

FFWPU Europe and Middle East: Former Aide of Mother Han Questioned in Police Leak in Government Gambling Probe

Knut Holdhus
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Alleged police intelligence leak. Illustration: ChatGPT



Yonhap News, Sisa Journal, and Newsis



Jeong Won-ju, Jan. 19, 2025

Former Family Federation aide questioned as witness as special prosecutors trace path of leaked police intelligence in South Korea

South Korea's Second Comprehensive Special Prosecutor Team, headed by Special Prosecutor Kweon Chang-yeong (권창영), has summoned [Jeong Won-ju](#) (정원주), the former chief of staff to [Family Federation](#) President [Hak Ja Han](#) (한학자), as a witness. In South Korea, the [Family Federation](#) is usually referred to as [Unificationism](#) (통일교). [Jeong](#) was questioned as part of the team's continuing investigation into allegations that a police inquiry into suspected overseas gambling by senior leaders of the [religious organization](#) was deliberately suppressed. According to [Yonhap News](#), [Sisa Journal](#), [Newsis](#), and many other media outlets, she was questioned on 31st July. The interview marks the first time she has been questioned by the current special prosecutor team.

Although [Jeong](#) is not being questioned as a suspect in this particular investigation, her position as [Hak Ja Han](#)'s former chief of staff places her at the center of questions about whether confidential police intelligence was passed from law enforcement to [Family Federation](#) officials before any formal investigation began. The special counsel is trying to determine how sensitive police information may have reached both political figures and representatives of the [religious organization](#).

The case has its origins in June 2022, when the Chuncheon Police Station reportedly received intelligence alleging that [Hak Ja Han](#) (한학자) and other senior [Family Federation](#) officials had engaged in gambling at casinos in Las Vegas between 2008 and 2011, involving approximately 60 billion won (around US\$43 million at current exchange rates). According to [Yonhap News](#) and [Sisa Journal](#), investigators allege that instead of pursuing the matter, confidential information about the intelligence was leaked into political circles, preventing a full criminal investigation from taking place.

The current investigation is not primarily about whether the alleged gambling actually occurred. Rather, it focuses on whether police officers or senior officials improperly disclosed confidential investigative intelligence and whether influential figures subsequently ensured that the investigation never progressed. That alleged obstruction has become one of several unresolved issues inherited by the Second Comprehensive Special Prosecutor after three earlier special prosecutor investigations.

Silent Arrival at the Special Prosecutor's Office

According to Sisa Journal and [Newsis](#), [Jeong](#) arrived at the special prosecutor's office in Gwacheon, south of Seoul, at approximately 9:55 a.m. on 31st July before questioning began at 10:00 a.m.



Former lawmaker Kweon Seong-dong, January 2025

Waiting reporters asked her several questions, including whether she had:

- reported investigative information to [Hak Ja Han](#) or other [Unificationism](#) leaders,
- received information about the police investigation from former lawmaker Kweon Seong-dong (권성동) or former [Family Federation](#) World Headquarters Director [Yoon Yeong-ho](#) (윤영호), or
- sought political assistance after learning that police possessed intelligence regarding the gambling allegations.

Both publications report that [Jeong](#) declined to answer any questions, walking directly into the interview room without making any public statement.

What Investigators Want to Know

All three articles mentioned above explain that investigators are particularly interested in determining whether confidential police intelligence reached the [Family Federation](#) before any formal investigation was launched.

According to [Yonhap News](#), earlier investigators had already found indications that [Family Federation](#) officials became aware of the intelligence report and began preparing for a possible police investigation.

[Sisa Journal](#) similarly says prosecutors are examining whether police officers actually conveyed details of the intelligence directly to representatives of the [religious organization](#).



Former South Korean President Yoon Suk-yeol, at the Pentagon, Washington, D.C., April 27, 2023

[Newsis](#) provides the most detailed description of the investigators' current theory. It reports that the special counsel believes former National Police Commissioner Yoon Hee-geun (윤희근) may have leaked police intelligence after receiving instructions from then-President Yoon Suk-yeol (윤석열) to ensure that the [Family Federation](#) could prepare for the investigation. The [article](#) further says investigators suspect Yoon Hee-geun (윤희근) was instructed to prevent any actual investigation from proceeding and that those instructions were passed through the National Police Agency's Criminal Intelligence Division to officials responsible for criminal intelligence within the National Office of Investigation.

These allegations represent the prosecution's current investigative theory. No court has determined that such instructions were actually given.

Earlier Special Prosecutor Investigation

According to [Yonhap News](#) and [Sisa Journal](#), an earlier special prosecutor investigation led by Min Joong-gi (민중기) had already resulted in indictments against former People Power Party lawmaker Kweon Seong-dong (권성동), [Hak Ja Han](#) (한학자), and others.

That earlier investigation concluded that confidential police intelligence had been exchanged but was unable to determine exactly how the information leaked from within the police organization or whether higher-ranking officials had participated in the process. Those unresolved questions have now become the responsibility of the Second Comprehensive Special Prosecutor Team.

Previous Witnesses and Searches

The current investigation has already involved extensive investigative activity.



According to [Yonhap News](#), investigators carried out searches of the National Police Agency, the Gangwon Provincial Police Agency, and the Chuncheon Police Station in April. Former National Police Commissioner Yoon Hee-geun (윤희근) has since been questioned twice as a criminal suspect, while former [Family Federation](#) World Headquarters Director Yoon Yeong-ho (윤영호) and several police officers formerly assigned to the National Police Agency's Criminal Intelligence Division have also been interviewed as witnesses.

Newsis adds that [Yoon Yeong-ho](#) was questioned on 2nd July because investigators believe he received information concerning the police intelligence from former lawmaker Kweon Seong-dong (권성동) in October 2022.

Police Intelligence Reports

The [Newsis article](#) also includes additional details that help explain how the case first developed.



It reports that a police officer formerly stationed at Chuncheon testified earlier this year during [Hak Ja Han](#)'s separate trial on alleged violations of the Political Funds Act. According to his testimony, the Chuncheon Police Station received three separate reports from an insider within the [Family Federation](#) between May and July 2022 alleging that [Hak Ja Han](#) (한학자) frequently engaged in overseas gambling using cash provided by members of the [religious organization](#).

The officer testified that police prepared intelligence reports based on those allegations and entered them into the police intelligence system.

According to [Newsis](#), these reports received the classification "Byeolbo" (별보 - Special Intelligence Report), the highest level of police intelligence reporting, meaning they would also be shared with the South Korean Presidential Office. Nevertheless, the National Police Agency reportedly decided on 15th July 2022, not to assign the matter to criminal investigators, citing insufficient supporting evidence, and instead archived the reports without opening a formal investigation.

Separate Criminal Proceedings

Although [Jeong Won-ju](#) (정원주) appeared only as a witness in this investigation, Sisa Journal notes that she is already standing trial in a separate criminal case.

In that case, prosecutors allege that she conspired with [Hak Ja Han](#) (한학자) and others in 2022 to provide 100 million won (in 2022 ca. US\$ 77,000) to former lawmaker Kweon Seong-dong (권성동) and also arranged so-called "split donations" - the practice of dividing political contributions among multiple nominal donors - using [Family Federation](#) funds to support members of the National Assembly.

Those charges are legally separate from the present investigation into the alleged suppression of the overseas gambling inquiry, although several of the same individuals appear in both proceedings. The questioning of Jeong as a witness suggests that the special prosecutor is continuing to reconstruct the

chain through which confidential police intelligence may have traveled from law enforcement to political figures and, ultimately, to officials within the [Family Federation](#).

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본) 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.

See also **Former Aide Questioned in Police Leak Probe**

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.



Presiding judge Woo In-seong.
Image: Grok xAI, 30th July 2026.

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 (민중기), the head of an army of special prosecutors with extensive investigative powers. Image: Grok xAI, Jan. 2026.

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



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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.



Jeong Won-ju, here 19th January 2025. Screenshot from [FFWPU](#) video.



Yoon Yeong-ho, former international HQ director of the [Family Federation](#). Here, 6th Dec. 2020. Screenshot from [Peacelink TV](#)

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.

See also [Former Aide Questioned in Police Leak Probe](#)

Text: Knut Holdhus, editor

Featured image above: **Hak Ja Han**, aka. **Mother Han**, here ca. 2016. Photo: [FFWPU](#)

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