

FFWPU Europe and the Middle East: Critics Warn of Authoritarian Rise in S Korea

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President Lee Jae-myung at a G-7 Summit June 17, 2025



South Korean President Lee Jae-myung accused of undermining judicial independence sparking fears of authoritarian power grab

Tokyo, 22nd September 2025 - Published as an article in the Japanese newspaper [Sekai Nippo](#). Republished with permission. Translated from Japanese. [Original article](#).

Is South Korea Now in a "Purge and Revolution"?

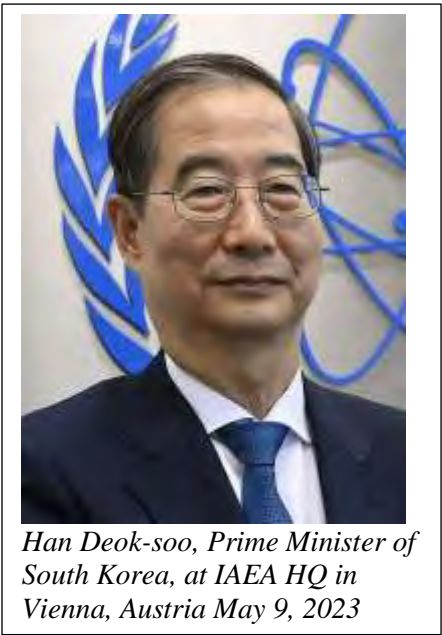
Ignoring the Constitution - Rushing Toward a Lee Jae-myung Doctrine and China/North-Korea-Style "Democracy"?

by Isami Ueda (上田 勇実)

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Han Deok-soo, Prime Minister of South Korea, at IAEA HQ in Vienna, Austria May 9, 2023

Seoul - The progressive Lee Jae-myung administration in South Korea, as U.S. President [Trump pointed out](#), appears to be running toward a "purge and revolution". Beginning with former President Yoon Suk-yeol and his wife, conservative political opponents are being arrested and prosecuted one after another as "insurrectionist forces", and some voices even warn that the administration may be trying to seize control of the judiciary to build a long-term leftist dominance.

A startling perception from the president - that the judiciary is beneath the National Assembly.

The morning after Lee held a press conference marking his 100th day in office on the 11th of this month, a major South Korean newspaper ran an editorial with a headline to that effect.

At the press conference Lee was asked about the constitutionality of the "Special Court for Insurrection" that the ruling Democratic

Party is pushing. That court is being considered as a way to "overcome" a situation that arose when, late last year, in the aftermath of then-President Yoon's declaration of emergency martial law, the court rejected the prosecution's request for an arrest warrant for former Prime Minister Han Deok-soo. Lee said,

"Where is it unconstitutional? Judicial independence does not mean the judiciary may act as it pleases. It must make judgments in accordance with the constitution and conscience within a structure set by the legislature."



At the press conference Lee referred to a "hierarchy of power in Korea". He said at the top is the will of the people, followed by powers directly elected by those people (the president and National Assembly members), and then powers that are indirectly selected (such as the judiciary). In other words, he appears to believe that he and the ruling party who won the election sit above the judiciary and are not bound by judicial rulings that run counter to their intentions. In response, South Korean legal experts have loudly denounced this as "a dangerous idea that ignores the separation of powers."

There has also been criticism of the ruling party for demanding the resignation of the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court - the justice who ordered remands pointing toward guilt in various trials related to suspicions about Lee - on the basis of fake news circulating on YouTube.

Lee Jun-seok, leader of the conservative opposition "Reform New Party", sneered sharply:

"If separation of powers is a nuisance, President Lee should amend the constitution and simultaneously serve as president, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, and leader of the Democratic Party. If you model it on China - where the state chairman, general secretary of the Communist Party, and chairman of the Central Military Commission hold overlapping posts - or North Korea - where the chairman of the State Affairs Commission, general secretary of the Workers' Party, and supreme commander of the people's army hold concurrent titles - it would match the world the Democratic Party dreams of. And both China and North Korea claim their systems are democracies."



President Donald Trump hosts a bilateral meeting with President Lee Jae-myung of the Republic of Korea, Monday, August 25, 2025, in the Oval Office

Lee retains tremendous power within the Democratic Party and won the presidency. It seems he believes the only institution left to deal with is the judiciary. He habitually says, "the will of the people is paramount," and when last year's turmoil caused by the declaration of martial law was brought under control, he hailed it as a "victory for democracy". Yet many observers fear that, in reality, he is applying pressure to the judiciary and racing toward an authoritarian politics aimed at controlling the three branches of government.

Last month, just before his summit with Lee, Mr. Trump posted on his social media, "In Korea, it's as if a purge or revolution is taking place," causing controversy. But was he simply making an off-hand remark to appease the far right or to justify an antipathy toward the left?

Lee Hee-chun, a former professor at the Korea National Intelligence University who is knowledgeable about analyses of the South Korean left, points out:

"Trump's remark, based on reports from intelligence agencies, hit the nail on the head about the essence of the Lee administration. 'Revolution' can mean a communist revolution, and 'purge' could signify the cleansing of reactionary elements that is essential to such a revolution."

South Korea's prosecution service is an institution guaranteed by the constitution, but there are suspicions that the push to dismantle it could be unconstitutional. Some legal observers say President Lee has "struck first" to prepare for the possible reopening of prosecutions in which he himself might become a suspect after he leaves office.

Lee's thinking - which ignores the separation of powers and the constitution that should serve as the last bulwarks against governmental overreach - "seems to be trying to force obedience to Lee Jae-myung's directives the way in North Korea the Workers' Party rules sit above the constitution and Kim Jong-un's guidance sits above them," according to a former senior prosecutor.

At last month's Japan - South Korea summit, Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba and Lee created a conciliatory atmosphere, and a major Japanese newspaper proudly reported in an interview that it had obtained from Lee a pledge to "adhere to the Japan - South Korea agreement on comfort women and forced labor." But can we truly feel at ease dealing with a neighboring leader who seems to be charging forward as if toward "purge and revolution"? Careful judgment is called for.

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Rev. Doo Seung-yeon delivering his message 19th Sep. 2025. Screenshot from live transmission by FFWPU

Gapyeong, South Korea. Slightly edited unofficial translation of the original Korean.

17th September was truly a devastating and sorrowful day, a day that felt as if the heavens collapsed and the earth sank. True Mother said that when Father went to Danbury [prison in Connecticut, USA], that was a day she wanted to erase

completely from memory – but for us, 17th September was an even more unbearable day that we wish we could forget forever. From the morning, the pouring rain felt like heaven’s tears soaking our hearts.

[...] Before departing [for Seoul], True Mother said this:

“The suffering I endure is enough. Let everything be concluded within just one day of the investigation so that no more innocent people will suffer.”



Father Moon in Danbury Correctional Facility, Connecticut, USA in December 1984. Photo: FFWPU

With these words, she went. And though over 80 years of age, after enduring more than nine hours of questioning, she returned to the Cheonwon Complex [in Gapyeong] in the dark hours of the day.

When I later met Mother at the Cheon Jeong Temple, she said to me:

“Because of your prayers, I was able to return safely.”

[...] Now we stand before a grave reality. An arrest warrant has been requested, and the hearing is scheduled for 22nd September at 1:30 p.m. Some cry out:

“What on earth can we do? What should we do?”

The answer is clear: We must pray. No, we must absolutely pray with devotion. Now is the time to deeply empathize with True Mother’s heart, to thoroughly reflect on our shortcomings and our immaturity as a community, and to boldly renew ourselves, no matter the pain.

It is the time to once again recall the essence of our Family Federation and remain faithful to that essence.



Scene from the Italian film Ponzio Pilato (1962). Photo: Utente:Vabbè. Public domain image

Two thousand years ago, Governor Pontius Pilate shifted responsibility onto the crowd and handed Jesus over to be crucified.

The cries of the people ultimately forced Jesus onto the path of the cross.

Today, our situation is not so different. Amid a fierce public opinion, our community is being put to the test. But we cannot lay the blame solely on external forces. We must confront the reality that within this situation lies our own shortcomings and immaturity. Therefore, we must humbly reflect, renew ourselves, and return to the essence.

Even if the storms of criticism and scorn from outside intensify, if we purify our inner selves and stand upright before Heaven, we will stand even more firmly.

Above all, we must unite around True Mother. To be one with her means to absolutely do as she says. At this time, she told us to convey this message to all members worldwide:

“I am fine because Heaven is with me, so do not worry. Do not be swayed by the present situation – each of you must be faithful to the mission given to you.”

Send us a message

First Name *Last Name

Email *

Email Address

Your Message *

Submit

And again she urged:

"In your vigil prayers, sincerely petition **Father** in the spirit world that this suffering does not fall upon others."

Hearing this, I felt so sorry and inadequate, seeing our helplessness in the face of a reality where the powerful suppress the innocent, simply because our foundation is so weak. If only our foundation had been as strong as that of Christianity, Catholicism, or Buddhism, would they then have dared to mock or belittle Heaven?



Hak Ja Han and aggressive reporters 17th Sep. 2025. Illustration by ChatGPT 20th Sep. 2025.

So I understood **Mother's** words as forgiveness for our past failures to establish a true foundation, and as a call to be reborn anew. We must change and make a new beginning.

Do not waste your feelings of indignation and filial devotion on the special investigation that has only about a month left. Instead, it is time for us to strengthen our solid inner foundation so that Heaven is never again mocked or disregarded. Now is the time to be cautious with every word and every action for the sake of **Mother's** safety. This is not just because of our duty as "children". It is not to avenge our humiliation. We cannot drive the **True Mother** to the edge of a cliff because of our pride or feeling of being humiliated.

Until now, for the sake of **True Mother's** safety, we have lived carefully, as if walking on thin ice, watching every word, every gesture, lest it bring harm to her.

But if, against all odds, a situation arises where we can no longer contain our indignation, then we will stop appealing to you with talk of filial devotion. That will be the moment to show our loyalty. That will be the moment to reveal it wholeheartedly and in earnest. That will be the moment to show the world, unmistakably, what kind of life we have lived.

There is a boundary we must never cross. They too have a boundary they must not cross.

[...] Once again, I emphasize: What can we do? What must we do?

True Mother has already given us the answer: Do not be swayed by the circumstances but be faithful to your given responsibilities. And, through prayer and devotion, petition **Father** in the spirit world. This is our strategy, our direction, and the way **True Mother** desires us to walk.

At this moment, I sincerely ask all of you to unite your hearts, drive out evil influences with pure devotion, and to only offer prayers and dedication for the well-being of the **True Mother**.

And the ultimate line (Maginot Line) we must defend to protect the **True Mother** has fallen; we must have a loyal heart, offer our devotion, and under no circumstances should they rise against us. I sincerely ask you to pray for this. Thank you. Thank you.

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Featured image above: Rev. Doo Seung-yeon (두승연), Director of the World Mission Headquarters of the **Family Federation**, delivering his message in **Gapyeong**, South Korea 19th September 2025. Screenshot from live transmission by **FFWPU**.

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