

FFWPU Europe and Middle East: Medical Release Extended Again for Mother Han

Knut Holdhus
July 30, 2026



[Hak Ja Han](#), aka. [Mother Han](#), here ca. 2016



Seoul court again extends Hak Ja Han's medical release ahead of August verdict

The South Korean news agency News1 (뉴스1) reports in an [article](#) by reporter Jang Si-on (장시온) on 30th July that a court has once again extended the suspension of detention for [Hak Ja](#)

[Han](#) (한학자), the 83-year-old president of the [Family Federation for World Peace and Unification](#) - in Korea often referred to as [Unificationism](#) (통일교). The extension allows her to remain outside detention while receiving medical treatment. The decision comes just one month before the court is scheduled to deliver its verdict in her trial.



Presiding judge Woo In-seong.
Image: Grok xAI

[Hak Ja Han](#) - also called [Mother Han](#) - was [taken into custody](#) in September 2025, several weeks before being indicted on charges related to alleged political funding violations and other offenses. However, the court later concluded that her health justified a temporary suspension of detention, permitting her to leave the detention center for medical care. Under South Korean law, a suspension of detention is an exceptional measure available when a defendant faces serious circumstances such as severe illness. It does not end the legal proceedings, and the defendant is generally expected to return to custody once the suspension expires.

According to the latest decision by the Seoul Central District Court, [Mother Han](#)'s temporary release, which had been due to end on 31st July, has now been extended until 2nd September.

Her lawyers argued that she continues to suffer from significant medical problems, including recovery from surgery for a fractured shoulder as well as vision difficulties, making detention problematic. The court with Woo In-seong (우인성) as presiding judge accepted those arguments and granted another extension.

This is the seventh suspension of detention granted to [Mother Han](#) since late last year. The court first approved temporary releases in [November 2025](#) (3 days), followed by additional suspensions in [February](#) (10 days) and [March 2026](#) (34 days), each time citing concerns about her health. Since the [end of April](#), the court has not issued entirely new suspensions but has instead extended the existing one on a monthly basis. The latest ruling represents the fourth consecutive extension since [April](#).

The court has also maintained restrictions during [Hak Ja Han](#)'s release. She is permitted to stay only at the hospital where she receives treatment and is prohibited from directly or indirectly contacting anyone connected with the court case.



*Min Joong-gi, the head of an army of special prosecutors with extensive investigative powers.
Image: Grok xAI*



Jeong Won-ju, January 19, 2025



Yoon Yeong-ho, former international HQ director of the [Family Federation](#). Dec. 6, 2020

The repeated extensions have become a point of controversy during the trial. At the closing arguments earlier this month, the special prosecution team, led by Min Joong-gi ([민중기](#)), investigating allegations involving former First Lady Kim Keon-hee ([김건희](#)) questioned whether [Mother Han](#) had received unusually favorable treatment from the court. Prosecutors argued that it is exceedingly rare for an ordinary defendant to remain outside detention for such a prolonged period through repeated suspensions. Although they did not challenge the court's authority to make the decision, they suggested that the lengthy series of extensions created the appearance of preferential treatment.

What the special prosecutors didn't mention, is that it is also "exceedingly rare" to put an octogenarian in poor health through an arduous prolonged detention in a tiny cell.

[Mother Han](#)'s legal team, by contrast, has consistently maintained that the requests are based solely on medical necessity. The court's decisions have likewise cited her health condition rather than any legal or procedural considerations unrelated to her treatment.

According to the [News1 report](#), the court case itself centers on several allegations dating back to 2022. Prosecutors accuse [Hak Ja Han](#) of conspiring with former [Family Federation](#) chief of staff [Jeong Won-ju](#) ([정원주](#)) to provide 100 million won (in 2022 ca. US\$ 77,000) in political funds to former lawmaker Kweon Seong-dong ([권성동](#)). They also allege that 144 million won (in 2022 ca. US\$ 111,000) from [Family Federation](#)-affiliated organizations was donated to lawmakers from the People Power Party during March and April of that year in violation of political funding laws.

In addition, prosecutors allege that [Mother Han](#) conspired with former [Family Federation](#) World Headquarters Director-General [Yoon Yeong-ho](#) ([윤영호](#)) to present luxury gifts worth approximately 80 million won (in 2022 ca. US\$ 62,000), including a diamond necklace made by the British jeweler Graff, to former First Lady Kim Keon-hee ([김건희](#)) on two occasions in July 2022.

At the trial's [closing hearing](#) on 10th July, prosecutors requested a sentence of five years' imprisonment for the alleged Political Funds Act violations and eight years' imprisonment on the remaining charges, including embezzlement. [Mother Han](#) rejected the accusations, telling the court, "I do not seek power through money," and denied any criminal wrongdoing.

The court is scheduled to announce its verdict on 31st August.

Regardless of the outcome, [Mother Han](#)'s current suspension of detention is set to remain in effect until 2nd September, meaning she is expected to remain outside detention while awaiting the court's decision. Whether she ultimately returns to custody will depend on the verdict and any subsequent rulings by the court.

Text: Knut Holdhus, editor

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Double Standard In Religion-Politics Probe?

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A growing political controversy in South Korea is raising questions

about whether investigations into alleged links between religious organizations and political parties are being conducted impartially. An editorial published by the daily *Seoul Shinmun* (서울신문) on 29th July argues that investigators have pursued allegations involving opposition politicians aggressively while showing far less urgency when similar claims concern the governing *Democratic Party*.

The debate centers on the work of a *Joint Investigation Headquarters* (합동수사본부), a task force made up of prosecutors and police officers. The body was established to examine allegations that major religious organizations sought to influence politics through lobbying, financial contributions, or organized party membership. Two religious movements have received particular attention: the *Family Federation for World Peace and Unification* – in Korea generally referred to as *Unificationism* (통일교) – and *Shincheonji Church of Jesus* [See editor’s note below]. Both have faced accusations that some of their members or officials attempted to build political influence, although the specific allegations differ from case to case.

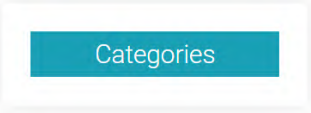
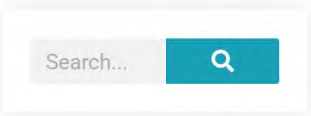
See also *Medical Release Extended Anew for Mother Han* (83)

According to *Seoul Shinmun*, one of South Korea’s oldest newspapers, the concern is not simply whether these allegations are true, but whether investigators are applying the same standards regardless of which political party may be affected.

The newspaper notes that investigators reportedly obtained testimony four months earlier from a former Shincheonji [See editor’s note below] member who claimed that a youth leader within the movement had encouraged members to join not only the conservative *People Power Party* but also the liberal *Democratic Party*. While investigators are said to have secured this statement, the editorial claims they did not follow up by thoroughly examining possible *Democratic Party* involvement.

This alleged lack of action contrasts sharply with the task force’s earlier handling of the *People Power Party*. In February, investigators searched the party’s headquarters as part of an investigation into claims that Shincheonji [See editor’s note below] members had joined the party in an organized manner. Despite strong political objections, authorities obtained party membership records and later indicted Shincheonji [See editor’s note below] Chairman Lee Man-hee (이만희) and others on charges including violations of the *Political Parties Act* and obstruction of business.

The editorial argues that such energetic action toward the opposition creates an unavoidable perception of unfairness if comparable allegations involving the governing party are



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not investigated with equal determination.



Prominent politician in governing party cleared:
Jeon Jae-soo (전재수).
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The newspaper also recalls another controversial decision involving the Family Federation. In April, investigators decided not to refer Busan Mayor Jeon Jae-soo (전재수) for prosecution over allegations that he had received money or other benefits from the Family Federation. Authorities explained that the statute of limitations had expired and that the available evidence was insufficient. Although that decision itself may have been legally justified, *Seoul Shinmun* suggests that the latest questions surrounding the

Shincheonji [See editor's note below] investigation contribute to a broader impression of inconsistent enforcement.

At the center of the editorial is the argument that investigators have not adequately explained why testimony obtained months earlier concerning the *Democratic Party* apparently remained dormant. Even though authorities have reportedly opened a separate investigation more recently, the newspaper maintains that this does not answer the central question of why no meaningful follow-up occurred after the original testimony was secured.

To understand the political background, it is important to know that South Korea has spent several years debating how alleged ties between religious organizations and politicians should be investigated. Lawmakers originally discussed appointing a special prosecutor to examine claims involving both the Family Federation and Shincheonji [See editor's note below]. However, political parties could not reach agreement over the scope of such an investigation – particularly whether Shincheonji should be included. As negotiations stalled, the government instead established the current Joint Investigation Headquarters to examine allegations involving religious influence on politics.

The editorial contends that the task force therefore carries a particularly important responsibility. Rather than focusing on one religious organization or one political party, it is expected to examine all credible allegations of improper relationships between religious groups and political figures. These could include accusations of political lobbying, the provision of money or gifts to public officials, or efforts to influence elections by encouraging members to join particular political parties.

The issue has also begun affecting politics within the *Democratic Party* itself. Ahead of the party's leadership election scheduled for 17th August, leading candidate and former Prime Minister Kim Min-seok (김민석) publicly questioned why no special investigation into Shincheonji [See editor's note below] had ever materialized. His remarks criticized the previous party leadership and highlighted growing internal disagreements over how the controversy has been handled.



South Korean Prime Minister Kim Min-seok (김민석). Photo: *델리민주 [더불어민주당]*. License: *CC Attr 3.0 Unp. Cropped*

In its conclusion, *Seoul Shinmun* argues that public

confidence in the investigation depends on investigators demonstrating complete political neutrality. Whether allegations concern the [Family Federation](#), Shincheonji [\[See editor's note below\]](#), the governing *Democratic Party*, or the opposition *People Power Party*, the newspaper maintains that the same investigative standards should apply. Only an investigation conducted without political exceptions, the editorial concludes, can avoid accusations that justice is being administered selectively rather than impartially.

See also [Medical Release Extended Anew for Mother Han \(83\)](#)

Text: *Knut Holdhus, editor*

Featured image above: *Calls for equal investigation.*
Illustration: ChatGPT, 29th July 2026.

[Editor's note: Shincheonji], officially known as *Shincheonji Church of Jesus, the Temple of the Tabernacle of the Testimony*, is a new religious movement founded in South Korea in 1984 by Lee Man-hee, who claims to be the promised pastor mentioned in the Bible's Book of Revelation.

Shincheonji teaches that the Book of Revelation is being fulfilled through its church and that Lee Man-hee has received divine revelation to interpret it. He teaches that South Korea is the location where the prophecies of the *Book of Revelation* are actively playing out in real-time, making it the epicenter of the final harvest. Shincheonji focuses on filling the literal 144,000 slots of the 12 Tribes mentioned in Revelation. Once this number of truly sealed, flawless believers is completed, they believe they will rule as kings and priests over the rest of humanity.]

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