

Statement from Pastor Mark Burns on the Sentencing of 83 year old religious leader, Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon

Mark Burns

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Donald Trump and Mark Burns

I am deeply disturbed by the sentencing of Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon by the Seoul Central District Court in South Korea.

As a pastor, an international advocate for religious freedom, and Founder and Chairman of Spiritual Diplomats, I believe this case raises serious concerns about the treatment of religious leaders and religious institutions in South Korea.

Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon is an internationally recognized religious leader whose ministry and work have reached millions of people around the world. Whatever political disagreements may exist, governments must be extremely careful that criminal law is never used in a way that becomes a weapon against religious leadership, religious organizations, or people of faith.

The freedom to worship, to organize, to speak, and to participate in the public life of a nation without fear of government persecution is a fundamental human right.

When an 83-year-old religious leader is sentenced to prison under circumstances that her church strongly disputes and intends to appeal, the international religious freedom community has a responsibility to pay attention.

I am calling upon the government and judicial authorities of the Republic of Korea to ensure that Dr. Han receives full due process, a fair and transparent appeals process, and treatment that respects both her human dignity and her religious freedom.

I also call upon religious leaders around the world, including Christians, Jews, Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, Sikhs, and people of every faith tradition, to stand together whenever religious liberty is threatened.

Religious freedom cannot depend upon whether we agree with another person's theology.

You do not have to share someone's beliefs to defend their right to believe them.

Spiritual Diplomats stands against religious persecution anywhere in the world. We will continue to speak for people of faith whose fundamental freedoms are threatened, regardless of denomination, religion, nationality, or political affiliation.

South Korea is an important democracy and a valued friend of the United States. Precisely because of that friendship, we must be willing to speak openly when actions raise serious questions about religious liberty and fundamental human rights.

I stand with Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon in calling for justice, due process, religious freedom, and the protection of her fundamental human rights.

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