than eliminating it.

The **author** refers to historical precedents, such as early Christian communities in ancient Rome. During periods of persecution, Christians gathered secretly in catacombs and private homes. The pattern illustrates a recurring phenomenon: when religion is excluded from the public sphere, it tends to reappear in hidden forms rather than disappear altogether.

The Risk of Escalating Social Costs

Another major concern highlighted in the **article** is the potential for increasing social and administrative costs. Dissolving a large religious organization does not end a conflict; instead, it can create a new series of legal and social challenges.

For example, the **liquidation of the organization's assets** may lead to lengthy court battles. Determining how to distribute property, buildings, and financial resources could involve complicated disputes among the government, former members, and related institutions.

The dissolution could also affect the livelihoods of people who worked for the organization. Staff members who depended on the **Federation** for employment may suddenly lose their jobs. In addition, ordinary believers might experience social isolation or confusion if their religious community suddenly disappears from public life.

The **article** suggests that these consequences will ultimately fall on the state itself. Government agencies will need to manage legal disputes, social tensions, and administrative complications resulting from the decision. In this sense, the attempt to solve a problem could unintentionally create a much larger one.

The **author** describes this possibility using a familiar idea: sometimes the cure becomes more damaging than the disease. If the policy creates more social disruption than it resolves, the government may end up spending significant public resources managing conflicts that could have been addressed more narrowly.

The Principle of Minimal Government Intervention

Modern legal systems often emphasize what is known as the "principle of minimal infringement". This principle suggests that when governments intervene in people's rights or freedoms, they should do so in the least intrusive way possible.

According to the **article**, if individuals within a religious group committed unlawful acts, the most appropriate response would be to investigate and punish those specific individuals. Holding the responsible parties accountable is consistent with the rule of law.



However, dissolving an entire religious organization may be seen as a much broader measure. Critics argue that such an action affects not only those who committed wrongdoing but also many ordinary members who were not involved.

From this perspective, the government's decision may appear disproportionate.

Instead of precisely targeting illegal behavior, it eliminates the institutional framework that supports the faith of a large number of people.



Dissolving an entire religious organization because of illegal acts committed by some individuals is not an appropriate response by state authorities. Here, selection from “Nameless”, painting by Luis Vargas Santa Cruz (Q112692608) about clergy abuse in Catholicism. Photo: Marafeminista / Wikimedia Commons. License: [CC ASA 4.0](#). Cropped

International Human Rights Concerns



International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

The [article](#) also raises questions about how the decision might be perceived internationally. Freedom of religion is widely recognized as a fundamental human right. This principle is protected in global agreements such as the [International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights](#),

which states that governments should not arbitrarily interfere with people's beliefs or religious practices.

Japan is a signatory to [this treaty](#), meaning it has committed to upholding these protections. Critics therefore worry that physically closing places of worship or dismantling a religious organization could attract scrutiny from international human-rights institutions.

Japan is often regarded as a leading democracy and an important member of the global liberal order. Because of this role, its domestic policies are closely watched. The [article](#) suggests that the country's credibility could be affected if its actions appear to contradict the values of religious freedom and pluralism that democratic societies promote.

Balancing Accountability and Religious Freedom

The central challenge highlighted in the [article](#) is finding the right balance between accountability and religious freedom. Governments have a responsibility to protect citizens from fraud, abuse, or other illegal activities. When wrongdoing occurs within a religious organization, authorities must investigate and respond.

At the same time, democratic societies must ensure that the actions taken against misconduct do not unintentionally restrict the broader freedom of belief. The principle of separation between religion and the state was originally designed to protect individuals from excessive government control over their spiritual lives.

The [article](#) argues that the separation of religion and state should function as a safeguard against government intrusion into personal belief. It should not become a tool that allows the state to dismantle religious communities entirely.

The Broader Implications

Finally, the [article](#) expresses concern about the potential loss of positive contributions that religious communities can make. Many faith-based groups participate in charitable work, promote dialogue between different religions, and advocate for peace or humanitarian causes.

If government action unintentionally suppresses these positive activities, society may lose valuable sources of social cooperation and moral engagement.

The [author](#) concludes by emphasizing that the purpose of government is to provide stability and predictability for its citizens. Instead of deepening social divisions, state policies should create conditions in which people with different beliefs can coexist

peacefully.

In this view, addressing wrongdoing within religious organizations is necessary – but it must be done carefully, in ways that protect both justice and the fundamental freedoms that democratic societies seek to uphold.

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Text: Knut Holdhus, editor

Featured image above: Japanese believers gathering for prayer March 2026. AI-generated Illustration March 2026.

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