

FFWPU USA: Continued Persecution in Korea

Demian Dunkley
May 15, 2026



FAMILY FEDERATION

The Newsletter

May 15, 2026

Hello family. Quick Connect update. Beyond the leader part 2. New raids on Family Federation locations. New Un Jin Moon prints for purchase. Sunday service livestreams.

News

Quick Connect: Continued Persecution in Korea



On Today's Quick Connect: A new Bitter Winter article on guilt by association, and the church in Korea faces a new embezzlement investigation just days after a bribery case was dropped.

[watch here](#)

Beyond the Leader Part 2: The Legal Effects of Guilt by Association



The first article in this series examined how media narratives can transform accusations against leaders or prominent members into a totalizing image of the group as a whole. This second article follows that process into the realm of state action, where the same mechanism may influence not only public opinion but also the legal and political treatment of religious minorities.

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Family Federation Faces New Embezzlement Investigation Days After Bribery Case Dropped



South Korea has seen repeated legal scrutiny of the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification (Unification Church) over the past year. According to the report, prosecutors recently dropped a bribery case against the organization due to insufficient evidence and an expired statute of limitations. However, on May 6th, the same joint prosecution-police task force conducted raids on 10 sites, including the church's Seoul headquarters and the Hyo Jeong Global Unification Foundation, this time on charges of aggravated embezzlement under the Special Economic Crimes Act.

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BACK TO OUR
ROOTS

NEW ART BY
UNJIN MOON

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“Personally, I think at a time like this, it is crucial to think back to the origins of our movement and what we stood for. That to me is what my parents are about ... to this day, we are fighting against socialism and communism and asking for religious freedom.”

—Unjin Moon

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REV. DUNKLEY ON X



@DEMIANDUNKLEY



Speak up on social media

Share this injustice and your personal testimony on social media. Facts and articles to share about her detention can be found in the News section of MotherOfPeace.com and by following Rev. Dunkley on X.

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Beyond the Leader. 2. The Legal Effects of Guilt by Association

by Maria Vardé | May 14, 2026 | [Featured Global](#)

In addition to ready-made stories for sale, the media can also produce scripts for more aggressive forms of state control.

by *Maria Vardé*

Article 2 of 4. Read [article 1](#).



Unification Church members protesting for religious liberty in Hiroshima, Japan, in 2024.

The first article in this series examined how media narratives can transform accusations against leaders or prominent members into a totalizing image of the group as a whole. This second article follows that process into the realm of state action, where the same mechanism may influence not only public opinion but also the legal and political treatment of religious minorities.

A particularly clear example can be found in Japan, after the assassination of former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in July 2022. The perpetrator, Tetsuya Yamagami, [stated](#) that he hated the Unification Church (now called the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification) because his mother had made excessive donations to it many years earlier, and that he targeted Abe because of the former prime minister's public proximity to organizations connected with the movement. In the months that followed, however, media outlets and anti-cult discourses [reshaped the public meaning of the crime](#). Yamagami was increasingly moral agent responsible for the assassination.

That reversal was not merely rhetorical. It created the political and emotional climate in which the Japanese government changed its interpretation of the law governing religious corporations. As attorney [Patricia Duval has analyzed](#), the law had traditionally been understood as allowing dissolution only in cases involving proven criminal offenses. After Abe's assassination and the intense public campaign that followed, however, past civil litigation concerning donations came to be treated as sufficient grounds to request the dissolution of the Unification Church. The Tokyo District Court and, later, the Tokyo High Court accepted this new interpretation.

Under that frame, Abe's assassination, earlier civil disputes, and anti-cult interpretations of the Church's beliefs merged into a problematic public and legal narrative. That narrative did not simply identify wrongful conduct committed by specific individuals. It reconstructed the Church as an organization whose proselytizing, donation practices, and doctrinal formation were [allegedly based on "brainwashing" or "mind control."](#) From that perspective, religious education aimed at salvation within the Church was read not as part of the believers' spiritual life, but as a mechanism designed to extract money. The expressed will of members who had donated was disregarded on the assumption that they had not acted freely, and even the absence of new complaints was explained by claiming that the faithful remained too influenced to recognize their own harm.

This reasoning transformed the Church into a [structurally fraudulent and socially harmful entity](#). Although an appeal to the Supreme Court remains pending, the immediate consequences were severe. Places of worship were closed, assets and bank accounts were transferred to a liquidator, and the religious life of ordinary believers was directly affected by a process that treated the organization itself as extinguishable.

Mother Hak Ja Han Moon, leader of the Unification Church, was incarcerated in connection with allegations that one of her associates had given bribes to politicians and to the former president's wife. She maintains that this happened

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politicians and to the former president's wife. She maintains that this happened without her knowledge or consent. The controversy then moved toward a broader political initiative. In early 2026, a bill publicly known as the "Church Dissolution Act" was introduced in the National Assembly. The proposal would allow the state to inspect religious organizations compulsorily, interrogate their leaders, revoke their legal status, dissolve them, and absorb their assets.



Mother Hak Ja Han Moon.

Although the text of the bill was framed in general terms, the political discourse around it made clear which groups were being targeted. The Unification Church and Shincheonji appeared as the immediate examples of movements requiring extraordinary supervision. The measure was presented as a response to alleged political interference by religious groups, but its language was broad enough to potentially affect any religion regarded as politically problematic. In this context, anti-cult discourse converges with a rhetoric of state protection against religious influence, producing a legal vocabulary in which some movements are treated less as communities of believers than as risks to be managed.

The Korean case is important because it extends a process already visible in Japan. Whereas the Japanese dissolution followed a specific public crisis triggered by Abe's assassination and by a long-standing campaign against the Unification Church, the Korean bill appears as a general instrument of state power over religious organizations. Its objective is not to respond to a particular controversy, but to create a mechanism through which the state may supervise, suspend, or eliminate religious bodies whose activities are interpreted as socially or politically dangerous.

A different but related problem can be observed in Argentina, where anti-trafficking law has intersected with anti-cult repertoires in cases involving religious or spiritual minorities. In these cases, notions such as psychological manipulation, coercive organization, spiritual dependence, and sexual or labor exploitation may be combined in ways that make religious belonging itself part of the suspicious structure. The legal category is human trafficking, but the narrative through which the case is publicly and institutionally organized may come from the older anti-cult imagination of the manipulative leader, the captive follower, and the hidden network.

The case of Konstantin Rudnev illustrates this dynamic with particular clarity. The earlier media construction of Ashram Shambhala became crucial when Rudnev was arrested in Argentina in 2025 and formally charged in a human trafficking case. The Argentine case did not arise from the initial discovery of an organized criminal network, but from suspicions activated in a hospital and migration context and then rapidly reframed as a case involving a "Russian cult," despite the alleged victim's denial that she was a victim. At the formalization of charges hearing, prosecutors began by reading Montenegrin headlines, themselves largely copied from Russian sources, and then suggested that Rudnev was organizing a network in Argentina. In this way, the case was [framed from the outset](#) as an "international criminal organization," before the prosecution had analyzed the evidence. According to what prosecutors admitted at the last hearing held on April in Bariloche, that analysis had still not been carried out.



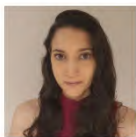
Konstantin Rudnev in Montenegro, 2024

Rudnev had already been represented for years in Russia as the leader of a criminal “cult,” after a trial that serious observers have described as based on false accusations and inseparable from the broader Russian pattern of [fabricating or amplifying accusations against dissidents and religious minorities](#). Once that image traveled through Russian and Montenegrin press materials, it became available as a ready-made explanation in Argentina. Before the local evidence had been fully examined, the figure of the “Russian cult” offered a narrative structure capable of linking hospital suspicions, migration status, foreign women, spiritual background, and trafficking law into one apparently coherent—but evidentially fragile—case.

The Japanese, Korean, and Argentine situations are not identical. Yet these scenarios are connected by the same movement from public suspicion to institutional consequence. Once this passage occurs, guilt by association no longer operates only as a cultural stigma; it becomes embedded in procedures, legal categories, and administrative decisions. This is the point at which guilt by association reaches its most consequential form. The label does not merely damage reputation, although it does that as well. It creates the conditions under which belonging to a stigmatized group can acquire legal significance.

In this sense, guilt by association functions as a mechanism of social control over religious diversity. Its effectiveness lies in the fact that it rarely appears as discrimination. It is more often expressed through languages that sound legitimate and reassuring, such as protection of victims, public good, legal rationality, social order, or national security. Yet when those languages allow the alleged responsibility of individuals to be projected onto entire communities, they transform stigma into structure. What began as a media narrative can then become a legal fact, and what began as suspicion can end in the restriction, supervision, or dissolution of religious life itself.

[Anti-Cult, Brainwashing, Religious Liberty](#)



Maria Vardé

Maria Vardé graduated in Anthropological Sciences at the University of Buenos Aires and is currently a researcher at the Instituto de Ciencias Antropológicas, Facultad de Filosofía y Letras, Universidad de Buenos Aires (Institute of Anthropological Sciences, Faculty of Philosophy and Humanities, University of Buenos Aires). She has written and lectured on archeology, spirituality, and freedom of religion or belief.



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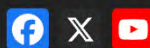
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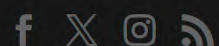
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Family Federation Faces New Embezzlement Investigation Days After Bribery Case Dropped.

South Korea has seen repeated legal scrutiny of the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification (Unification Church) over the past year.

According to the report, prosecutors recently dropped a bribery case against the organization due to insufficient evidence and an expired statute of limitations.

However, on May 6th, the same joint prosecution-police task force conducted raids on 10 sites, including the church's Seoul headquarters and the Hyo Jeong Global Unification Foundation, this time on charges of aggravated embezzlement under the Special Economic Crimes Act.

This marks the third confirmed raid in 11 months.

This pattern of investigations occurs amid broader public and political debates about the church's activities and its legal status.

In a democracy, the timing and sequence of such probes can raise questions about consistency in law enforcement and the balance between accountability and due process, particularly when they involve religious organizations.

Such developments are important for society to follow because they touch on fundamental issues of religious freedom, the independence of the justice system, and public trust in how high-profile cases are handled.

When legal actions against religious groups appear to follow one another rapidly, citizens have a legitimate interest in assessing whether they reflect genuine enforcement or broader institutional and political dynamics.

Do you believe the sequence of investigations into the Family Federation demonstrates fair and consistent application of the law, or does it suggest possible political influence on the justice process?



5:57 PM · May 14, 2026 · 1,816 Views

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Ernst Spari @ErnstSparix · 23h Behind these "investigations" lies a picture of persecution. If no legal violations have occurred, yet charges are repeatedly sought, political motives are likely at play. FFWP is currently suffering persecution that should never happen in a democracy.

Timothy Capps @tcfishn98 · 20h Political influence on the justice system. #ReligiousFreedom #ReleaseTheMotherOfPeace

Ulrich Ganz @ganz_ulrich · 22h A democratic state must protect religious minorities with the same commitment and dignity afforded to majority belief systems. Weaponizing media narratives and state power against minority religions puts religious freedom at risk.

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FFWPU Europe & Middle East @ffwpueume · May 15
We are very concerned about the restrictions on the religious freedom of South Korean citizens. Religious freedom is a fundamental human right and must be respected, and every investigation and legal process must be fair and just, in accordance with the law. #ReligiousFreedom

1 7 23 155 6



Abenaki @AbenakiTcham · May 15
If course this attack is a criminal political oriented attack! They will create any fake things to destroy us!
#religiousfreedom
#truthshallberevealed

1 1 3 81 6



Kathy @Kathy3k4 · May 14
Yes one raid after another; and one charge after another! Seems like they are just targeting Dr Han, founder of Family Federation! One statute of limitations expired and they want to start another charge. Dr Han is 83 and now recuperating in a hospital due to 7 months of
[Show more](#)

1 6 16 168 6



Gabor Vasmatics @GaborVasmatics · 23h
It does not look fair at all. It looks more like a desperate attempt to find anything that can justify their excessive use of force.

1 4 8 80 6



Fjoralba Hysa @hysa_fjoralba · 21h
When will they stop with this unjust political war?

3 5 60 6



Alan Jessen @ARJ1308 · 11h
When you have unlimited political power and a muzzled, timid media, you can create a story that you want. This is the opposite of the "blind lady" justice. Sad for Korea.

4 39 6



Karen @Karen95716968 · 5h
They seem bound and determined to find something. It looks very obvious. #religiousfreedom is attacked.

2 18 6



Assaa(あっさー) @tobira_mukou · 18h
It looks like they won't stop until they find any piece of evidence.

1 42 6



東京LIFE @keisukebot · 8h
Translated from Japanese [Show original](#)
● The Truth of the Unification Church: The Struggles of Second-Generation Blessing Members
youtu.be/BrjWA_1Nc4o
(Hong Nan-sook English Edition)

youtube.com
統一教会の真実 祝福2世の苦勞
Enjoy the videos and music you love, upload original content, and share it all with friends, family, and th...

42 6



がんちゃん @hNj4l7yjn32435 · 9h
#重要なメッセージ

3 29 6



Kaarina Jager @KJager88655 · 1h
Tragedy for democracy in South Korea.

5 6



Sophie Tanemori @sophie_wu63935 · 15h
Targeting a religious group with repeated raids and investigations while cases are dismissed for lack of evidence raises serious concerns about political influence and religious freedom.

In a democracy, the law must be applied fairly and consistently — not used as a tool to
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2 41 6



Monika Dearing @DearingMon50379 · 19h
This soundsquite dangerous and unjust to me!!!

2 4 38 6



Dumas Maria Evi @evi54768_evi · May 14
#ReligiousFreedom #ReleaseTheMotherofPeace #GodsDreamOneFamily

2 3 78 6

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A curated collection of oil paintings by Unjin Moon expressing the beauty of Holy Mother Han, Sun Myung Moon, and the Cheon Won complex and celebrates the lives and ministry of our True Parents.



Back To My Roots 30x40 oil on canvas



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You and Me 30x40 oil on canvas



Hak Ja Han 30x40 oil on canvas



Sun Myung Moon 30x40 oil on canvas



Monarch Butterfly 30x40 oil on canvas



Rise Oil 30x40 oil on canvas



Dream's Fishing Ground 30x40 oil on canvas



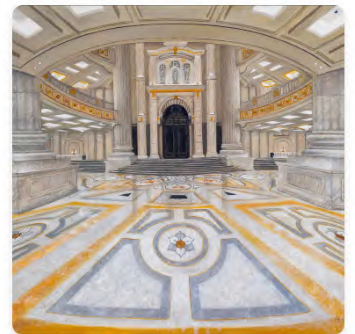
Two Become One 30x40 oil on canvas



Rare Encounters 40x30 oil on canvas



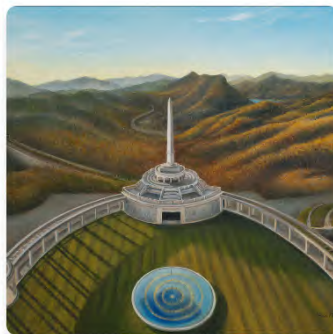
Cheon Won Gung 40x30 oil on canvas



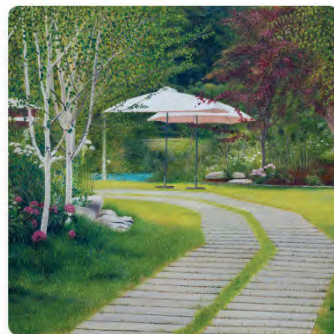
Cheon Won Gung Lobby 40x30 oil on canvas



Cheonil Sanctum 40x30 oil on canvas



Cheon Seung Monument 40x30 oil on canvas



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