

FFWPU Europe and Middle East: Accelerated Trial Schedule for Holy Mother Han

Knut Holdhus
March 27, 2026



Artistic impression of [Hak Ja Han](#) in court hearing. Illustration: ChatGPT



Amen News

Seoul court fast-tracks complex proceedings in Hak Ja Han trial as new phase with intensive hearings schedule is announced

The South Korean online religious news outlet Amen News, also known by its Korean name "Kyohei Wa Shinang" (교회와신앙 - Church and Faith), published 26th March a [report](#) with details about the progression of the legal proceedings surrounding [Hak Ja Han](#) (한학자), the co-founder and current leader of the [Family Federation for World Peace and Unification](#), formerly the [Unification Church](#).



The court hearings schedule for [Mother Han](#) from March 27, to June 12, 2026

[Amen News](#), known for writing for Christian audiences about perceived theological "risks" within newer religious groups, explains that the trial against the detained [Hak Ja Han](#) - also called [Mother Han](#) - have entered a structured and closely monitored phase. Seoul Central District Court has formally announced an intensive trial schedule extending from late March through mid-June 2026. The case marks one of the most consequential legal challenges faced by a major religious figure in recent Korean history.

According to court arrangements, a total of thirteen hearings have been scheduled between 27th March and 12th June. This timetable seems to reflect a deliberate judicial strategy: proceedings will unfold at a relatively brisk pace, with one to two hearings per week, many of which will focus on witness examination. The structured cadence suggests that the court aims to avoid unnecessary procedural delays while maintaining continuity in evidentiary review.

The early phase of the trial is particularly witness-heavy. Beginning with a single witness on 27th March,

the schedule quickly escalates to multiple testimonies per session, including days with as many as five witnesses. Through April and into May, hearings consistently feature three to five witnesses at a time, indicating that the prosecution is likely front-loading testimonial evidence to establish a detailed factual record. This approach is typical in complex cases involving finance, where layered transactions, institutional structures, and chains of responsibility must be clarified through cumulative testimony.

According to the [Amen News report](#), by late May and early June, the schedule appears to shift slightly, with several dates listed without specified witness counts. This may indicate time reserved for cross-examination, evidentiary disputes, or preliminary closing arguments. It is also possible that the court is allowing flexibility for overruns or additional witnesses, a common necessity in multi-defendant cases involving organizational leadership.

From an analytical standpoint, the duration of the trial itself is unlikely to conclude strictly within the 12th June timeframe. While these thirteen hearings represent the initial evidentiary phase, comparable cases in South Korea - particularly those involving high-profile defendants and complex financial allegations - often extend beyond initial schedules. Additional hearings, procedural motions, and potential appeals could prolong the process into late 2026 or even beyond. Therefore, the current schedule should be interpreted as the opening segment of a longer judicial trajectory rather than a definitive endpoint.



Layout of [Mother Han's](#) detention cell, compared to size of a Mini Cooper. Illustration

In South Korean criminal procedure, pre-trial detention can be extended in increments, subject to judicial review. Given the structured pace of hearings and the level of allegations, it is reasonable to anticipate that detention could continue at least through the primary evidentiary phase - that is, until mid-year - and potentially longer if the court determines that the risks of evidence tampering and flight outweigh the health risks posed by holding a frail octogenarian in poor health locked up in a tiny cell for a very long period.

However, it is not guaranteed that detention will last for the entirety of the trial. Defense counsel may file motions for bail or conditional release, particularly if the proceedings extend significantly or if the defense can argue that the risks justifying detention have diminished. Courts sometimes grant release under strict conditions, such as travel restrictions or financial guarantees, especially for elderly

defendants or those with stable residences and limited flight risk. Whether such considerations will apply in this case remains uncertain.

Voices critical of the prolonged detention of and trial against the [83-year-old champion of world peace, family values](#), and Korean reunification tend to focus on harsh detention conditions, prolonged custody, or procedural intensity as concerns. The mainstream South Korean media tends, however, to interpret the long trial as an expression of a complex evidentiary record, or a high-stakes, carefully managed prosecution.

The announced trial schedule provides an important framework for what is likely to be a complex and extended legal process. Both the duration of the trial and the length of detention will ultimately depend on how the evidentiary phase unfolds, the volume of contested material, and judicial assessments of procedural fairness and risk. The coming months will therefore serve less as a conclusion and more as a critical foundation for the broader legal resolution of the case.

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Shocked Author: "Japan Ignores Basics Of Justice"

March 26, 2026 • Knut Holdhus



Japanese author alarmed by lack of fairness in court ruling to dissolve Family federation as he finds glaring departure from the fundamentals of judicial process – namely, identifying, proving, and recognizing facts



Tokyo, 24th March 2026 – Published as an article in the Japanese newspaper *Sekai Nippo*. Republished with permission. Translated from Japanese. *Original article.*

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Deviates from the Fundamentals of Trial Procedure

Dissolution Order Against the Family Federation

by Fumihiko Kato (加藤文宏), author

On 4th March, the *Tokyo High Court* issued an order to dissolve the *Family Federation for World Peace and Unification* as a religious corporation.

See also *Scholar Questions Secrecy in Dissolution Case*

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See also *Constitution: Dissolution Requires Public Trial*

After reading the 179-page decision along with Appendices 1 through 5, I was left holding my head in disbelief. It is vast and overwhelming, yet like a mirage, it lacks substance. Moreover, numerous longstanding issues were left unresolved and simply abandoned.

Neglect in Establishing the Facts

The most representative and deeply rooted problem was the political situation four years ago, which moved forward with dissolution as a foregone conclusion.



Made a 180-degree flip-flop, changing the law overnight by including civil cases: Former Prime Minister **Fumio Kishida**. Here, at press conference 14th August 2024. Photo: 首相官邸 (PMO) / Wikimedia Commons. License: *CC Attr 4.0 Int*. Cropped

Politicians, intimidated by the emotional climate of society, sought to eliminate the **religious organization** by including civil matters among the requirements for dissolution, while bureaucrats were pressured under dominant power dynamics.

However, **no decisive civil case sufficient to force dissolution could be found**. The Ministry of Education, Culture,

Sports, Science and Technology even resorted to **fabricating** written statements – likely because it recognized that **the objective could not be achieved without manufacturing wrongdoing**.

Unable to correct course, the matter was handed over to the judiciary. **Judges were then left with no choice but to treat donations not as religious acts, but as consumer issues on par with sales and contracts.**

The High Court, compelled to prove that the solicitation of donations constituted systematic and continuous fraud, **intervened in matters of doctrine –**

something inherently beyond judicial determination – and concluded that believers had been manipulated. As a result, all donations from the past became subject to scrutiny for malicious



Faithful believer offering donation, i.e. performing a religious act. Japanese anti-religious lawyers succeeded however to persuade the courts to treat donations as consumer issues on par with sales and contracts, subject to civil law. Illustration by Microsoft Designer Image Creator 14th July 2024.

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conditions from the past became subject to scrutiny for malicious intent, and alleged damages accumulated.

The decision recognized approximately 7.4 billion yen [ca. 70 million US dollars in 2008] in donations made prior to the 2009 compliance declaration [See editor's note below] as confirmed damages constituting torts. For donations made thereafter, about 18 million yen [ca. 115,000 USD in 2026] were deemed to constitute torts, about 23 million yen [ca. 147,000 USD in 2026] were considered "likely" to constitute torts, and about 915 million yen [ca. 5,856,000 USD in 2026] were classified as cases where the possibility of torts "cannot be denied". These figures, however, are **merely estimates based on the judges' impressions**.

Comparing the confirmed damages before the compliance declaration [See editor's note below] with those after, it becomes evident that the **religious organization reduced what is considered harm by roughly a factor of 400** through stricter discipline. **Even so, the court concluded that there was no prospect of improvement** in malicious conduct.

Furthermore, due to the use of abstract and complex classifications – such as "established", "likely", and "cannot be denied" – confusion arose. For example, four individuals included among cases definitively labeled as "damage" on page 63 of the decision are classified on page 124 as cases where the possibility "cannot be denied".



Despite the court's

Swayed by the media and the authorities?

Japanese judges. Illustration: Microsoft Designer Image Creator, June 2025.

persistent focus on the alleged systematic malicious nature of donations, **no actual evidence was presented showing that the funds collected were used for illegal or improper activities**.

Nevertheless, the **organization** was deemed a religious corporation that "clearly harms the public welfare".

By departing from the fundamentals of judicial process – namely, identifying facts, proving facts, and recognizing facts – the High Court produced contradictions at every turn, ultimately straying not only from the Religious Corporations Act but also from the spirit of the Constitution.

As a result, **believers have been barred from entering the churches they supported through their own donations** and can no longer even pray together in their place of faith.

Since the **High Court's decision**, criticism has erupted from political figures and experts overseas.

Some voices express concern that **the ruling could end up justifying China's policies of religious suppression** used as a means of ethnic cleansing.

Indeed, while attempts in European countries to deny legal status to new religions or seek their dissolution **have consistently been overturned by the European Court of Human Rights**, the **High Court's decision** runs counter to the broader trend in liberal societies and can only be described as highly abnormal.

People Unable to Speak Out

Meanwhile, within Japan, there are people who cannot speak out about issues related to the **Family Federation**, even if they wish to.

Many religious figures have remained silent for the past four years.

many religious figures have remained silent for the past four years out of fear of being branded as part of a “cult”. Even among legal professionals, some choose to look the other way.

Martin Niemöller once wrote, “When the Nazis came for me, there was no one left to speak out for me.” Due to the [High Court’s decision](#), these words have ceased to be merely a warning and have instead come to reflect the reality of Japan today.

See also [Constitution: Dissolution Requires Public Trial](#)

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Dr. Martin Niemöller 27th May 1952. Photo: J.D. Noske / Anefo / Wikimedia Commons. Public domain image. Cropped

See also [UN Submission Protests Mass Closure of Churches](#)

Text: Fumihiko Kato (加藤文宏), author. He has contributed to various media outlets, including opinion magazines. Under the pen name Fumi Kato (かとう ふみ), he has published works such as “Chushi Ruro” (厨師流浪 – Wandering Chef), “Kakai Fuki” (花開富貴 – Blossoming, Prosperous and Noble), and “Denko no Otoko” (電光の男 – Lightning Man). In 2023, he contributed with an article titled “[Can News and Talk Shows Determine Good and Evil?](#)” in the February issue of Monthly Seiron (月刊正論), challenging the approach to reporting on the [Unification Church](#).]

Featured image above: Fumihiko Kato (加藤文宏), here delivering a lecture 14th December 2024 in Ichikawa City, Chiba Prefecture. Photo: Tsuyoshi Toyoda (豊田剛).

[Editor’s note 2: The **2009 compliance declaration** of the Unification Church of Japan (now the [Family Federation for World Peace and Unification](#)) was a formal commitment by the organization to reform its practices in response to longstanding public criticism and legal challenges.

The [Unification Church](#) in Japan had faced numerous allegations related to recruitment tactics and donation solicitation, termed “spiritual sales” (靈感商法) by a hostile network of activist lawyers who had declared the [religious organization](#) an enemy. These issues led to multiple lawsuits orchestrated by the activist lawyers and significant media backlash. This prompted the [organization](#) to take measures to restore its reputation and demonstrate compliance with legal and ethical standards.

The [religious organization](#) pledged to stop possibly unethical donation practices, including what the hostile network of lawyers claimed amounted to “pressuring members into making large financial contributions under spiritual pretexts.”

This was in response to accusations from the same activist lawyers that followers “were being manipulated into giving away substantial amounts of money or property.”

The [Unification Church](#) stated it would enhance internal oversight to ensure compliance with ethical and legal standards. Measures included better training for leaders and stricter guidelines for evangelization and solicitation of donations.

After this compliance declaration, there was a significant decrease in the number of lawsuits against the [Unification Church](#) – since 2015 called the [Family Federation](#). The [religious organization](#) has used this as evidence that it has improved its practices and should not be subject to dissolution.]

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