

Statement on Verdict Concerning Dr. Hak Ja Han

August 31, 2026



The Universal Peace Federation (UPF) notes with deep concern the first-instance ruling issued today by the Seoul Central District Court in the proceedings concerning Dr. Hak Ja Han, co-founder of UPF.

UPF is an international non-governmental organization holding General Consultative Status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council. Founded in 2005, it convenes thousands of Ambassadors for Peace—women and men of diverse national, cultural and religious backgrounds—who share a commitment to building a peaceful and unified world grounded in dialogue, reconciliation and service.

Dr. Hak Ja Han has been a central figure in advancing that vision for decades. She has supported sustained initiatives for interreligious cooperation, humanitarian service and the peaceful reunification of the Korean Peninsula. Their work has connected Korea with leaders and communities across many regions and has contributed to a wider appreciation of Korea's role in advancing peace.

Together with the late Rev. Dr. Sun Myung Moon, Dr. Han helped bring international attention to the challenges facing not only the people of Korea, but those across the world who suffer the consequences of conflict, poverty, human rights violations and environmental devastation. Her longstanding engagement with religious and political, civil-society actors and those who sustain United Nations-related platforms is a matter of public record and remains part of the foundation upon which UPF continues its global work.

Throughout the legal proceedings of recent months, Dr. Han has cooperated with utmost dignity, while respectfully maintaining her innocence. Her counsel has contested the assertion that she personally authorized, directed or knowingly participated in the acts alleged by the prosecution. Substantial questions concerning the evidence, individual responsibility and the applicable legal interpretation remain subject to appellate review.

No single first-instance judgment, especially one that raises more questions than it answers, can redefine a lifetime of public work or displace the record she has established over many decades. For those throughout the UPF community who have worked with her and witnessed that record firsthand, her life remains a testimony to her exemplary character, blameless intentions and enduring commitment to peace.

History offers many examples of religious reformers and spiritual leaders whose purposes were misunderstood, whose work met determined opposition, and who at times endured persecution. Over time, however, greater wisdom has prevailed, making it possible for their lives and contributions to be assessed in a broader light than was possible amid the controversies of their own day. Without prejudging the legal process, UPF believes that Dr. Han's life and work must be, and eventually will be viewed in that wider perspective—through the record of what she has sought to build and the communities she has served.

Seen in this context, UPF remains concerned by the humanitarian dimension of the case, including the two-year imprisonment of an elderly religious leader. Whatever the final judicial determination, questions of proportionality, human dignity and fundamental rights warrant careful and continuing consideration.

Today's decision does not conclude the judicial process. UPF trusts that the appellate courts will, with the requisite independence, impartiality and care expected, examine the full evidentiary record, the question of individual responsibility and the legal issues raised by the defense.

UPF calls upon its Ambassadors for Peace and partners worldwide to continue their work of dialogue and service. Dr. Han would have it no other way. The most constructive response remains the patient pursuit of justice through lawful means and a steadfast commitment to the principles of peace, reconciliation and human dignity that Dr. Han has championed throughout her public life.

Dr. Tageldin I. Hamad
President, UPF-International