

FFWPU Europe and Middle East: S Korea Closes Probe into Imaginary Crimes of Family Fed

Knut Holdhus
April 15, 2026



Featured image above: Collusion narrative unravels as probe closes. Illustration: ChatGPT



[Segye Ilbo](#)

Religious affairs reporter Jeong Seong-su

Probe ends, but reputational damage lingers after 11 months with widely circulated Unificationism-politics collusion narrative - failing to produce evidence

[Segye Ilbo](#), the South Korean newspaper, published on 12th April an [opinion piece](#) by religion correspondent Jeong Seong-su (정성수) about the recent decision by the joint investigation headquarters to end its high-profile investigation into [Unificationism](#) political ties and influence.

See also [Alleged Unificationism Influence Case Collapses](#)

The [article](#) discusses a major legal and political controversy in South Korea that has now come to a significant turning point. At the center of the issue were allegations of improper ties - often described as "collusion" - between religious organizations and political figures. Specifically, the case focused on claims that members of the [Family Federation for World Peace and Unification](#) - in Korea often referred to as [Unificationism](#) (통일교) - had provided money or favors to politicians across party lines. These allegations led to a wide-ranging investigation involving both prosecutors and police and attracted intense media attention.

However, as of 10th April 2026, the joint investigation team officially [closed the case](#) without bringing charges against any of the key individuals involved. This outcome has prompted a broader reassessment of the narrative that had dominated public discourse for months: the idea that there was a systemic pattern of "church - state collusion".

To understand the significance of this decision, it is important to look at how the case developed. Initially, the allegations appeared serious and far-reaching. Reports suggested that multiple politicians - both from the ruling party and the opposition - might have received unlawful payments connected to religious groups. Because these claims touched on issues of political integrity, religious influence, and corruption, they quickly gained traction. Media outlets reported extensively on the story, and public concern grew.

Yet, according to the investigators, the central problem with the case was the lack of solid evidence. While there were testimonies suggesting that money had changed hands, these statements were largely indirect. In other words, they were based on what people had heard rather than what they had directly witnessed. Crucially, there was no clear, verifiable proof showing who gave money to whom, when it happened, how much was involved, or under what circumstances the transactions took place.



Alleged [Unificationism](#) influence case collapses. Illustration: ChatGPT



Will her detention continue after current [urgent medical release](#) even though she was cleared in one case of religion-politics collusion involving governing party member? Will special prosecutors insist on prolonging a detention that has already lasted more than 200 days in tiny cell? Will another case involving opposition party politician be treated differently by prosecutors appointed by current Lee administration? Here, [Hak Ja Han](#) (83), aka. as [Mother Han](#), being released on 27th March 2026 for [urgent hospital treatment](#).

In criminal law, these details are essential. Without them, it is extremely difficult - if not impossible - to prove wrongdoing beyond a reasonable doubt. As a result, the investigators concluded that the evidence did not meet the threshold required to proceed with prosecution. This led to a decision of non-indictment for all those involved, including prominent political figures and leaders within the [religious organization](#).

The [article](#) emphasizes that this outcome highlights a fundamental principle of the rule of law: allegations alone are not enough. No matter how serious or widespread a claim may appear, it must be supported by concrete evidence in order to justify legal action. This principle is especially important in politically sensitive cases, where public opinion and media coverage can create pressure to act quickly or aggressively.

At the same time, the [article](#) acknowledges that the damage caused by the investigation cannot simply be undone. Even though no charges were filed, the process itself had significant consequences. Some political figures faced reputational harm or were forced to step down from positions of power. A [religious organization](#) and its affiliated groups were subjected to repeated searches and were portrayed in some reports as channels for illegal lobbying. This created a lasting stigma, affecting not only the institutions involved but also their members and supporters.

From this perspective, the case serves as a cautionary example of how quickly an unproven claim can escalate into a large-scale public controversy. What began as a single testimony eventually grew into a broad narrative implicating an entire network of political and religious actors. The media played a key role in this process by repeatedly reporting and amplifying the allegations, sometimes without sufficient verification.

The [article](#) also argues that the decision not to indict carries an important message about judicial independence. In a democratic society, legal decisions should be based on evidence and legal standards - not on public pressure or political considerations. If prosecutors had pursued charges despite weak evidence, it could have undermined trust in the fairness and neutrality of the justice system. By choosing not to proceed, the authorities reaffirmed the idea that the law must be applied consistently, even in high-profile cases.

Looking ahead, the [article](#) suggests that this decision may have implications for other ongoing legal proceedings. For example, one prominent religious leader - [Hak Ja Han](#) (한학자), co-founder and current head of the [Family Federation](#) - is still on trial for related allegations in a case involving opposition party politicians.



There is a broader claim that there has been a pattern of financial exchanges between the [religious organization](#) and politicians. However, if that claim has not been substantiated in the above case involving a prominent political figure from the current governing party led by Lee Jae-myung (이재명), then similar arguments in the other case that includes important figures from PPP, the main opposition party, ought to now face increased scrutiny in court. Judges have the duty to question whether the underlying assumptions of these prosecutions are valid in all the current cases.

Beyond the legal details, the [article](#) calls for a broader societal reflection. It urges people to move away from emotionally driven debates and return to constitutional principles. One key concept discussed is the separation of religion and state. The [opinion piece](#) states,

"The principle of separation of religion and state is not intended to exclude religion, but to prevent state power from encroaching on matters of faith while also protecting religion from being exploited as a political tool."

Importantly, the [article](#) does not suggest that religious organizations should be above the law. If individuals or groups engage in unlawful activities, they should be held accountable. However, it warns against treating an entire religion as inherently suspect based on unproven allegations. Doing so risks creating unfair generalizations and deepening social divisions.

The [article](#) frames the outcome of this case as an example of the legal system functioning as it should. Despite intense scrutiny and public interest, the decision was ultimately based on evidence - or the lack thereof. The author expresses hope that this episode will be remembered as a moment when legal principles prevailed over speculation and emotion.

At the same time, it serves as a reminder of the costs of such controversies. Even when accusations are not proven, they can leave lasting scars on individuals, institutions, and society as a whole. Moving forward, the [article](#) calls for greater caution, fairness, and adherence to the rule of law in handling similar issues, with the goal of fostering a more balanced and unified society.

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Rapid Liquidation Implies Prearranged Verdict

April 13, 2026 • Knut Holdhus

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Members' shock and composure when faced with extremely well-coordinated rapid liquidation nationwide, raising questions of prearranged verdict

Tokyo, 10th April 2026 – Published as an article in the Japanese newspaper *Sekai Nippo*. Republished with permission. Translated from Japanese. *Original article*.

[Opinion Contribution]

[Part 2 of a Series] Nonfiction Writer Masumi Fukuda: Tokyo High Court Decision on the Family Federation

Liquidator Arrives Accompanied by Police Cars

by nonfiction writer Masumi Fukuda (福田ますみ)

See part 1 in the series: *Japan: Verdict Predetermined, Evidence Silenced*

What happened to the religious organization after the dissolution order?



Logo of the Sekai Nippo

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Attorney Nobuya Fukumoto (福本修也) explains:

“As soon as I returned to my office, I immediately received a call from the liquidator’s lawyer. I was taken aback by how quickly things were moving. Shortly afterward, that lawyer came to my office, and we held discussions about the future with Chairman Masaichi Hori (堀正一) of the [religious organization](#).”



Attorney Nobuya Fukumoto, here at Tokyo press conference 25th March 2025. Screenshot from video by [FFWPU](#).

Request to submit smartphones

The liquidator asked Chairman Hori to sign a document pledging full cooperation with the [liquidation process](#). The document was extremely detailed, even including a clause requiring the submission of smartphones. Because this raised concerns about staff privacy, that point was challenged.

Chairman Hori also urged the liquidator to handle the membership registry with great care to prevent any leakage of personal information.

The liquidator then requested that the contents of the document be communicated nationwide to churches and believers as an official notice. However, Chairman Hori responded that even if such a notice were issued, there was no guarantee all staff could respond immediately. Communicating it to all believers would take even longer – some only attend church once a month. Chairman Hori said,

“The liquidator seemed to view a religious corporation as if it were a company where a single mass email could unify all employees, and believers were seen merely as subordinate members at the bottom of such an organization. I was surprised by that perception.”

In the end, the liquidator gave up waiting for the notice to reach all believers and appears to have entered churches and related facilities across the country almost simultaneously between around 12:00 and 14:00. Charman Hori added,

“At the Nagoya church, three police cars were dispatched, and a large number of media gathered, surrounding the church and flashing cameras at believers coming and going.”



Rev. Masaichi Hori, here in January 2026. Screenshot from video by [FFWPU](#)

The day of the decision

That day, Ms. S, a female believer who had worked at the headquarters reception for many years, came to work at the headquarters a little after 11. She said,

“On the way, I kept listening through earphones to a livestream by a group of active second-generation believers. When the [result](#) was announced at 11, the screen showed lawyer Fukumoto with a gloomy expression, surrounded by reporters, ‘Ah... I see.’”

Arriving at headquarters in shock and disappointment, less than an hour later she heard, **“We’re lawyers,” as the liquidator arrived. At first there were three people, but eventually around 20 gathered. Among them were 7-8 security guards dispatched from a security company, which gave an overly imposing impression.**

Since she had never expected the liquidator to arrive on the very day of the decision, **the thoroughness of the preparation made her feel that the dissolution must have been decided long in advance.**

Believers maintained dignity



The state took their places of worship. Must hold worship services in parks. Here, An illustration of members gathering in a Japanese park for their Sunday meeting 12th April 2026.

Although the chairman had instructed them to “maintain dignity as religious

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people”, the staff did not need to be told. They remained calm in the face of the sudden arrival, offering guest slippers, serving tea, and brewing coffee.

The liquidators focused first on understanding the [organization's](#) financial condition. They called in accounting staff, the administrative department responsible for keys, IT personnel, and those in charge of real estate.

They then told staff in other departments:

“Please take your personal belongings and leave by 6:30 p.m. today.”

However, this proved impossible in a single day, and the deadline was extended to the end of the following day, 5th March. Ms. S continued to come to work daily afterward to take care of her reception duties.

“You don’t feel like something might happen, do you?”

On 5th March, one of the liquidators asked Ms. S:

“You don’t feel like something might happen, do you?”

She replied calmly,

“You mean our people causing trouble? That’s impossible. We are people of faith. Doing such things would go against our teachings.”

On a rainy day, a security guard standing at the back entrance became soaked despite holding an umbrella. Ms. S and others searched for rain gear inside the building and lent him towels. The guard thanked them, saying, “That really helps,” and “Thank you very much.”

Ms. S described the situation,

“We simply acted naturally, thinking they must be having a hard time. I hope that by seeing our everyday behavior, their perception of us might change. We do not resist, fight, or argue. We are taught to forgive.”

The liquidators and security personnel who interacted with believers like Ms. S must have felt something. Why, after all, must an [organization](#) of such sincere and earnest believers be dissolved?

To be continued. Part 3 coming soon.

See part 1 in the series: [Japan: Verdict Predetermined, Evidence Silenced](#)

Featured image above: Three police cars parked in front of a [Family Federation](#) church in Japan. Photo: Provided by a related party

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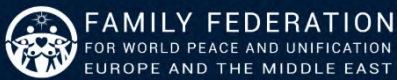
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