

UPF International Statement on the Detention of UPF Co-Founder Dr. Hak Ja Han

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The Universal Peace Federation (UPF) is deeply concerned by the detention of its co-founder, Dr. Hak Ja Han (82), by South Korean authorities on September 22, 2025. We respect the principle of due process and call for its strict adherence in her case.

Dr. Han has categorically denied any wrongdoing. She appeared for questioning while still recovering from a heart procedure. We have expressed concern that her pre-trial detention is an affront to an internationally respected religious leader.

We are firmly convinced of Dr. Han's innocence and expect that the legal process will uphold the fundamental principle of the presumption of innocence, leading to a swift and fair resolution. In this spirit, we reaffirm our trust in transparency, impartial justice, and the rule of law as guiding principles for all the proceedings.

A History of Resilience and Faith

To understand the current events, it's essential to reflect on the challenges faced by UPF's founders over decades. Dr. Han's late husband, Rev. Sun Myung Moon (1920 - 2012), endured unjust imprisonments in both North and South Korea in his youth, bearing these hardships with dignity. During the Japanese occupation, he was also detained by colonial authorities for his involvement in Korea's independence movement.

In the 1980s, Rev. Moon was convicted in the United States on tax-related charges, despite maintaining his innocence. He served 13 months in prison before being released. At the time, prominent religious and civil rights leaders condemned the verdict as politically and religiously motivated. This pattern of facing legal challenges only strengthens our resolve today. It reminds us that the path of peacebuilding is often met with resistance, but the truth ultimately prevails.

A Lifelong Dedication to Peace: Key Milestones

Dr. Hak Ja Han and Rev. Moon devoted their lives to interfaith dialogue, humanitarian service, and family-centered peacebuilding. Their vision of a unified human family continues to guide UPF's global mission. Among their key milestones was their 1990 meeting with Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev at the Kremlin to launch a peace exchange, followed in 1991 by a journey to Pyongyang to meet Chairman Kim Il-Sung in pursuit of Korean reunification. In 1992, Dr. Han founded the Women's Federation for World Peace, and in 2005, together they established the Universal Peace Federation. From 2005 to 2006, they led a 100-city world peace tour, and following Rev. Moon's passing in 2012, Dr. Han launched new initiatives such as the Sunhak Peace Prize and the "Peace Starts With Me" campaigns.

Over the years, they addressed audiences in the U.S. Capitol, the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, and the United Nations. They also engaged world leaders, civil society, and appointed tens of thousands of Ambassadors for Peace of the Universal Peace Federation, all united by the vision of "One Family under God."

Their legacy also lives on through UPF's global initiatives such as the Middle East Peace Initiative, the Northeast Asia Peace Initiative, international disaster relief efforts following events like Hurricane Katrina and the 2011 Japan tsunami, as well as educational and youth leadership programs. These programs illustrate a long-standing commitment to building bridges, not walls.

UPF's Stance and the Path Forward

UPF continues its mission without interruption. As emphasized in the Founders' Address, our purpose is to promote universal values and peacebuilding across nations and faiths. We call on our global partners, including interfaith leaders, policymakers, humanitarian organizations, and civil society, to remain focused on our shared vision. True to Dr. Han's example, we respond to adversity not with bitterness, but with prayer, forgiveness, and service.

The institutions and initiatives founded by Dr. Han and Rev. Moon continue to operate around the world, a testament to the strength and enduring relevance of their vision. This work does not pause; it is our living response to these challenges.

In closing, UPF affirms that the ideals championed by Dr. Hak Ja Han and Rev. Sun Myung Moon transcend any single moment. Their vision of a united human family working for peace continues to guide us.

Call to Action

To our partners and friends around the world: thank you for your steadfast support during this challenging time. We encourage you to continue your work for peace with strength and conviction. Your efforts uphold the very values that inspire us all.

UPF remains dedicated to "One Family under God" and looks forward to advancing justice, reconciliation, and goodwill together with our diverse global community.