

FFWPU Europe and the Middle East: Bail Hearing - Holy Mother Han's Spiritual Message

Knut Holdhus
December 2, 2025



Mother Han speaking in Newark, New Jersey, USA December 28, 2019

At bail hearing 1st December, Mother Han (82) portrays her life not in politics, but in service to heaven and humanity as she seeks humane release from detention

On 1st December 2025, a highly anticipated bail hearing unfolded at the Seoul Central District Court for [Hak Ja Han](#) (한학자) - also called [Mother Han](#) - the Co-Founder and longtime leader of the [Family Federation for World Peace and Unification](#) - more commonly known as the [Unification Church](#).

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Reporter Jang Hyeon-eun (장현은) wrote about the hearings for the Hankyoreh Shimbun, a large South Korean daily, in an article published 2nd December which in English would carry the headline "[Hak Ja Han at bail hearing: 'I am the Mother of Peace \[...\] I am not the person the special prosecutor describes'.](#)"

[Mother Han](#), now in her early eighties, has been detained since 22nd September and was indicted on 10th October by special prosecutors appointed by the current Lee administration for several alleged actions considered in breach of several South Korean laws. According to the Hankyoreh, prosecutors claim that she provided funds and valuable gifts to influential figures including First Lady Kim Keon-hee (김건희) and Rep. Kweon Seong-dong (권성동) of the People Power Party.



From a demonstration in support of [Mother Han](#) in Gapyeong, South Korea in November 2025

These actions, investigators argue, were intended to advance requests related to the [Family Federation's](#) institutional interests. Against this backdrop, [Mother Han](#) used the opportunity offered at her bail hearing to deliver a personal, impassioned defense of both her intentions and her legacy.

Reporter Jang describes in [his article](#) how the 1st December afternoon proceedings, presided over by Judge Woo In-seong (우인성) of Criminal Division 27 at the court, centered on [Mother Han](#)'s petition for release on health grounds. Her legal team emphasized the impracticality and potential harm of detaining an 82-year-old religious figure while she prepares her defense.

But the most striking portion of the session came when the court granted her the chance to speak. Seizing the moment, [Mother Han](#) framed herself not as a political actor embroiled in clandestine dealings, but as a lifelong religious leader devoted to realizing divine aspirations for peace and unity.



[Mother Han](#) as she appeared on South Korean TV in Sep. 2025

According to the [Hankyoreh article](#), [Hak Ja Han](#) began her remarks by reflecting on her decades-long spiritual mission. She described herself as someone who has worked well into old age "with the dream of attending the Creator, our Heavenly Parent, here on earth." [Mother Han](#) explained,

"The Creator's dream for April 2025 was what is the very "principle of creation" (창조의 원칙) - to live on earth as the True Parent, embracing His/Her children. Because I know this, I resolved over the course of my 80-year life to build a [palace](#) (궁전) where the Creator could dwell, in order to fulfill that dream."

Jang's report emphasizes that throughout her statement, [Mother Han](#) stressed the exclusively religious and humanitarian focus of her work. She insisted that she has never been concerned with the political currents of South Korea, nor has she involved herself in partisan matters.

Instead, she described her life's purpose as nurturing a global culture of peace: teaching adherents and peace-loving persons everywhere to pray for harmony, unity, and the creation of "one human family" oriented toward the will of Heaven. Her frequent references to herself as the "Mother of Peace" and "Holy Mother" were offered not as personal aggrandizement, she said, but as titles bestowed upon her by world leaders, religious figures, and scholars who recognize her efforts to promote reconciliation and shared humanity.



One of the sacred sites of the [Family Federation](#) - the Cheon Jeong Temple in Gapyeong, South Korea. The building houses a museum in honor of the life of the [True Parents](#)

[Mother Han](#) energetically rejected the portrayal of her advanced by the special prosecutor, saying,

"I am not the kind of person the special prosecutor describes."

She invited the court to visit the Cheon Jeong Temple - her residence and an important symbolic site for the [Family Federation](#) in Gapyeong - to see firsthand how she has lived and what she has built. Her appeal was both a plea for understanding and an implicit challenge to the narrative that her actions were politically or materially motivated.

Her attorney reinforced these themes, arguing that [Mother Han](#)'s health requires humane accommodation and warning the court against potential prejudice stemming from widespread skepticism of the [Family Federation](#). Raising concerns about religious freedom and due process, the defense insisted that [Mother Han](#)'s constitutional rights must be protected, and that her detention risks undermining her ability to mount an effective and fair defense.

Overall, the hearing highlighted a dramatic clash between the state's allegations of influence-peddling and [Mother Han](#)'s own account of a life devoted to spiritual mission. As the case proceeds, her dual role - as a religious matriarch to millions and a defendant in one of South Korea's highest-profile political-religious trials - will remain at the center of national attention.

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Trial Day 1: Mother Han Denies All Allegations

- December 1, 2025
- Knut Holdhus



Mother Han (82) denies all allegations on day 1 of high-profile trial in Seoul amid disputes over alleged church-state collusion

The first full trial of Family Federation President Hak Ja Han (한학자) – by many called Mother Han – was held on 1st December at the Seoul Central District Court. The proceedings opened with firm denials from Mother Han’s legal team in response to a series of allegations involving unlawful political contributions, luxury gifts to figures connected to the presidential office, and what prosecutors describe as a pattern of improper church-state dealings.

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According to the large news agency Reuters, Mother Han (82) sat quietly through the proceedings, sometimes with closed eyes. She told

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quietly through the proceedings, sometimes with closed eyes. She told the court she was not interested in politics,

“I had no interest in politics in this country [...] Every politician, people in religious and academic communities know me as a mother of peace.”



South Korea's current president Lee Jae-myung perceived by many to retaliate against conservative religious groups that supported former President Yoon Suk-yeol. Here, day after winning the election on 3rd June 2025. Photo: Korea.net / Korean Culture and Information Service (Photographer name). License: CC ASA 2.0 Gen. Cropped

allege that **Mother Han** and several close aides provided political funds to members of the *People Power Party* that governed the country from 2022 to 2025. It is alleged that the funds were part of an attempt to cultivate influence through concealed financial transactions and the provision of luxury goods. These actions, prosecutors argue, were aimed at securing political access and favorable treatment.

According to Chosun Biz, the trial centers on several key accusations. Prosecutors claim that in early January 2022, **Mother Han** conspired with her then-chief secretary Jeong and former headquarters director Yoon Yeong-ho (윤영호) to deliver 100 million won (US \$68,000) in cash to *People Power Party* lawmaker Kweon Seong-dong (권성동).



Yoon Yeong-ho, Dec 6, 2020. Screenshot from Peacelink TV

2022, Yoon and others attempted to send luxury items – including a high-end Chanel bag and an expensive Graff necklace – to the First Lady through a figure known publicly as “Geonjin Beopsa”, or Jeon Seong-bae (전성배), a spiritual adviser with connections to political elites.

The Chosun Biz writes that **Mother Han's** legal team rejected every allegation during the opening session of the trial. They argued that the transactions and gift-giving described by prosecutors were not orchestrated by **Hak Ja Han** but were instead the unilateral actions of Yoon Yeong-ho (윤영호), whom they characterized as someone driven by personal ambition rather than institutional loyalty. According to the defense, Yoon acted independently, failed to report his activities to senior **Family Federation** leadership and continued to engage in

The case, brought by the special counsel of prosecutors appointed by the current Lee Jae-myung (이재명) administration to investigate matters connected to former First Lady Kim Keon-hee (김건희), has drawn significant public attention due to its intersection of politics, religion, and questions about the misuse of religious funds.

The large daily *Chosun Biz* published 1st Dec. a report with the long headline “**Suspicion of Church-State Collusion – Unification Church President Hak Ja Han Denies Charges at First Trial – ‘Actions Were Yoon Yeong-ho’s Doing Alone’**”. According to the article, **Mother Han** was indicted and detained as part of a broader investigation into suspected “church-state collusion” between senior figures in the **Family Federation** and individuals linked to the Yoon Suk-yeol (윤석열) administration, the losing side in the June national snap election.

The specially appointed prosecutors



The Chosun Biz logo



Logo of the People Power Party



People Power Party lawmaker **Kweon Seong-dong** (권성동). here 23rd Dec. 2024. Photo: 국민의힘TV / Wikimedia Commons. License: CC Attr 3.0 Unp. Cropped

Additional allegations assert that assert that organizational funds from the **Family Federation** were mobilized during March and April of the same year to provide over 140 million won (US \$95,300) in donations to various provincial party chapters. Furthermore, the special counsel contends that in July

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to senior ranking [secretary](#) leadership, and continued to engage in questionable political dealings even after leaving the organization. [Mother Han](#)'s counsel insisted that she had no involvement in or knowledge of the alleged donation schemes or gift arrangements.

The special counsel, however, offered a sharply contrasting view. Park Ju-min ([박주민](#)) writes for Reuters that one of the prosecutors portrays [Mother Han](#) much like anti-religious activists do, as the "absolute power holder of the [Unification Church](#) at the top", claiming that not a single penny "can be moved without her approval."



Prosecutors maintained that the defendants had misused their positions to divert contributions from members of the [religious organization](#) into politically motivated expenditures. It was argued that using believers' money for such purposes constitutes a grave breach of trust and corrodes representative democracy by allowing private religious authority to attempt to shape public power through unofficial channels. Representative democracy assumes that each citizen has *roughly equal* political influence, and elected officials should respond to voters, not powerful institutions.

As the trial began, [Mother Han](#) appeared in court wearing a mask and arriving in a wheelchair, weeks after a brief [medical release](#) early in November for eye surgery. Her legal team requested periodic recesses due to her health condition. Despite the courtroom's strict seating limits – 33 places – more than a hundred [Family Federation](#) members and supporters gathered outside, prompting the court to livestream the proceedings in an overflow room.

The case continues to attract intense scrutiny as it touches on sensitive questions about political ethics, the relationship between religion and governance, and the responsibilities of leaders who oversee large and financially powerful religious institutions. The trial's outcome may influence how such interactions are regulated and interpreted in South Korea from now on.

According to France24, there will be a separate trial on 9th December where [Mother Han](#) will face charges of violating the *Political Parties Act*. Prosecutors claim that she had told over 2,000 members of the [Family Federation](#) to join for former President Yoon's *People Power Party* in time to influence the outcome of an important party convention.



Logo of international channel France 24.

Rev. Demian Dunkley, President of the [Family Federation](#) in North America, reported on X from the courthouse that the lawyers "were basically just setting up the rules of the game for the whole trial" to begin with. The feeling in the courtroom was professional and calm. Dunkley reported that a prosecutor read out the indictments, using a PowerPoint presentation on a large screen.

Several religious leaders from the USA concerned about the religious freedom issue of the trial and prolonged detention attended the opening day at *Seoul Central District Court*.

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Featured image above: A group of [Family Federation](#) members and observers from the USA outside *Seoul Central District Court* 1st December 2025. Photo: [FFWPU](#)

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