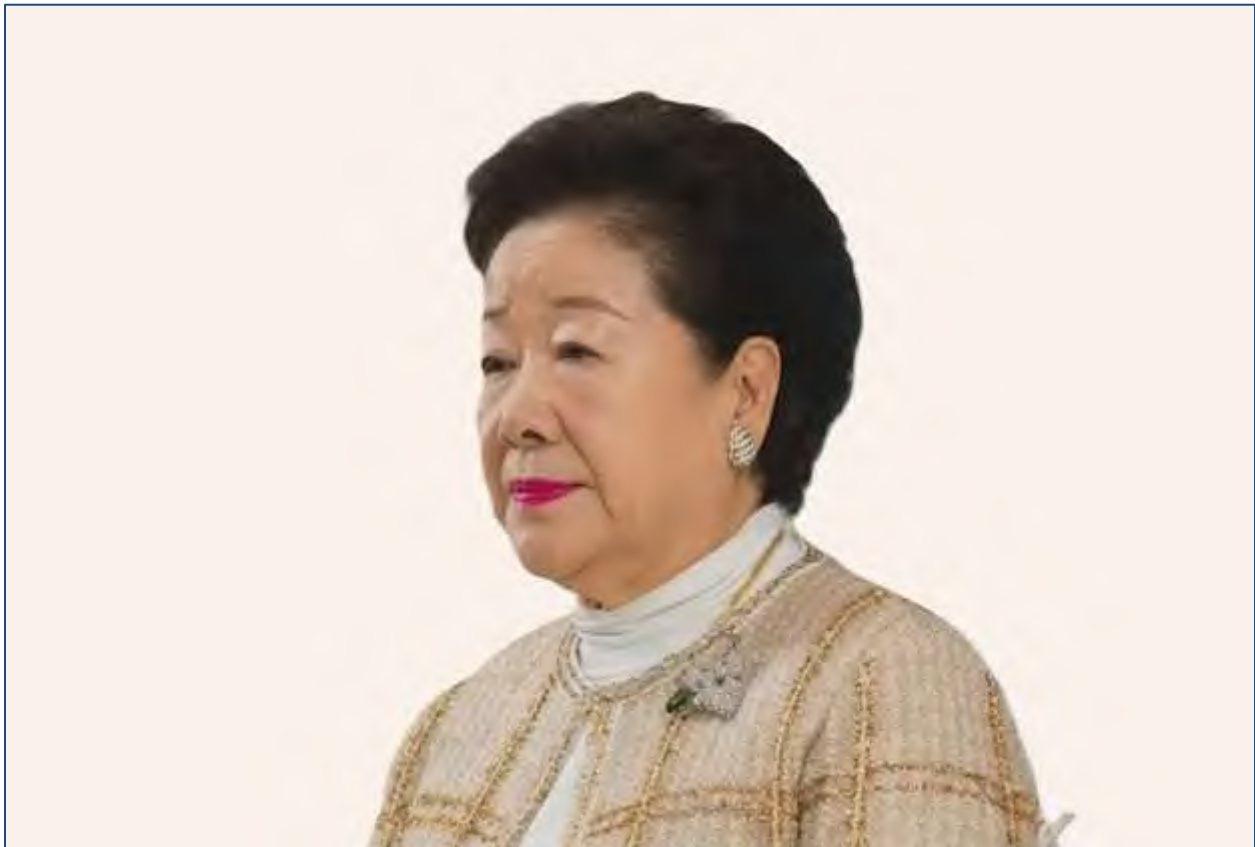
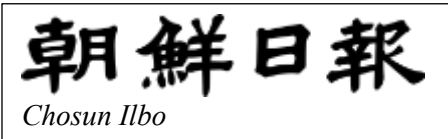


FFWPU Europe and Middle East: S Korea Seeks 13-Year Sentence for Holy Mother Han

Knut Holdhus
July 10, 2026



[Hak Ja Han](#), aka. [Mother Han](#) in 2023



South Korean special prosecutors ask for "death sentence" for religious leader: 13 years in prison for 83-year-old Mother Han

The large South Korean daily Chosun Ilbo reported in an [article](#) by Kim Na-yeong (김나영) on 10th July about the final hearing in the case against [Hak Ja Han](#) (한학자), the longtime leader of the [Family Federation for World Peace and Unification](#), commonly known in Korea as [Unificationism](#) (통일교). Special prosecutors have requested a 13-year prison sentence for the 83-year-old religious leader, whom many call [Mother Han](#). The case is one of the most significant legal proceedings to emerge from the investigation into the relationship between [Unificationism](#) and the administration of former conservative President Yoon Suk-yeol (윤석열).



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

Commenting on the expected deliberately harsh stance of the special prosecutors, in a [statement](#) on 9th July the [Family Federation](#) leadership of North America and Europe claims, "After months of detention and interrogation, the government's case rests on innuendo, association, and a maze of technical accusations that obscure more than they prove."

At the center of the prosecution's case is the allegation that senior figures within the [religious organization](#) cultivated improper political influence by providing money, luxury gifts, and financial support to prominent conservative politicians and public officials. According to the [Chosun Ilbo article](#), special prosecutors led by Min Joong-gi (민중기) argue that these activities amounted to an illegal intertwining of religion and politics that undermined South Korea's constitutional system.

The sentencing request was made on 10th July 2026, during the final hearing before the Seoul Central District Court. A request for a particular sentence, however, does not mean that the defendant has been convicted. Under South Korean criminal procedure, prosecutors

present their recommended punishment before the court delivers its verdict at a later date.

According to the special prosecution team, [Mother Han](#) was not merely aware of the alleged activities but served as the ultimate decision-maker within the [religious organization](#) and was the primary beneficiary of its political lobbying efforts. Prosecutors therefore asked the court to impose a total sentence of 13 years in prison. They proposed five years for alleged violations of the Political Funds Act and an additional eight years for the remaining charges.



Jeong Won-ju, January 19, 2025

The [Chosun Ilbo](#) writes that the case also involves several former senior officials of [Unificationism](#). Prosecutors requested a 10-year prison sentence for former chief of staff [Jeong Won-ju](#) (정원주), describing her as [Mother Han](#)'s closest aide who played a central role in implementing major decisions. They further alleged that [Jeong](#) helped establish off-the-books funds that were ultimately intended for [Mother Han](#).

Former World Headquarters Director [Yoon Yeong-ho](#) (윤영호) faces a requested sentence of three years and six months. Although prosecutors argued that [Yoon](#) committed crimes in order to expand his own influence within the [religious organization](#), they also acknowledged that many of his actions were allegedly carried out under [Mother Han](#)'s direction. [Yoon](#)'s

wife, a former finance director within the [Family Federation](#) identified only by her surname Lee, faces a requested sentence of three years on charges related to embezzlement. Prosecutors stated that while she exercised considerable control over the finances of the [religious organization](#), they took into account her cooperative attitude during the investigation and the fact that she acted under instructions from senior officials.

The prosecution described the case in unusually strong language. It argued that the affair was not simply a matter of campaign finance violations but represented an attempt by a [religious organization](#) to insert itself into the highest levels of government decision-making. According to prosecutors, this conduct disrupted South Korea's constitutional order and amounted to an abuse of state power. They urged the court to impose severe punishments to deter similar conduct by religious organizations in the future.

The [Chosun Ilbo report](#) points out that the charges against [Hak Ja Han](#) cover several separate allegations.



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

One concerns an alleged payment of 100 million won (approximately US\$75,000 at the time) made in January 2022 to People Power Party lawmaker Kweon Seong-dong (권성동). Prosecutors allege that [Mother Han](#), together with [Jeong](#) and [Yoon](#), sought favorable treatment for [Unificationism](#) from the incoming Yoon administration and violated South Korea's Political Funds Act by providing the money.

A second allegation involves what Korean prosecutors describe as "split donations" (쪼개기 후원), a practice in which a large contribution is broken into many smaller donations made under different names or through multiple individuals in order to evade legal limits or disclosure requirements. Prosecutors claim that between March and April 2022, approximately 144 million won in funds connected to Unificationism was distributed in this manner to lawmakers belonging to the conservative People Power Party and other politicians.

Another major allegation concerns luxury gifts reportedly intended for First Lady Kim Keon Hee (김건희). Prosecutors allege that [Mother Han](#) instructed an intermediary, Jeon Seong-bae (전성배), to deliver a Graff diamond necklace and a Chanel handbag to Kim in July 2022. They contend that this violated South Korea's Improper Solicitation and Graft Act, which regulates gifts provided to public officials and their spouses.

Yoon Yeong-ho (윤영호) has also been indicted separately in another criminal case involving alleged bribery. However, in the present proceedings, he is being tried only on charges related to the political donations and associated offenses.

The trial forms part of a broader investigation launched by the current left-leaning Lee Jae-myung

(이재명) administration into allegations that [Unificationism](#) maintained unusually close ties with senior members of the conservative Yoon administration. Since the assassination of former conservative Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in 2022 - which drew international attention to the political connections of the [religious organization](#) in Japan - its activities and influence have come under increased scrutiny. In South Korea, based on those concerns, the Lee administration appointed special prosecutors to start criminal investigations focusing on whether [Unificationism](#) officials sought to influence government policy through unlawful political contributions, lobbying, and the provision of expensive gifts.

The court has not yet issued its verdict. The prosecution's presentation represents only one side of the case, and the defendants remain presumed innocent until the court reaches a final judgment. Nevertheless, the prosecution's request for a 13-year prison sentence against [Mother Han](#) underscores the seriousness with which investigators view the allegations and marks one of the most consequential legal cases involving [Unificationism](#) in South Korea's history.

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FFWPU Europe & the Middle East regarding the upcoming final arguments in the legal proceedings in South Korea involving Dr. Hak Ja Han (83), Co-Founder of the Family Federation.

Official Statement of FFWPU North America and FFWPU Europe & the Middle East on the Case of Republic of Korea v. Dr. Hak Ja Han



Seoul Central District Court. AI-illustration: ChatGPT, 5th July 2026

On July 10, 2026, prosecutors in South Korea are expected to deliver the government’s final arguments against Dr. Hak Ja Han, the Mother of Peace. It seems inevitable that they will ask for a conviction and seek a lengthy prison sentence for an 83-year-old spiritual leader whose life has been defined by the pursuit of peace, unity, and reconciliation for all humankind.

See also [Mother Han: Prosecutors Seek 13-Year Sentence](#)



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

After mobilizing hundreds of police and investigators, and spending millions of dollars, the prosecutors have failed to show that she ordered, directed, or intended any crime. After months of detention and interrogation, the government’s case rests on innuendo, association, and a maze of technical accusations that obscure more than they prove.

As her life story confirms beyond any legitimate challenge, [Mother Han](#) answers to a higher calling. She

knows what is in her heart and what she pursues, and even now, she asks us to respond not with bitterness or fear, but with prayer.

This is not the first time our founders, [Mother Han](#) and her late husband, Rev. [Sun Myung Moon](#) have stood before the powers of this world. Like so many other religious leaders, they have been misunderstood, accused, and persecuted for their faith and commitment to peace.

This moment is larger than one trial. This represents a test of whether people of faith in South Korea can still speak truth to power.

We will keep praying and remain strong. We are confident that the truth will be revealed, and [Mother Han](#)’s work for lasting peace will not stop. As Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. often said, “The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends towards justice.”



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July 3, 2026

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



Co-defendant: Yoon Yeong-ho, here 9th August 2020. Screenshot from video by [FFWPU](#)

[Editor's note: The trial of [Hak Ja Han](#) ([한학자](#)) – also called [Mother Han](#) – is expected to [conclude](#) on 10th July, when the special prosecutors appointed by the left-leaning [Lee Jae-myung](#) ([이재명](#)) administration will deliver their closing arguments and recommend sentences for the defendants. [Dr. Han](#) and her co-defendants will then present their final statements before the court retires to deliberate and reach its verdict.

The case has become one of the most prominent examples of what South Korean media have described as “religion-politics collusion” – the alleged improper intertwining of religious organizations and political power. At the same time, the investigation has drawn criticism from opponents of the administration of [Lee Jae-myung](#) ([이재명](#)), as well as from those who argue that the special prosecutors have been granted unusually broad powers to investigate political and religious figures perceived to have supported the former administration of [Yoon Suk-yeol](#) ([윤석열](#)). These critics contend that the investigation, initiated under Lee’s administration, constitutes a campaign targeting political and ideological opponents.

The 27th Criminal Division of the *Seoul Central District Court*, presided over by Judge [Woo In-seong](#) ([우인성](#)), is expected to deliver its ruling several weeks after the final hearing on 10th July. That’s not, however, the end of the story. A second “religion-politics collusion” case is due to open as soon as the first one is ended.]

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Featured image above: [Hak Ja Han](#), aka. [Mother Han](#), in [Gapyeong](#), South Korea in 2025. Photo: Screenshot from video by [FFWPU](#), improved for higher resolution and sharpness by [Grok xAI](#), 13th June 2026.

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