

FFWPU Europe and the Middle East: Family Fed Japan's Final Legal Appeal Filed

Knut Holdhus
March 13, 2026



Grand Bench of the Japanese Supreme Court, the highest judicial panel, consisting of all 15 justices, which handles critical constitutional issues, landmark cases, and changes to legal precedent. It sits at the top of the Japanese judicial system to ensure consistent interpretation of the law.



Claim of religious freedom violation raised in Supreme Court appeal over dissolution as Family Federation believers pursue final avenue in the Japanese legal system

The Japanese daily [Sekai Nippo reported on 10th March](#) on the latest development in the [dissolution order](#) against the [Family Federation for World Peace and Unification](#) (formerly the [Unification Church](#)). The [paper](#) writes,

"The [religious organization](#) filed a special appeal with the Supreme Court on 9th March, challenging the [Tokyo High Court's decision](#) that ordered its dissolution.

The [liquidation process](#) - such as compensation to victims of donation-related "damages" - being carried out by a liquidator appointed by the Tokyo District Court will continue.

Because of the [High Court's ruling](#), the dissolution order has already taken effect, and the [religious organization](#) has already lost its legal status as a religious corporation. However, if the Supreme Court overturns the [dissolution decision](#), the effect of the dissolution would be suspended, and the [liquidation procedures](#) would stop.

As of 10th March, the [religious organization](#) has not issued a comment. In the statement of reasons for the special appeal to be submitted to the Supreme Court, it is expected to argue that the 'violation of laws and regulations' - a requirement for dissolution under the Religious Corporations Act - does not include torts under civil law, and that the [dissolution order](#) infringes upon the constitutionally guaranteed 'freedom of religion'."

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In Japanese procedure, a special appeal (特別抗告 - tokubetsu kōkoku) is a very limited appeal to the Supreme Court used when a party claims that a lower court decision violates the Constitution or involves a serious legal error. It is not a normal appeal about facts or evidence.

In many procedural matters (including certain civil rulings and non-trial decisions), once the High Court has ruled, there is normally no ordinary appeal left. The only remaining route is a special appeal to the Supreme Court.



The Constitution of Japan (The Official Gazettes, a Special Edition)



Shinzo Abe in March 2022, few months before he was assassinated.

The Supreme Court will usually consider it only if the appellant claims a violation of the Japanese Constitution, or a serious procedural/legal defect in the decision.

The Supreme Court generally does not re-evaluate evidence or factual findings. It reviews constitutional or legal interpretation issues only.

The Supreme Court rejects most special appeals quickly, often without detailed reasoning.

According to the [Sekai Nippo article](#), the [religious organization](#) plans to argue that the [dissolution order](#) violates "freedom of religion". This may be seen as strategic because freedom of religion is protected by Article 20 of the Constitution of Japan. Constitutional claims are one of the few valid grounds for a special appeal.

So the argument the [Japanese daily](#) describes is essentially that the [dissolution order](#) violates constitutional protections for religious freedom. That gives the many believers of the [Family Federation](#) a procedural doorway to the Supreme Court.

Such a special appeal is not unusual procedurally, but rarely successful. Parties frequently file a special appeal after losing in the High Court when no ordinary appeal remains. However, the Supreme Court accepts only a very small fraction. Most are dismissed summarily.

Even though the legal mechanism of this case is common, the subject matter is highly unusual. The dissolution of a religious corporation in Japan is extremely rare. It raises constitutional questions about religion and state authority.

The case is connected to the political and social fallout after the 2022 assassination of former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe (安倍晋三). That context is why the appeal has drawn substantial

attention.

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Alleged Attempt To Influence Witness Statements

March 12, 2026 • Knut Holdhus

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Allegations and denial as case against Hak Ja Han takes a new turn in latest hearing 10th March: Witness claims attempt to influence testimony

South Korean **MBC News** and several other news outlets



Logo of MBC News

reported on 10th March on a high-profile court case involving the leadership of the *Family Federation for World Peace and*

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leadership of the [Family Federation for World Peace and Unification](#) – also known as the [Unification Church](#). The trial has drawn significant public and media attention and centers on [Hak Ja Han](#) – also called [Mother Han](#) – the [religious movement's](#) current leader. She is facing multiple legal charges, including alleged violations of South Korea's *Political Funds Act*.

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During the proceedings, testimony from a former senior [Federation](#) official has raised new allegations about possible attempts to influence witness statements. The [Family Federation](#), however, strongly denies these claims and maintains that they are unfounded.



Artistic impression of South Korean court hearing. Illustration: ChatGPT 22nd nov. 2025

[MBC News](#) reports that the controversy emerged during a court hearing on 10th March 2026, at the *Seoul Central District Court*, where [Yoon Yeong-ho](#) (윤영호), a former headquarters director of the [religious organization](#), appeared as a witness in [Hak Ja Han's](#) trial. At the start of his testimony, [Yoon](#) stated that he wanted to first address what he described as an important matter concerning “the actual (factual) truth” of the case. According to his statement in court, he received several messages between 7th and 20th September 2025, from individuals connected to [Mother Han](#).

[Yoon](#) claimed that these messages conveyed personal remarks attributed to [Mother Han](#). According to his account, she expressed sentiments such as, “I have never abandoned you,” and suggested that it had been wrong for the [Federation](#) to distance itself from him previously. She also reportedly stated that if he were willing to return despite the difficulties he was facing, he would be welcomed back unconditionally.

However, [Yoon](#) testified that these messages were accompanied by a request. He said he was asked to prepare a written statement asserting that [Mother Han](#) had not ordered any unlawful acts. The proposed wording, according to [Yoon's](#) testimony, would indicate that although [Mother Han](#) may have been informed about certain activities and approved them, she had not directly instructed anyone to carry out wrongdoing.

According to the [MBC News article](#), [Yoon](#) further alleged that in exchange for writing such a statement, several forms of assistance were suggested. These included withdrawing a legal complaint that had been filed against his spouse, restoring his membership and position within the [religious organization](#) after he had been expelled, and providing financial support, including covering legal expenses.

The



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Both imprisoned and investigated: Former South Korean President Yoon Suk-yeol and First Lady Kim Keon-hee, here in Tokyo 16th March 2023. Photo: [首相官邸ホームページ/Wikimedia Commons](#). License: [CC Attr 4.0 Int](#). Cropped

background to this testimony involves a broader investigation in South Korea concerning allegations of political influence and improper lobbying. Yoon had previously been questioned by a special prosecutor's team investigating claims that expensive gifts were delivered to Kim Keon-hee (김건희), the wife of former South Korean president Yoon Suk-yeol (윤석열), as part of efforts to gain favorable treatment for the [religious organization](#). During that earlier investigation, Yoon Yeong-ho reportedly stated that the actions in question had been carried out under instructions from the [Family Federation's](#) leadership. That claim contributed to the investigation expanding to examine possible responsibility at higher levels of the [organization](#).

The [Family Federation](#) has firmly rejected Yoon's latest allegations. In response to the testimony reported in the media, [Federation](#) representatives stated that [Mother Han](#) had never attempted to persuade Yoon to give favorable testimony. They described his claims as inaccurate and said that they intend to challenge them during cross-examination in court.

In an [official statement](#) 11th March, the *Culture and Public Relations Office* (문화홍보국) of the [Family Federation](#) in South Korea, points out,

"We ask that the following be taken into consideration in reporting, as claims appearing in some media reports stating that 'President [Hak Ja Han](#) attempted to persuade someone to provide favorable testimony' are not true.

The [President](#) did not attempt to persuade former headquarters director [Yoon Yeong-ho](#) to provide favorable testimony.

[Yoon Yeong-ho's](#) incorrect claims will be corrected through cross-examination.

Reporting that presents information in a definitive manner despite being inconsistent with the facts constitutes a serious issue that can severely damage the reputation of [this federation](#). We therefore request that reporting be conducted fairly and objectively, based on thorough factchecking."

As the legal proceedings continue, the court will evaluate the credibility of the testimony and the evidence presented by both sides. The case has become a significant topic in South Korea because it combines issues of religion, politics, and legal accountability, and its outcome may certainly influence public perceptions of the [Family Federation](#) and its leadership.

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Featured image above: [Mother Han](#) (left) and Yoon Yeong-ho. The image of [Mother Han](#) is showing how she may well appear now, illustrated by Grok xAI, 21st February 2026. The image of Yoon is a screenshot from a [FFWPU](#) transmission in August 2020.

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