

Faith dragged into the Colosseum - When the State turns faith into a spectacle of control

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Illustration on a war on religion by [Linas Garsys/The Washington Times](#)

In Korea today, the most dangerous thing you can be is faithful.

On July 18, 2025, South Korean prosecutors launched a shocking assault - raiding multiple Family Federation facilities and storming the private residence of Dr. Hak Ja Han, known lovingly around the world as Holy Mother Han, the Mother of Peace, and the most prominent female spiritual leader on the planet.

Over 1,000 agents surrounded the property. Without warning, they entered sacred spaces revered by believers around the world. They turned a sanctuary into an evidence locker, rifled through personal items, and treated the home of an 82-year-old religious woman like a crime scene.

And yet - no indictment. No charges. Just a name on a list, and a silence too loud to ignore.

Dr. Hak Ja Han has spoken at the United Nations, launched peace summits across every continent, and worked with leaders in over 190

countries to help families heal. Today, she is working boldly for the reunification of the Korean peninsula - a vision that transcends politics and borders. Could that mission be part of why she is under such pressure now? In a region shaped by division and power struggles, our movement's call for peace may be more threatening than many care to admit.

This was not just a legal raid. It was a rupture in the nation's moral order - the kind that wounds more than one household, and echoes through the conscience of a people.

To treat her as a criminal is unthinkable - and a warning to us all.

And yet, it is not isolated.

The same week, prosecutors raided Yoido Full Gospel Church - Korea's largest Pentecostal congregation - and Far East Broadcasting, a major Christian media outlet. Their leaders were branded by innuendo and paraded before the press. The charges? Vague lobbying. No convictions. No verdicts.

This is not justice. It is theatre.

The special prosecutor's office in Korea has a growing record of overreach against minority faiths - from Shincheonji to the World Mission Society Church of God. Sweeping raids. Camera crews. Media trials. It is a pattern.

"While specific members who caused problems should be investigated, it is unacceptable to label the religious organization and its leaders as a criminal group without clear evidence," said Massimo Introvigne, President of the World Council of Religions for Peace.

International concern is growing. In 2024, the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom sent a delegation to Seoul, while Human Rights Watch highlighted a broader erosion of civil liberties - including on protest and minority rights. Even Korea's own Human Rights Commission has called for

protecting religious freedom as a cornerstone of democracy.

The consequences are already visible. As Introvigne further warns, "We have seen hate crimes and violations of human rights just because they are Shincheonji," and in some cases, "violations that led to death." He reveals a chilling reality, that religious minorities in Korea are often stigmatized not for wrongdoing, but simply for existing.

This pattern extends across democracies beyond Korea. Introvigne notes that governments often use the label 'cult' to justify regulation and suppression - a tactic repeatedly criticized by international courts as discriminatory and unlawful.

South Korea, once admired for its cultural innovation, now risks becoming defined by political spectacle and institutional overreach. News programs resemble game shows. Elections are broadcast with dragons and avatars. And now, the government has made a raid on a religious leader look like just another media event.

We've seen this playbook before in Japan. After the assassination of Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, the attacker's personal vendetta was redirected into a media frenzy against our church. The gunman's name faded, and false headlines stuck. An entire movement was scapegoated.

As Dr. Hwangbo recently warned, "We are seeing the same judicial proceedings and attack methods against the Family Federation that were mainly conducted in Japan now being carried out in Korea. It appears that Korea's new government is also oppressing the Family Federation and other religions."

The pattern is undeniable. Whether by intention or inertia, South Korea appears to be following the same script.

Two thousand years ago, believers were dragged into coliseums for the spectacle of the empire. Today, the arenas are digital. The weapons are headlines. But the intent is the same: To shame the faithful into silence - and to distract the public while power consolidates behind the cloud of dust.

This isn't justice for the people - it's a performance for power. This is about eradicating political enemies. And the public, whether they know it or not, is being asked to applaud their own deception.

Until now, we have remained restrained. The Family Federation has fully cooperated. The inquiry centers on a former church official accused of offering gifts to a former First Lady. From day one, we answered every inquiry and followed every rule.

In return, we've been met with raids, leaks, travel bans, and public slander.

I was literally boarding a flight to Korea when I got the message that they were raiding Cheongpyeong, and that agents were already inside Mother's room. When I landed, our members were still in a state of shock.

I had read in the news that hundreds of our young people were ordered to block the police - blaring headlines over pixelated photos of crowds at the gates. But when I arrived, I saw the truth. They had simply gathered outside the walls, praying and singing hymns of peace, as busloads of police seized control of the grounds with military precision.

And yet, the media painted the police as the victims.

When I met True Mother, she was composed, but there was a weight behind her calm that I will never forget. She spoke softly, not in fear, but with a sorrow so deep it made the air in the room feel heavier. She shared how investigators had gone through her drawers, and how certain items - things symbolic of her mission and legacy - were now missing. Among them, she said quietly, were her pearl necklace and earrings: "the ones I wore on the world tour are gone."

There was a pause in the room. A silence not of absence, but of gravity. The kind of silence that follows something sacred being touched by hands that do not understand it.

But this is not a woman focused on herself. Instead, she reflected on how this moment was much more than a violation of privacy or dignity, it was a profound wound to the soul of Korea itself. As she spoke, I could feel her heartbreak - not for what was taken from her, but for what might be lost spiritually if this nation she loves dearly fails to confront this injustice with conscience and humility.

This is not just about one faith group. This is about religious freedom for all people.

Whether you are Christian, Buddhist, Muslim, or atheist, what happened in Korea is one of the clearest

recent tests of the world's commitment to conscience.

Under Article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, every person has the right to believe, to worship, and to live according to conscience - "either alone or in community with others."

That right was violated on July 18. And if the world ignores it, it won't stop here.

I do not speak today just as a pastor. I speak as a son. As a man of faith. As someone who believes truth - however inconvenient - still matters.

They may drag us into the arena, but we will not be silent.

We stand with Holy Mother Han - not because she is accused, but because we know her character, record, and truth.

So we say to the world: Watch Korea closely. The way a nation treats its faithful is a mirror of its future.

And to every leader with a conscience: Do not wait until it's your altar, your prayer, your people.

The line has already been crossed.

It's time to draw it back. Because if we lose the courage to protect faith, we lose the right to call ourselves free.

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