

FFWPU Europe and Middle East: Holy Mother Han Trial Set to Conclude July 10<sup>th</sup>

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A South Korean court scene with special prosecutors on one side and defense attorneys on the other, Mother Han in the middle, with Jeong on the left and Yoon on the right. Illustration: ChatGPT



Special prosecutors set to conclude political influence case against Mother Han and former Unificationist leaders with 10th July hearing

Newsis (뉴시스), South Korea's largest independent wire news agency, published on 19th June an [article](#) by reporter Hwang Jun-seon (황준선) about the latest development in the high-profile case at Seoul District Court against [Hak Ja Han](#) (한학자) - also known as [Mother Han](#) - and former leaders of her [religious organization](#). The trial is now entering its final stage. She is the spiritual head of the [Family Federation for World Peace and Unification](#), commonly known in Korea as [Unificationism](#) (통일교). [Mother Han](#) has long been one of the most influential religious figures in South Korea.



Sentenced to lifetime imprisonment in case seen by many as political revenge: Former South Korean President Yoon Suk-yeol, here in a meeting at the Pentagon, Washington, D.C., April 27, 2023

Special prosecutors appointed by the current left-leaning Lee Jae-myung (이재명) administration allege that she and several senior [Unificationism](#) officials became involved in efforts to cultivate political influence through unlawful donations, lobbying, and gifts directed toward prominent conservative politicians and their associates.

[Newsis](#) reports that the trial is expected to conclude on 10th July, when special prosecutors will present their final arguments and recommend sentences for the defendants. [Mother Han](#) and her co-defendants will then make their closing statements before the court begins deliberations in order to reach its final decision.

The allegations arise from events surrounding South Korea's 2022 presidential election, which was won by Yoon Suk-yeol (윤석열). According to special prosecutors, [Family Federation](#) officials sought to build close ties with Yoon's political circle and to increase the influence of the [religious organization](#) within the new administration. The prosecution claims that these efforts crossed legal boundaries and involved violations of South Korea's political funding and anti-corruption laws.

The case has become one of the most prominent examples of what Korean media often describe as "religion-politics collusion" - the improper intertwining of religious

organizations and political power. There are however a large number of critics of the current Lee Jae-myung administration and the special prosecutors given wide powers to investigate political and religious leaders perceived to have supported the former conservative Yoon Suk-yeol administration. Such critical voices regard the investigation called for by Lee, to be a campaign against political or ideological opponents.



One of the most serious accusations concerns an alleged payment of 100 million Korean won - equivalent to roughly US\$70,000 to US\$75,000 at current exchange rates - to Kweon Seong-dong (권성동), a senior member of the conservative People Power Party and a close political ally of Yoon. Prosecutors contend that the money was delivered shortly before the presidential election as part of a broader effort to support Yoon's campaign and strengthen the [Family Federation's](#) political connections.

The defendants also face accusations that [Unificationism](#) funds were distributed to multiple politicians through a practice often described as "split donations". In this scheme, a large sum is divided into many smaller contributions and donated through different individuals, making it appear that the money comes from separate donors rather than a single source. South Korean authorities frequently investigate such arrangements because they can be used to evade campaign-finance restrictions.

Another allegation involves luxury gifts reportedly provided to Kim Keon-hee (김건희), the wife of former South Korean President Yoon. Prosecutors claim that expensive items, including Chanel handbags, were passed through Jeon Seong-bae (전성배), a controversial religious figure known in Korea as "Geonjin Beopsa" (건진법사). This aspect of the case has attracted considerable public attention because it combines questions of political influence, religious networks, and unofficial intermediaries operating around the highest levels of government.

According to the [Newsis report](#), a notable feature of the latest court hearing was the apparent opposite views of [Mother Han](#) and one of her former senior aides, [Yoon Yeong-ho](#) (윤영호). During questioning, [Hak Ja Han](#) largely declined to answer questions from prosecutors and often stated that she could not remember relevant details. However, she made an exception when her own lawyer asked about [Yoon's](#) conduct. [Mother Han](#) stated that she felt "betrayed" by her former subordinate, suggesting that he had acted independently and was now attempting to shift responsibility onto her.

Throughout the proceedings, [Mother Han](#) has sought to distance herself from key decisions at the center of the case. She testified that she was not informed in advance about [Yoon Yeong-ho's](#) meetings with Yoon Suk Yeol and denied receiving reports concerning donations to the People Power Party. Her position is that any improper activities were carried out without her knowledge or authorization.

[Yoon Yeong-ho](#), however, offered a more complicated account. While he rejected suggestions that he possessed broad independent authority within the [Family Federation](#), he acknowledged that major decisions typically required approval from [Mother Han](#) and other senior leadership figures. He emphasized that important matters, including special events and financial decisions, were routinely reported to the president of the [religious organization](#) before action was taken.

Perhaps most significantly, [Yoon](#) claimed that discussions had taken place among himself, [Mother Han](#), and her former chief secretary [Jeong Won-ju](#) (정원주) regarding organized support for Yoon Suk Yeol's presidential bid. Although [Yoon Yeong-ho](#) characterized this allegation as true only "in broad terms", the statement could prove important because it potentially links the [Federation's](#) highest leadership to political activities that prosecutors argue were coordinated and systematic.

When the trial concludes in July, the court's eventual ruling will not only determine the legal responsibility of [Mother Han](#) and her associates but may also have broader implications for political fundraising, lobbying regulations, and the relationship between religion and government in South Korea.

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newest  
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issues official  
response to  
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coverage



Issuing statement on misleading media coverage:



Issuing statement on misleading media coverage:

A [statement](#) issued by the South Korean headquarters of the [Family Federation](#) to the media on 18<sup>th</sup> June 2026, in response to recent media reports. Translated from the [text on the Korean language website](#) of the [Family Federation](#).

The Korean HQ of the [Family Federation](#) in Cheongpa-dong, Seoul, here at the inauguration in May 2005. Photo: [FFWPU](#)

## Official Statement of the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification Regarding Distorted Reports on the Launch of the Pastors’ Policy Advisory Committee

See also [Mother Han Trial Set to Conclude on 10th July](#)

The Korean chapter of the [Family Federation for World Peace and Unification](#) (hereinafter “the Korean [Family Federation](#)”) expresses its deep regret that recent media reports concerning the launch of the “Pastors’ Policy Advisory Committee” have been reported in a manner that differs from the facts through distortion and exaggeration. To promote accurate understanding, we hereby present the following objective facts.

### 1. Establishment of a Transparent, Institutionalized Decision-Making System and Ongoing Communication

Recent claims in some reports alleging that the Korean [Family Federation](#) engages in “unilateral decision-making” and lacks “internal communication” are entirely inconsistent with the facts. The Korean [Family Federation](#) is an organization whose management transparency has been officially recognized through its acquisition of the religious sector’s [first ISO certification](#) for anti-bribery and compliance management.

At present, under its highest decision-making body, the Central Committee, the [Federation](#) has established three internal advisory bodies – the *Personnel Advisory Committee*, *Ethics Advisory Committee*, and *Pastors’ Policy Advisory Committee* – to create a systematic decision-making process. In addition, it has institutionalized official weekly nationwide online meetings for pastors and maintains ongoing communication channels that regularly gather diverse opinions from the field, including nationwide church visits by the President of the Korean chapter six days a week.

### 2. Launch of the Advisory Committee Through Democratic Procedures



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From the formal [Family Federation](#) meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> May 2026 to commemorate the awarding of the integrated certification. Photo: [FFWPU](#)

Reports claiming that the committee's launch has faced strong opposition or controversy regarding its representativeness are also clearly distorted. Beginning with an announcement on 2<sup>nd</sup> June, the *Pastors' Policy Advisory Committee* officially confirmed regional and generational representative candidates through a nationwide online pastors' meeting on 9<sup>th</sup> June and fairly elected 13 representatives in various fields through a nationwide online vote on 16<sup>th</sup> June.

All of these procedures were conducted transparently through democratic processes, and we clearly state that there was neither significant opposition nor any procedural defect.

**3. Legal Contradictions in Claims of Frequent Amendments to the Internal Advisory Body's Bylaws**

The report's claim that "the bylaws of an organization that has not even been launched keep being changed" is baseless and stems from a misunderstanding of the organization's legal nature.

The "Pastors' Policy Advisory Committee" is an internal advisory body within the [religious organization](#) that is preparing for official launch and is not an independent legal entity. Accordingly, the committee does not possess its own separate bylaws. Therefore, the assertion that non-existent bylaws have been repeatedly amended is a clear error that fails to verify even the most basic facts.

**4. The Original Purpose and Authority of the "Pastoral Service Representative"**

The title "National Representative of Pastors" mentioned in media reports does not exist in the official regulations. The correct title is "Pastoral Service Representative."

Although some media articles repeatedly referred to the position as a service representative, describing it in headlines as the "National Representative of Pastors" was incorrect. This position was created during the [National Assembly of Pastors](#) on 7<sup>th</sup> April solely for the purpose of reaching agreements and coordinating matters related to working hours. It is a temporary and limited role directly elected by frontline pastors.

Interpreting this position as if it were the representative of a policy body speaking on behalf of all pastors is entirely inconsistent with its original purpose and lacks any legal basis.

**5. Mutual Confirmation and Communication Regarding the Scope of Authority**



Pastors of the [Family Federation for World Peace and Unification](#) pose for a commemorative photo, pledging reform at the "National Pastors' Assembly for Victory in Vision 2027" held at The Ocean Resort in Yeosu, South Jeolla Province. The banner says, "Embracing the Heart of the [True Parents](#), Toward Renewal". Photo: [FFWPU](#)

The claim that the service representative was not informed about the term of office and scope of authority is also

contrary to the facts.

As noted above, when the representative was elected on 7<sup>th</sup> April, the temporary nature of the position and its defined scope of authority were fully explained. Furthermore, immediately after the election, headquarters officials met directly with the representative to confirm and discuss these matters.

**6. Warning Regarding Actions Exceeding Authorized Powers and Planned Follow-Up Measures**  
We reiterate that the “service representative” elected in April was entrusted only with limited authority concerning the adjustment of employment conditions.

Nevertheless, actions that claim external representative status on behalf of the entire [religious organization](#) and that use titles and designations not approved through official procedures are causing serious confusion in both internal and external communications.

Accordingly, the Korean [Family Federation](#) is currently conducting a thorough investigation into actions that exceed the authorized scope of the individuals concerned and plans to take appropriate follow-up measures to protect the [organization’s](#) sound order and reputation.

The Korean [Family Federation](#) respectfully requests that members of the media conduct thorough fact-checking and provide fair and balanced reporting based on an objective perspective.

The [Federation](#) further states that it will hold parties legally accountable, including for defamation, in cases of maliciously distorted reporting or the dissemination of false information in the future, and will respond firmly using all available means.

18<sup>th</sup> June 2026

Korean Chapter of the [Family Federation for World Peace and Unification](#)

See also [Mother Han Trial Set to Conclude on 10th July](#)

**Featured image** above: Illustration of FFWPU statement on recent misleading South Korean media coverage.  
Image: ChatGPT, June 2026

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