

FFWPU Europe and Middle East: Gingrich Pressures Seoul to Free Holy Mother Han Han

Knut Holdhus
November 25, 2025



Newt Gingrich (2016) - Above the image: The logos of the papers that carried the ad on Nov. 24, 2025. Besides the photo: The Korean ad and English translation of parts of it.

Placing large ads in South Korean media, Gingrich warns Seoul its values are at stake and urges Lee administration to free 82-year-old religious leader

In a paid print advertisement in major Korean outlets - the Chosun Ilbo, Kyunghyang Shinmun, and Hankook Ilbo - on 24th November, Newt Gingrich, former U.S. House Speaker, strongly urged the Korean government to release [Hak Ja Han](#), by many called [Mother Han](#), the 82-year-old leader of the [Family Federation](#), formerly the [Unification Church](#). The ad is titled "The Korea-U.S. Alliance Is a Values Alliance", and Gingrich frames his call in terms of religious freedom, democratic principles, and shared U.S.-Korea values.



Attorney Kang Shin-eop of "Kang Shin-eop TV", one of Korea's most influential legal commentators, declared the ad a bombshell

Gingrich argues that [Mother Han](#)'s detention is not just a religious matter, but a serious test of Korean democracy: in free societies, he says, religious leaders are not arrested for their religious activities or how they run their church. He describes the South Korean government's legal actions as a "direct infringement" on freedom of religion and conscience.

Newt Gingrich warns that state intervention into religious affairs risks shaking the foundations of Korean democracy and raises a "red flag" to U.S. leaders. He also contends that "selective justice" and the politicization of law enforcement threaten democratic legitimacy.

The former U.S. House Speaker emphasizes [Mother Han](#)'s role in peacebuilding, noting her decades-long leadership, her global work

to promote interfaith dialogue, and the [Family Federation](#)'s public-interest initiatives: peace advocacy, cultural exchange, volunteer programs, and inter-Korean reconciliation efforts. While acknowledging that the [Federation](#) has faced controversy, he argues that "hastily labeling" it as a criminal group would be a "grave misjudgment".

Gingrich points out practical concerns: [Mother Han](#)'s age (82) and the proportionality of detaining such an elderly religious figure. He urges that pre-trial detention should be a last resort, stressing humanitarian and societal consequences.

Newt Gingrich calls on Korean judicial authorities to withdraw excessive detention measures and release [Hak Ja Han](#) immediately, as she has not been convicted. He frames the issue as more than legal: it's a moral test of Korea's commitment to democratic values, religious liberty, and national dignity. He appeals directly to President Lee Jae-myung to "make the right decision".

Finally, Gingrich casts this as a matter of shared values: the U.S.-Korea alliance is not just strategic but bound by freedom. If South Korea sets a precedent of curbing religious freedom, he warns, it risks undermining those shared democratic ideals.



The economic newspaper [Chosun Biz](#) (조선비즈) reported on the ad extensively, summarizing Gingrich's key arguments: religious freedom, non-interference, the risk of politicized justice, and calls for [Mother Han](#)'s release.

Other Korean outlets also covered the ad, highlighting Gingrich's concerns about state overreach and his framing of the case as more than a criminal investigation.



The popular weekly newspaper [Ilyo Shinmun](#) (일요신문) published commentary from political pundits. Professor Shin Yul (Myeongji University) described Gingrich's ad as part of an "aftershock" following [Hak Ja Han](#)'s detention. He noted that the [Family Federation](#) has many foreign followers and significant international influence, but argued that strong foreign backlash (especially from U.S. conservative figures) could complicate the legal process.

Shin also warned of a "hot spot" in U.S.-Korea relations: the [Family Federation](#)'s political connections and backing by high-profile U.S. conservatives could make the case a diplomatic vulnerability.



A column in the major economic daily [Aju News](#) argues that while American conservatives (like Gingrich and Trump) are raising the alarm about religious freedom, Korean media and civic society should also reflect on the legitimacy of the investigations. The column suggests that these global conservative interventions might not just be about liberty - but also about political alliances and

power.



Mike Pompeo February 13, 2022

According to the Korea JoongAng Daily [on 5th September](#), Mike Pompeo, another high-profile U.S. conservative and former Secretary of State, previously condemned the special prosecutor's plans to summon [Mother Han](#), calling such moves a betrayal of democratic principles.

On the conservative commentary front, prominent media personalities and lawyers with conservative audiences for example, attorney Kang - Kang Shin-eop (강신업) - on his [YouTube/live channel](#) - discussed the ad and the legal/political questions surrounding the case; these segments generally echoed concerns about proportionality, the treatment of an elderly religious leader, and the international optics for Korea.

In U.S.-based commentary (e.g., [The Washington Times](#)), Gingrich's stance is framed as part of a broader campaign: that protecting [Mother Han](#) is not only defending religious freedom but safeguarding an international movement for peace.



Ad on front page of the Washington Times 25th November 2025, protesting the long-term detention of Pastor Son Hyun-bo of the large Segyero Church and [Mother Han](#). Ad sponsored by Coalition for Religious Freedom Korea.

Some South Korean analysts express unease about foreign political involvement: that a U.S. politician publicly pressuring South Korea's judiciary could be perceived as interference in domestic affairs.

Others point to the possibility that this is not purely about religious rights, but also about power networks: the [Family Federation](#)'s global reach, its ties to U.S. conservative politics, and potentially the use of Western political capital to defend its leader.

Gingrich's ad raises the stakes for U.S.-Korea relations by framing [Mother Han](#)'s case as a values issue, not just a legal case. It suggests that religious freedom is part of the alliance, not separate from it.

For the South Korean government, responding to such public pressure from a prominent U.S. conservative could be tricky: pushing back may risk accusations of undermining religious liberty, while capitulating could be seen as yielding sovereignty to external actors.

The debate is reigniting broader discussions in Korea about the line between regular law enforcement and politicized justice. Gingrich's "selective justice" warning taps into domestic anxieties about whether legal processes are being used for political ends.

For the [Family Federation](#) and [Hak Ja Han](#), the ad is not just a defense - it's a reaffirmation of their global legitimacy and mission. Support from figures like Gingrich and Pompeo bolsters their narrative of being persecuted for their beliefs and public good work.

Text: Knut Holdhus, editor

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Artistic impression of **Mother Han** in detention cell. Illustration: Grok xAI, October 2025.

It has already been 63 days since **True Mother** entered the facility [Seoul Detention Center], and November now has only one week left. Hoping earnestly for **Mother's** swift return, I would like to share recent news about her with you.

[...] We entered the reception room first, and shortly afterward **Mother** came in by wheelchair. We offered our greetings.

Today as well, **Mother** looked peaceful. However, now that more than two months have passed, [...] and **Mother's** hair had grown noticeably longer down her neck.

When the clock started, Moon Shin-chul (문신출) reported that Moon Hoon-sook (문훈숙), Moon Shin-chul (문신출), Moon Shin-heung (문신흥), and two leaders – Director Kim Eun-sang (김은상), Director Kim Jin-chul (김진출) – had come.

Then **Mother** said to the two leaders,

“You’ve worked hard. You must be the witnesses and teach what the **Family Federation** has done so far throughout the life of the Mother of Peace, **Holy Mother Han**. The people of this nation must know this. World-renowned figures have come to see me, haven’t they? Everyone said it was not right that the Mother of Peace should be in such a place. So, for their sake at least, I must continue my work.”

She also said, “You must unite and let the Korean people know that they are the chosen people.”

One of the leaders mentioned that at the Gangnam Church, Vice President Kim Dong-yeon (김동연) gave a lecture on **True Parents’** life course, and that senior blessed families were revived and 20 new members attended, all of whom were deeply moved.



Kim Dong-yeon, here speaking on 26th October 2025 in Gapyeong, South Korea. Screenshot from PeaceTV.

Mother listened and then said,

“I’ve heard that many young people in Korea are unemployed. We must witness to them, educate them, and open their eyes to the world. For that, language is important. Korean must become a world language. Right now, English is the global language, but the entire world is becoming interested in our culture. If Korean becomes a global language, a peaceful world will come more quickly. Haven’t I often said how important the Korean language is? We must plant in young people a dream for the world.”

[...] Members, **True Mother** said that now that K-culture has become globally influential, if Korean also becomes a world language, then unemployed young people could be trained in Korean-language teaching methods and go overseas. That would solve unemployment, give them dreams for the world, and – as not only K-culture but even further our spirit, our *K-spirit*, spreads globally – the realization of a peaceful world would come more quickly.

Listening to **Mother**, it was all about achieving three things at once,

“How can I help LGBTQ+ young people? How can I plant dreams in young people and open their eyes to the world? How can I hasten world peace?”

Mother is always thinking about this. Her mind and heart are always the same – always for the future generation’s dreams and for world peace.



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A flower field in Ijan, Armenia 6th June 2021. Photo: Ալկնիսյան91 / Wikimedia Commons. License: [CC ASA 4.0 Int](#). Cropped

Recently, members, I read a poem that many of you may know. It is the poem "If I Bloom Alone" (나 하나 꽃피어) by Jo Dong-hwa (조동화). I will read from this short poem:

Don't say,
"What difference would it make
if just one flower – I – were to bloom?"

If you bloom,
and I bloom too,
then in the end, won't the whole field of grass
become a field full of flowers?

Don't say,
"What difference would it make
if just one person – I – were to be dyed with color?"

If I am colored,
and you are colored too,
then in the end, won't the whole mountain
burst into a blazing glow?

Members, as our [church](#)'s difficulties have continued for a long time, this poem deeply moved me. Its message is truly beautiful. A small beginning has the power to transform the whole.

One flower blooming seems to change nothing – but if two, then three bloom, eventually the entire meadow becomes a flower field.



Water drops. Photo: Madhulalu347723 / Wikimedia Commons. License: [CC ASA 4.0 Int](#)

One drop of water seems to vanish quickly – but if drops gather one by one, they become a great ocean.

I believe our faith and devotion are the same.

Will anything really change because I offer devotion alone? Can my one prayer truly bring meaningful change? As difficult times continue, such thoughts may arise. But the small devotion we offer to Heaven always connects, accumulates, and expands.

Each one of us is a microcosm – isn't that extraordinary? Each member's prayer becomes *us*, and we can move the universe. One person's tear, one person's gratitude, one person's dedication is surely added to the great flow of providence.

From a human perspective, my small devotion may seem insignificant. But when that small devotion awakens others, encourages others, colors others – then just as the whole mountain blazes when each leaf changes, our entire community will awaken warmly and powerfully.

It began with one flower but became a whole field. It began with one drop but became the sea. What began as the devotion of a few in early morning prayer has now become a time of devotion shared throughout the world. Through tonight's vigil, I hope that we can go beyond individual devotion and create one great flow of devotion

together.

May today also be a time in which we love our Heavenly Parent, love the [True Parents](#), love one another, and offer devotion in return.

Even now, thinking of our [True Mother](#) enduring the cold weather, let us be grateful for the precious daily life given to us and live with a heart of appreciation.

Wishing peace and happiness always upon your families, I will conclude here.

Thank you.

See also [Mother Han: Prosecutors' Narrative Hard to Prove](#)

See also [Gingrich Pressures Seoul to Free Mother Han \(82\)](#)

Featured image above: Hoon-sook Moon speaking 24th November 2025 in Gapyeong, South Korea. Screenshot from live transmission by [FFWPU](#).

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