

FFWPU Europe and Middle East: S. Korea Holds World's Oldest Pretrial Detainee - Holy Mother Han, Age 82

Knut Holdhus
November 8, 2025



Mother Han returning (in the black car) to Seoul Detention Center on November 7, 2025

Korea JoongAng Daily
return to tiny detention cell

Seoul prosecutors show no humanitarian compassion: Court denies world's oldest detainee's medical leave extension, orders



Mother Han being brought out from Seoul Detention Center in a wheelchair to a waiting car on November 4, 2025



Demian Dunkley, here Oct. 19, 2025

The large newspaper Korea JoongAng Daily reported 7th November that [Family Federation](#) leader [Hak Ja Han](#), also called [Mother Han](#), has returned to detention after a Seoul court denied her request for a longer medical leave. The decision, announced on Friday, ended [Han](#)'s 3-day temporary release, which had been granted to allow her to undergo eye surgery. The Seoul Central District Court's Criminal Division rejected Han's plea for an extension, ruling that the medical treatment for which she was released had already been completed and that there was no justification for further suspension of her detention.

The Chosun Ilbo reported 4th November that [Hak Ja Han](#) had been released that day. According to the JoongAng Daily this was on the condition that she refrain from contact with anyone except medical personnel during her hospital stay. After successfully completing her surgery, [Mother Han](#) applied to extend her temporary release until 13th November, arguing that she required additional time to recover from the operation. However, the court turned the request down and ordered her return to the Seoul Detention Center before the 4 p.m. deadline on Friday 7th Nov.

The JoongAng Daily writes that according to the Special Counsel Min Joong-ki's investigative team, which has been leading the probe into [Mother Han](#), her medical needs had already been met and did not warrant continued exemption from custody. The rejection of [Han](#)'s request underscores the court's strict stance on detention extensions and signals that her ongoing legal proceedings will continue without further medical delays. [Mother Han](#)'s brief hospital stay thus concludes amid heightened scrutiny surrounding her case and the broader investigation into the [Family Federation](#)'s leadership and activities.

Adding to this, Demian Dunkley, President of the [Family Federation](#) in North America, wrote from Seoul in The Monarch Report on X 7th November,

"82-year-old [Hak Ja Han](#) [...] underwent urgent eye surgery on 5th November for her end-stage glaucoma amid a brief suspension of pretrial detention. Facing embezzlement

charges, [Han](#) risks permanent blindness without interventions every four months, yet her release - limited to hospital grounds - ends today, 7th November, mandating an immediate return to the detention center post-procedure.

Medical experts emphasize that recovery from such glaucoma surgeries, like trabeculectomy, requires 4-6 weeks in a sterile, low-stress environment: wearing eye shields, applying drops for weeks to months, avoiding bending, lifting, straining, or irritants to prevent infections or complications that could hasten vision loss - challenges amplified for elderly patients with slower healing and higher risks.

Detention centers, often overcrowded with limited medical oversight, are unfit for this delicate phase, potentially exacerbating her condition through restricted movement and exposure risks. Critics argue the prosecution and judiciary prioritize custody over humane health considerations, raising questions about pretrial practices in South Korea."



In another post on 7th November, Dunkley reports from Seoul,

"82-year-old Dr. [Hak Ja Han](#) - revered as the 'Mother of Peace' - is the oldest person ever in the world to be detained pre-trial. Dr. [Hak Ja Han](#)'s case at age 82 is exceptional not just in South Korea but worldwide.

Pre-trial detention (i.e., held in custody during investigation before a full trial) for political crimes like bribery or corruption is rare for individuals over 80 due to humanitarian considerations, health exemptions, and alternatives like house arrest or bail.

Globally, such cases often involve former leaders from countries with aggressive anti-corruption drives (e.g., Peru, South Korea, South Africa), but documented instances peak in the 70s, with [Han](#) holding the record for age. International norms (e.g., UN Mandela Rules) emphasize alternatives to detention for the elderly to avoid health risks.

Peru leads in prosecuting ex-leaders (5 of last 6 presidents implicated in Odebrecht scandal), but even there, ages top out at 80. In democracies like the US/UK, pre-trial detention for white-collar political crimes is uncommon regardless of age - bail is standard unless flight risk is high.

Even after her recent eye surgery which requires 4-6 weeks of recovery, request for extension on her temporary release was denied by South Korean government. Today is day 46 of her detainment."

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Buddhist Head: “Donations As Spiritual Training”

• November 6, 2025

• Knut Holdhus

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At symposium on dissolution order and liquidation of assets, Buddhist leader brings up highly relevant topic of donations as spiritual training



Tokyo, 3rd November 2025 – Published as an article in the Japanese newspaper [Sekai Nippo](#). Republished with permission. Translated from Japanese. [Original article](#).

Donations Made Without Attachment Are a Form of “Spiritual Training”

Symposium in Shizuoka on the Dissolution Order of the Family

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A symposium was held on 1st November in Shizuoka City to exchange views on the *dissolution order* issued against the *Family Federation for World Peace and Unification* (formerly the *Unification Church*), the issues surrounding its *corporate liquidation*, and Japanese attitudes toward religion.

The event was hosted by the *Shizuoka Prefectural Association for the Protection of Fundamental Human Rights and Freedom of Religion* and drew about 200 participants, with a live broadcast streamed online.

Rev. Shindō Mizuta (水田真道), chief priest of Kongōji Temple (Myōshinji branch of the Rinzai school) in Numazu City, raised concerns about the *Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology's* recent (20th October) guidelines for the *liquidation* of “designated religious corporations” subject to strengthened financial monitoring. He pointed out issues with the clause stating that “the liquidator has the authority to manage and dispose of all property belonging to the liquidated corporation.”

From a religious standpoint, he explained that “donation” is “a form of spiritual training performed without attachment or expectation of return,” and criticized the policy strongly, saying,

“It is unreasonable that not only assets obtained through unlawful acts but also donations sincerely offered by believers are subject to disposal.”



Rev. Shindō Mizuta (水田真道), chief priest of Kongōji Temple in Numazu City. Screenshot from video by *FFWPU*



Rev. Haruhisa Nakagawa (中川晴久), pastor of Christian Church of the Lord's Sheep in Yokohama, here in Shizuoka 1st Nov. 2025. Screenshot from video by *FFWPU*

Rev. Haruhisa Nakagawa (中川晴久), pastor of *Christian Church of the Lord's Sheep* in Yokohama, who has been addressing cases of abduction and forced faith-breaking [See *editor's note below*] suffered by *Family Federation* members, condemned the actions of deprogrammers, saying, “Third parties intervene in families, causing serious divisions and conflicts, and even exploiting them politically. It's truly unforgivable.” He added, “In my estimation, there may be more than 10,000 victims.”

Islamic commentator Humayun A. Mughal expressed concern that “religious hate has increased in Japan over the past year,” and appealed for mutual respect, saying,

“People may hold different beliefs and ideologies, but in the end, what matters most are human beings, life, and the soul. Peace begins from there.”



Religious commentator and journalist Humayun Mughal, here in Shizuoka 1st Nov. 2025. Screenshot from video by *FFWPU*

Featured image above: Participants at the symposium. From left: Rev. Shindō Mizuta (水田真道), chief priest of Kongōji Temple of the Myōshinji branch of the Rinzai school; Islamic commentator Humayun A. Mughal, and Rev. Haruhisa Nakagawa (中川晴久), pastor of the Lord's Sheep Christian Church; – afternoon of 1st November in Shizuoka City, Shizuoka Prefecture. Photo: Takahide Ishii (石井孝秀).

[Editor's note: Coercive faith-breaking (“deprogramming”) in Japan refers to the practice of coercively attempting to separate individuals from their religious affiliations or beliefs, typically through intervention by family members, professional faith-breakers (deprogrammers) or organizations hostile to new religious movements (NRMs). This phenomenon often targets members of such movements, e.g. relatively large faiths like the *Family Federation* or *Jehovah's Witnesses*, but also smaller groups like *Happy Science* (Kōfuku no Kagaku) and other newer religious movements.

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Also subject to faith-breaking attempts: *Members of Soka Gakkai.*
Here students belonging to the faith in 2001. Photo: Wikimedia Commons. License: [CC ASA 3.0 Unp](#). Cropped

However, also Soka Gakkai, a Buddhist-based lay organization with more than 8 million Japanese members, and affiliated with Nichiren Buddhism, has occasionally been subject to faith-breaking attempts.

The practice gained attention in the latter half of the 20th century, particularly in the 1980s and 1990s. Parents or concerned family members often hired faith-breakers who taught them how to abduct and forcibly detain believers. Almost all such cases involved confining the individual believer and cutting him or her off from the religious community. During the confinement, the believer was subjected to intense questioning or indoctrination designed to break his or her faith. The aim was to “rescue” the person from what the family often had been tricked by faith-breakers or lawyers to regard as harmful influence from the religious organization.

Critics of forced de-conversion argue that it violates fundamental human rights, including freedom of thought, religion, and association. Reports of psychological trauma and accusations of unlawful detention have sparked debates over its ethical and legal implications. In response, some religious groups, particularly NRMs, have lobbied for greater protections against such practices.

Japanese courts have been inconsistent in addressing cases of coercive faith-breaking. While some verdicts have condemned the practice as illegal detention, others have been more lenient, citing family concerns about “mental health” or alleged “exploitation” as mitigating factors.]

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