

FFWPU Europe and Middle East: Mother Han Denies Charges, Declines to Testify

Knut Holdhus
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Hak Ja Han, Mother Han, in 2025 in Gapyeong, South Korea



On 12th June hearings at Seoul court, Hak Ja Han denies prosecutors' charges over political funding and uses her right to decline further testimony

On 12th June 2026, the South Korean online news agency NewsPim (뉴스핌) published a [court-reporting article](#) by reporter Lee Ba-reum (이바름) concerning a highly publicized case involving [Hak Ja Han](#) (한학자), the leader of the [Family Federation for World Peace and Unification](#) - in Korea often referred to as [Unificationism](#) (통일교). The case has attracted significant attention in South Korea because it touches on allegations of improper connections between a major religious organization and political figures, a subject often described in Korean media as "church-state collusion" (정교유착 - jeonggyo yuchak).



He was given life sentence, she 4 years in what some perceive as revenge on political opponents: Former South Korean President Yoon Suk-yeol and First Lady Kim Keon-hee, here in Tokyo March 16, 2023

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The [article](#) reports on the appearance of [Hak Ja Han](#) - also called [Mother Han](#) - as a witness before the 27th Criminal Division of the Seoul Central District Court. Although she appeared in court and formally took the witness oath, she ultimately refused to answer questions about

the allegations against her. The [report](#) focuses primarily on what occurred during the hearing itself rather than attempting to determine whether the allegations are true.

According to the [article](#), [Mother Han](#) arrived at court in a wheelchair and required assistance entering the courtroom. The [report](#) notes that she was unable to read the witness oath independently. Instead, her grandson, who accompanied her, read the oath sentence by sentence, and she repeated each sentence after

him. This detail was included because it illustrated both her physical condition and the unusual circumstances surrounding her court appearance.

After the oath had been completed, [Mother Han](#) asked the presiding judge for permission to make a brief statement. Once allowed to speak, she immediately rejected some of the central allegations that have emerged in the broader investigation. She stated that she had never given 100 million Korean won (approximately 65,000 U.S. dollars) to conservative lawmaker Kweon Seong-dong (권성동). She also denied having given gifts to Kim Keon-hee (김건희), the wife of former South Korean president Yoon Suk-yeol (윤석열). In addition, she said that she had never provided political funds to politicians.



[Mother Han](#) went on to criticize [Yoon Yeong-ho](#) (윤영호), a former senior official within the [Family Federation](#). According to the [article](#), she said that [Yoon](#) had been someone she trusted and valued, but that he had created numerous false stories while acting on behalf of the [Unificationism](#) headquarters and affiliated organizations. She described this situation as deeply regrettable.

Having made these remarks, [Hak Ja Han](#) then announced that she would refuse to answer further questions. The [article](#) states that she told the court she had already expressed her position regarding the matters under discussion and therefore would decline to testify. Throughout the remainder of the hearing, she reportedly responded to every question with essentially the same phrase: "I refuse to testify."

The [article](#) notes that lawyers representing [Yoon Yeong-ho](#) attempted to challenge this refusal. They pointed out that [Mother Han](#) had previously provided statements during a special prosecutor's investigation and questioned whether those earlier statements had been inaccurate. Nevertheless, according to the report, she continued to decline answering and repeatedly invoked her refusal to testify.

To help readers understand the significance of the hearing, the [article](#) summarizes the criminal allegations that prosecutors have brought against [Hak Ja Han](#). Prosecutors allege that she conspired with [Unificationism](#) officials, including former chief of staff Jeong Won-ju (정원주) and former [Family Federation](#) executive Yoon Yeong-ho, to provide political funds to politicians.



One allegation concerns the delivery of 100 million won in cash to lawmaker Kweon Seong-dong (권성동) in January 2022. Another allegation concerns the use of [Unificationism](#)-related funds to make what prosecutors describe as divided or split donations totaling 144 million won to members of the conservative People Power Party during March and April of that year.

The [article](#) further states that prosecutors accuse [Mother Han](#) and Yoon of arranging gifts for Kim Keon-hee (김건희) in July 2022. These gifts allegedly included luxury items such as a diamond necklace produced by the British jewelry company Graff and other valuables with a combined value of roughly 80 million won (ca. 52,000 US dollars). According to the [NewsPim report](#), prosecutors also allege that funds belonging to [Unificationism](#) were improperly used or embezzled in order to obtain favors connected to political activities.

Importantly, the [NewsPim article](#) is written as a straightforward report on court proceedings. It does not present the allegations as proven facts. Instead, it reports both the prosecutors' accusations and [Mother Han's](#) denials. The [article's](#) central newsworthy development is not new evidence but rather [Hak Ja Han's](#) decision to appear in court, publicly deny key accusations, state that a former subordinate fabricated claims, and then refuse to provide substantive testimony during the witness examination.

For readers outside South Korea, the case is notable because many regard it as part of the crackdown by the current left-leaning Lee Jae-myung administration on leaders and organizations perceived to have supported the former conservative Yoon Suk-yeol administration. In that process, the former president of South Korea has already been given a life sentence.

The 12th June hearing, as [reported by NewsPim](#), offered a rare public appearance by [Mother Han](#) and provided a glimpse into how she responded to the accusations in this latest hearing in the case against her. As of the date of the [article](#), the charges remained allegations under judicial review, and the hearings are set to continue, so that a final verdict is not expected until late July at the earliest.

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Japan’s Next Step: Indoctrination Of Children

June 10, 2026 • The News Desk

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European human rights expert points out how the Japanese authorities with “cult experts” as advisors have stepped up their assault on large religious minority Family Federation by implementing plan that includes indoctrinating school children



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third installment of her four-part series examining the treatment of the *Family Federation for World Peace and Unification* – formerly the *Unification Church* – in Japan following the government's dissolution proceedings against the movement, Paris-based international human rights attorney Patricia Duval turns her attention to a subject she considers particularly significant: the policies directed toward children of *Family Federation* families.

Published in the human rights and religious liberty magazine *Bitter Winter* on 3rd June 2026, the *article* argues that the Japanese government's response to controversies surrounding the *Family Federation* has evolved beyond legal actions against the *religious organization* itself and now encompasses educational, counseling, and child-protection initiatives aimed at minors whose parents belong to the *movement*.

Duval contends that these measures amount to a state-sponsored effort to indoctrinate children raised in *Family Federation* households and reshape their attitudes and beliefs. According to her *analysis*, the policies are presented by authorities as child-protection mechanisms but function, in practice, as programs designed to persuade children that their parents' religious commitments have harmed them and that they should distance themselves from those beliefs.

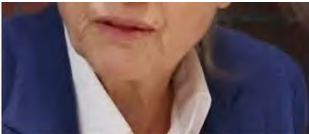
The *article* focuses on two closely connected developments: the governmental action plan adopted in early 2024 and the official guidelines concerning what authorities describe as child abuse linked to religious beliefs. Together, Duval argues, these initiatives establish a framework through which schools, counselors, social workers, and child-protection agencies become active participants in monitoring, identifying, and intervening in the lives of children from certain religious communities.

Educational Programs and Awareness Campaigns

According to Duval, the governmental plan includes a variety of educational and counseling measures directed at young people. These initiatives are incorporated into schools and human rights education programs and are intended to increase awareness of issues associated with religion, particularly in relation to the *Family Federation*. Duval writes,

“The governmental measures adopted in January 2024 implement [...] ‘awarenes-sraising’ sessions organized as part of human rights courses, including ‘consumer education’ on religious donations – as if donations to a church were a matter of *consumer law* – particularly regarding the “criminal financial activities” of the *Unification Church*, to make children ‘aware’ of the problems that may arise from their parents’ membership in that *church*”.

She describes a system in which children are exposed to educational materials discussing alleged religious abuses, including cartoons, online forums, and classroom activities. Additional lessons are integrated into broader human rights and consumer education curricula. These sessions reportedly address religiaious donations and financial



Patricia Duval – Member of the Paris Bar Association, specializing in international human rights law. Has defended the rights of religious and faith minorities both in France and internationally. Photo (2025): *Sekai Nippo*

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Disputed donations. Here, woman offering donation that her son later wanted refunded. Illustration: Microsoft Designer Image Creator, 21st January 2025.

contributions made by members of the [religious organization](#), presenting them as matters that may affect families and children.

Duval emphasizes that the government frames these programs as awareness-raising efforts. However, she argues that their underlying message encourages children to view their parents' religious commitments as inherently problematic. In her interpretation, the educational content is structured to lead children toward the conclusion that membership in the [Family Federation](#) is associated with harmful behavior and that they may themselves be victims of that environment.

The [article](#) further notes that schools distribute materials encouraging students to seek assistance if they have concerns related to religion in their homes. These include contact information for counseling services and written forms through which children can communicate worries or request support.

Counseling and Psychological Intervention

A major concern raised by Duval involves the counseling infrastructure accompanying these initiatives. She notes that counselors involved in the program may receive training from former members of the [Family Federation](#) who are critical of the [movement](#).

In her view, this creates a significant risk that counseling services will not remain neutral. Rather than offering balanced support, she argues, such programs may encourage children to reinterpret their upbringing through a framework that assumes religious involvement is the source of emotional or psychological harm.

The [article](#) also discusses the possibility of referrals to mental health services. Children who express anxiety or distress connected to their parents' religious affiliation may be directed toward psychological evaluation or counseling. Duval questions whether such interventions are based on objective assessments of harm or whether they reflect a broader assumption that membership in a controversial religious group is itself a source of concern.

She suggests that the cumulative effect of these measures is to encourage children to reconsider their parents' beliefs and authority through a lens shaped by state-sponsored educational and counseling programs.

To be continued.

Text: Knut Holdhus, editor

Featured image above: Japanese junior high school students in Kyomizu showing “peace” sign. The persons in the picture have no known relation to the Family Federation. Photo (2009): RageZ / Wikimedia Commons. License: [CC Attr 2.0 Gen](#)

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