FFWPU Europe and Middle East: S Korean Faith Leaders Protest State Assault on Religion

Knut Holdhus October 18, 2025



Religious leaders at the prayer rally in support of <u>Mother Han</u> October 13, 2025 outside Seoul Detention Center



South Korean religious councils protest state overreach following inhuman detention of 82-year-old Mother Han

On 13th October, the South Korean newspaper <u>Segye Ilbo</u> published a report which translated to English would carry the headline "<u>Detaining President Hak Ja Han Is an Infringement on</u>

Religious Freedom - Korea Council of Religious Leaders (KCRL) and KCLC Issue Declaration on Religious Freedom". The piece was penned by Religious Affairs Reporter Jeong Seong-su (정성수).



Religious leaders reading their joint statement at the prayer rally in support of <u>Mother Han</u> October 13, 2025 outside Seoul Detention Center.

See also Arbitrary Detention of Mother Han, Pastor Son

See also In Detention: Mother Han's Condition and Words

See also Mother Han (82) in Poor Health in Damp, Cold Cell

See also Law as Weapon: Old Age and Frail Health Ignored

See also Mother Han's Arrest and Purge of Faith in SKorea

See also News Release Blasts Indictment of Hak Ja Han, 82

In South Korea, tensions between religious communities and state authorities have intensified following

the arrest of <u>Hak Ja Han</u>, president of the <u>Family Federation for World Peace and Unification</u>. Prominent religious groups, including the Korean Christian Leaders Council (KCLC) and the Korea Council of Religious Leaders (KCRL), have denounced the move as an infringement on constitutional guarantees of religious freedom. The controversy has sparked widespread concern over what faith leaders describe as an alarming encroachment of political and prosecutorial power into religious affairs.



Religious leaders braving the rain during the prayer rally in support of <u>Mother Han</u> October 13, 2025 outside Seoul Detention Center

The <u>Segve IIbo article</u> describes how on 13th October, representatives from KCLC and KCRL gathered outside the Seoul Detention Center in Uiwang, Gyeonggi Province, just outside Seoul to issue their Second Declaration on Religious Freedom. The event, attended by roughly 300 religious leaders and followers, took the form of a public prayer meeting and a press statement urging government restraint and transparency in handling religious organizations.

The declaration was prompted by a special prosecutor's investigation that included the arrest of <u>Hak Ja Han</u> and the search of several prominent religious institutions - among them Yoido Full Gospel Church, Far East Broadcasting Company, and the <u>Family Federation</u> (also known as the <u>Unification Church</u>). According to KCLC and KCRL, these actions amount to a direct violation of Article 20 of the South Korean Constitution, which enshrines the freedom of religion and the separation of religion and state.



Religious leaders at the prayer rally in support of <u>Mother Han</u> October 13, 2025 outside Seoul Detention Center

KCLC argued that the investigation reflects a growing trend of prejudice against religious organizations, warning that politically motivated scrutiny could destabilize the country's democratic principles. The council emphasized that the use of state power against faith communities not only undermines the independence of religion but also threatens the broader foundation of democracy and human rights in South Korea.

In their joint statement, the two religious councils issued three key demands to the authorities. First, they called for an end to biased and politically motivated investigations and insisted on fair legal procedures. Second, they urged the media and investigators to refrain from indiscriminate raids and speculative reporting that could damage reputations without evidence. Third, they demanded the cessation of one-sided inquiries and human rights violations stemming from the probe.

Religious Affairs Reporter Jeong Seong-su points out that the declaration also extended concern beyond Christian communities. With allegations of political involvement emerging even within certain Buddhist orders, KCLC warned of a "dangerous trend" in which political bias is spreading across religious boundaries. The group stressed the need for unity among all faith traditions to defend the principle of religious freedom regardless of doctrine or denomination.



Rev. Hong Yun-jeong, Chairman of the Korea Council of Religious Leaders, delivering his brief speech October 13, 2025

A separate news report by Peace TV on 18th October features an extract from a short speech by Rev. Hong Yun-jeong, Chairman of the Korea Council of Religious Leaders, delivered at the event 13th October,

"Please become the righteous people of this era. When politicians are corrupt, when those in power remain silent, who is it that has the mission to reveal truth in the darkness of history and become a light for the nation? It is the religious leaders of the nation.

Like the prophecy in Isaiah's era which lamented that there was not even one righteous person, I earnestly appeal once again that you become truly righteous people for this time. I earnestly request once again that you become the Old Testament prophets and New Testament apostles of this era."

In closing, KCLC and KCRL vowed to continue mobilizing religious communities nationwide to resist what they view as state overreach. The organizations plan to expand interfaith cooperation, pursue legal and

institutional reforms, and advocate for stronger human rights protections for religious practitioners.

The event outside the detention center symbolized more than a protest - it was a collective declaration that South Korea's faith leaders intend to safeguard their constitutional rights and resist any erosion of religious liberty in the face of growing political and judicial pressure.

See also Arbitrary Detention of Mother Han, Pastor Son

See also In Detention: Mother Han's Condition and Words

See also Worrying Health Update for Detained Mother Han

See also Law as Weapon: Old Age and Frail Health Ignored

See also Mother Han's Arrest and Purge of Faith in SKorea

See also Mother Han: "The Truth Will Surely Be Revealed"

See also Firsthand Account of Ordeal of Mother Han (82)

Text: Knut Holdhus, editor

See also Court Decision to Prolong Detention Condemned

See also Co-Founder, 82, Questioned 9 Hours by Prosecutors

See also Korean Crisis: "True Democracy Must Serve Heaven"

See also News Release Blasts Indictment of Hak Ja Han, 82

Related to faith leaders protest state assault: Denying Allegations: Hak Ja Han (82) in Inquiry

Also related to faith leaders protest state assault: <u>Ugly: Arrest Warrant Sought for Hak Ja Han</u> (82)

And also related to faith leaders protest state assault: <u>Critics Warn of "Authoritarian Drift" in SKorea</u>

More, related to faith leaders protest state assault: 70 Years On: Detention History Repeats Itself

And more, related to faith leaders protest state assault: <u>Trump Raises Alarm Over Church Raids in Korea</u>

Even more, related to faith leaders protest state assault: <u>Mike Pompeo Calls Probe of Co-Founder "Lawfare"</u>

Still more, related to faith leaders protest state assault: <u>Korean Faith Crackdown: USA Urged to Confront It</u>

Yet more, related to faith leaders protest state assault: <u>Korean Bribery Scandal: Media Clears Federation</u>

And also related to faith leaders protest state assault: <u>Raids Blur Line Between Justice and Politics</u>

More, related to faith leaders protest state assault: <u>Heavy-Handed Raid on Sacred Sites</u> Condemned

And more, related to faith leaders protest state assault: <u>Scholar Sounds Alarm: State Raiding the Sacred</u>

Even more, related to faith leaders protest state assault: <u>Raids as Political Spectacle and Media Trials</u>

And even more, related to faith leaders protest state assault: <u>Religious Freedom: 330 Faith</u> <u>Leaders Speak Up</u>

Yet more, related to faith leaders protest state assault: <u>Yonhap: Repeated Allegations Create</u>
<u>Public Bias</u>

Still more, related to faith leaders protest state assault: <u>Japan Following the Way of China</u>

And still more, related to faith leaders protest state assault: Warning of Threat from CCP Fearing Korean Unity

And also related to faith leaders protest state assault: <u>Japan's Dissolution Case Echoes China's Playbook</u>

Also related to faith leaders protest state assault: Communists of China Exploiting Assassination

And also related to faith leaders protest state assault: "Lawyers Lying and Shaming Japan" for 50 Years

More, related to faith leaders protest state assault: <u>Lawfare: State Uses Legal System in War on Faith</u>

Democratic Party's Assault On Family Federation

- October 17, 2025
- Knut Holdhus



In South Korea, the ruling Democratic Party appears to be waging an all-out campaign to discredit and dismantle the Family Federation

세계일보

The logo of the Segye Ilbo The South Korean daily Segye
Ilbo published on 16th October 2025 an
article which in English would be
headlined "Relentless Assault on the
Family Federation – The True Face of
Politics That Has Lost Fairness" [Religious

Column]". The piece was written by Religious Affairs Reporter Jeong Seong-su (정성수).

See also Arbitrary Detention of Mother Han, Pastor Son

See also In Detention: Mother Han's Condition and Words

See also Mother Han (82) in Poor Health in Damp. Cold Cell





Categories

See also Law as Weapon: Old Age and Frail Health Ignored

See also Mother Han's Arrest and Purge of Faith in SKorea

See also News Release Blasts Indictment of Hak Ja Han, 82

According to Jeong, in South Korea, the ruling Democratic Party appears to be waging an all-out campaign to discredit and dismantle the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification (FFWPU) – formerly known

as the Unification Church - and its

affiliated organizations. To many

四子ら

2024 logo of the Democratic Party of South Korea. Public domain image.

observers, the attacks seem less about accountability and more about political theater, exposing a troubling erosion of fairness in Korean politics.

At the center of the controversy is an 82-year-old woman suffering from heart disease, the Federation's president, who is currently in detention. Despite her condition, the authorities and certain lawmakers have intensified scrutiny not only on the Family Federation itself but also on its partner institutions, such as the Korea Religions Association and Sun Moon University, which the Federation founded. The tone of this pursuit has raised concerns about bias and disproportionate pressure against a single religious community.

A Disputed Financial Controversy



Democratic Party lawmaker Jeong Eulho (정을호). Photo: 대 한민국 국회 (National Assembly of the Republic of Korea) / Wikimedia Commons. Public domain image. Cropped The Segye Ilbo article reports that Democratic Party lawmaker Jeong Eul-ho (정을호) during a parliamentary audit of the Education Committee on 14th October, claimed that the Ministry of Education's financial support for Sun Moon University had "soared" from 11.7 billion won in 2020 to 25.8 billion won in 2024 – more than doubling in just four years. The lawmaker accused the Family Federation of having "extended its tentacles into the education sector under the Yoon Suk-yeol (윤 석열) administration."

The remark quickly made headlines. Many Korean media outlets repeated the claim with little to no verification, fueling suspicions that the university's growth was the result of political favoritism or religious influence.

The Segye Ilbo describes how Sun Moon University responded immediately with a

rebuttal. The increase in funding, it explained, was part of a nationwide policy to expand financial support for universities – not a case of special treatment. Nearby institutions received similar boosts: one saw a 172% rise, another 212%, and others well over 170%. The data, in other words, reflected a general trend.

Yet by the time the facts emerged, the damage to public perception was done. The narrative that Sun Moon University – and by extension, the Family Federation – was "corrupt" or "improperly connected" had already spread. Some outlets even used sensational headlines suggesting collusion between the Federation and President Yoon, further amplifying the controversy.

Fact-Checking Fails in Parliament

Religious Affairs Reporter Jeong Seong-su portrays how the attacks did not end there. Another Democratic Party lawmaker, Moon Jeong-bok (문정복), brought up the Korean Religious Development Forum, alleging that former leaders of the Korea Religions Association – an organization historically linked to the Family Federation – had joined the forum in an attempt to "control" it.

Her assertion, however, was factually incorrect. The forum was actually founded in 2019 by Professor Park Jae-gap (박재갑), a respected cancer researcher and former professor at Seoul National University. The organization's purpose is academic and interfaith in nature, not political. It is unclear whether Rep. Moon conducted any factual checks before making her claims.



lawmaker Moon Jeong-bok (문정복). Photo (2019): 문정복/ Wikimedia Commons. License: CC ASA 4.0 Int. Cropped

Send us a message

First Name * Last Name

Email *

Email Address

Your Message *

build connections with former First Lady Kim Keon-hee (김건희). In doing so, she presented a diagram displaying names and even photographs of journalists, professors, and forum members – visually resembling a "suspect chart". Although she admitted that "the forum itself is sound," her presentation nevertheless painted it as a hub of conspiracy, casting unwarranted suspicion on innocent participants.

The Forum's True Nature

In reality, the Korean Religious Development Forum (종교발전포럼) has long been regarded as an open platform for interfaith dialogue. A Kyunghyang Shinmun article from June 2014 described the forum as "open to all religions", featuring speakers from Buddhism, Protestantism, Catholicism, Won-Buddhism, Confucianism, Donghak, Shamanism, Islam, the Family Federation, and even Western philosophy.



From a **prayer vigil outside Seoul Detention Center** 28th September 2025 in support of detained Mother Han. Photo: Masataka Asaoka

The Segye Ilbo report includes Professor Park quoted as saying: "Religions may appear different, but ultimately they walk the same path. There are no bad religions – only extremists who distort them."

Indeed, journalists from *The Hankyoreh* and *JoongAng Ilbo*, two of Korea's major newspapers, have given lectures there. Religious Affairs Reporter Jeong describes himself as someone who has attended several sessions for reporting purposes. He says he can attest that the forum was never an instrument for religious influence or political control. It functioned simply as a place for dialogue and coexistence among faiths.

Nevertheless, through careless remarks and misleading insinuations, lawmakers have unfairly tarnished the reputations of countless individuals who have participated in good faith.

Beyond Politics: A Question of Fairness

The deeper question is why the Democratic Party continues to single out the Family Federation with such intensity. The organization, regardless of its past controversies, has also contributed to international peace efforts, education, and humanitarian work. Many of its members are ordinary citizens – South Korean taxpayers – some of whom may even support the Democratic Party itself.



Young members of the Family federation praying outside Seoul Detention Center on a rainy day in October 2025 in support of detained Mother Han. Screenshot from video by FFWPU

In any democratic society, religions have both the right and the responsibility to cooperate with the government for national stability and prosperity. Patriotism and faith, while distinct, often align in their pursuit of societal harmony. To depict such cooperation as political collusion risks undermining religious freedom and civic fairness alike.

What began as political oversight now resembles a campaign of vilification – one that blurs the line between legitimate investigation and persecution. The language used by some lawmakers, and echoed uncritically by segments of the media, has created a moral panic that obscures truth and fuels prejudice.

The Need for Balance

Segye Ilbo writes that ultimately, the issue is not about detending one religion over another. It is about maintaining fairness, due process, and respect for human rights – principles essential to a functioning democracy. When political power is wielded selectively against a specific faith group, it damages public trust and weakens the very institutions meant to uphold justice.

The Family Federation's members are now enduring profound emotional and social hardship. They are citizens of this nation, entitled to the same dignity and legal protection as anyone else. If Korea's political leaders continue to sacrifice impartiality for the sake of political advantage, they risk losing credibility not only with religious communities but with the broader public as well.

In the end, the question remains: Is the Democratic Party genuinely pursuing truth – or simply targeting a convenient enemy? The answer may determine not just the fate of one religious organization, but the integrity of South Korea's democratic values themselves.

See also Arbitrary Detention of Mother Han, Pastor Son

See also In Detention: Mother Han's Condition and Words

See also Worrying Health Update for Detained Mother Han

See also Law as Weapon: Old Age and Frail Health Ignored

See also Mother Han's Arrest and Purge of Faith in SKorea

See also Mother Han: "The Truth Will Surely Be Revealed"

See also Firsthand Account of Ordeal of Mother Han (82)

Text: Knut Holdhus, editor

Featured image above: Elderly woman in wheelchair attacked by fierce red dragon. Illustration: Microsoft Designer Image Creator, October 2025

See also Faith Leaders Protest State Assault on Religion

See also Court Decision to Prolong Detention Condemned

See also Co-Founder, 82, Questioned 9 Hours by Prosecutors

See also Korean Crisis: "True Democracy Must Serve Heaven"

See also News Release Blasts Indictment of Hak Ja Han, 82

Related to the Democratic Party's assault: Denying Allegations: Hak Ja Han (82) in Inquiry

Also related to the Democratic Party's assault: Ugly: Arrest Warrant Sought for Hak Ja Han (82)

And also related to the Democratic Party's assault: Critics Warn of "Authoritarian Drift" in SKorea

More, related to the Democratic Party's assault: 70 Years On: Detention History Repeats Itself

And more, related to the Democratic Party's assault: Trump Raises Alarm Over Church Raids in Korea

Even more, related to the Democratic Party's assault: Mike Pompeo Calls Probe of Co-Founder "Lawfare"

Still more, related to the Democratic Party's assault: Korean Faith Crackdown: USA Urged to Confront It

Yet more, related to the Democratic Party's assault: Korean Bribery Scandal: Media Clears Federation

And also related to the Democratic Party's assault: Raids Blur Line Between Justice and Politics

More, related to the Democratic Party's assault: Heavy-Handed Raid on Sacred Sites Condemned

And more, related to the Democratic Party's assault: Scholar Sounds Alarm: State Raiding the Sacred

Even more, related to the Democratic Party's assault: Raids as Political Spectacle and Media Trials

And even more, related to the Democratic Party's assault: Religious Freedom: 330 Faith Leaders Speak Up

Yet more, related to the Democratic Party's assault: Yonhap: Repeated Allegations Create Public Bias

Still more, related to the Democratic Party's assault: Japan Following



Also related to the Democratic Party's assault: Communists of China Exploiting Assassination

And also related to the Democratic Party's assault: "Lawyers Lying and Shaming Japan" for 50 Years

More, related to the Democratic Party's assault: Lawfare: State Uses Legal System in War on Faith



