

FFWPU Europe and the Middle East: Democratic Party of South Korea's Assault on Family Federation

Knut Holdhus
October 17, 2025



Elderly woman in wheelchair attacked by fierce red dragon. Illustration: Microsoft Designer Image Creator

In South Korea, the ruling Democratic Party appears to be waging an all-out campaign to discredit and dismantle the Family Federation



The South Korean daily [Segye Ilbo](#) published on 16th October 2025 an article which in English would be headlined "[Relentless Assault on the Family Federation - The True Face of Politics That Has Lost Fairness](#)" [[Religious Column](#)]" . The piece was written by Religious Affairs Reporter Jeong Seong-su (정성수).

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According to Jeong, in South Korea, the ruling Democratic Party appears to be waging an all-out campaign to discredit and dismantle the [Family Federation](#) for World Peace and Unification ([FFWPU](#)) - formerly known as the [Unification Church](#) - and its affiliated organizations. To many observers, the attacks seem less about accountability and more about political theater, exposing a troubling erosion of fairness in Korean politics.

At the center of the controversy is an 82-year-old woman suffering from heart disease, the [Federation's](#) president, who is currently in detention. Despite her condition, the authorities and certain lawmakers have intensified scrutiny not only on the [Family Federation](#) itself but also on its partner institutions, such as the Korea Religions Association and Sun Moon University, which the [Federation](#) founded. The tone of this pursuit has raised concerns about bias and disproportionate pressure against a single religious community.

A Disputed Financial Controversy



The [Segye Ilbo article](#) reports that Democratic Party lawmaker Jeong Eul-ho (정을호) during a parliamentary audit of the Education Committee on 14th October, claimed that the Ministry of Education's financial support for Sun Moon University had "soared" from 11.7 billion won in 2020 to 25.8 billion won in 2024 - more than doubling in just four years. The lawmaker accused the [Family Federation](#) of having "extended its tentacles into the education sector under the Yoon Suk-yeol (윤석열) administration."

The remark quickly made headlines. Many Korean media outlets repeated the claim with little to no verification, fueling suspicions that the university's growth was the result of political favoritism or religious influence.

The [Segye Ilbo](#) describes how Sun Moon University responded immediately with a rebuttal. The increase in funding, it explained, was part of a nationwide policy to expand financial support for universities - not a case of special treatment. Nearby institutions received similar boosts: one saw a 172% rise, another 212%, and others well over 170%. The data, in other words, reflected a general trend.

Yet by the time the facts emerged, the damage to public perception was done. The narrative that Sun Moon University - and by extension, the [Family Federation](#) - was "corrupt" or "improperly connected" had already spread. Some outlets even used sensational headlines suggesting collusion between the [Federation](#) and President Yoon, further amplifying the controversy.

Fact-Checking Fails in Parliament



Religious Affairs Reporter Jeong Seong-su portrays how the attacks did not end there. Another Democratic Party lawmaker, Moon Jeong-bok (문정복), brought up the Korean Religious Development Forum, alleging that former leaders of the Korea Religions Association - an organization historically linked to the [Family Federation](#) - had joined the forum in an attempt to "control" it.

Her assertion, however, was factually incorrect. The forum was actually founded in 2019 by Professor Park Jae-gap (박재갑), a respected cancer researcher and former professor at Seoul National University. The organization's purpose is academic and interfaith in nature, not political. It is unclear whether Rep. Moon conducted any factual checks before making her claims.

According to the [Segye Ilbo](#), Moon went on to allege that the [Family Federation](#) was using the forum, its network, and other individuals to build connections with former First Lady Kim Keon-hee (김건희). In doing so, she presented a diagram displaying names and even photographs of journalists, professors, and forum members - visually resembling a "suspect chart". Although she admitted that "the forum itself is sound," her presentation nevertheless painted it as a hub of conspiracy, casting unwarranted suspicion on innocent participants.

The Forum's True Nature

In reality, the Korean Religious Development Forum (종교발전포럼) has long been regarded as an open platform for interfaith dialogue. A Kyunghyang Shinmun article from June 2014 described the forum as "open to all religions", featuring speakers from Buddhism, Protestantism, Catholicism, Won-Buddhism, Confucianism, Donghak, Shamanism, Islam, the [Family Federation](#), and even Western philosophy.

The [Segye Ilbo report](#) includes Professor Park quoted as saying: "Religions may appear different, but ultimately they walk the same path. There are no bad religions - only extremists who distort them."

Indeed, journalists from The Hankyoreh and JoongAng Ilbo, two of Korea's major newspapers, have given lectures there. Religious Affairs Reporter Jeong describes himself as someone who has attended

several sessions for reporting purposes. He says he can attest that the forum was never an instrument for religious influence or political control. It functioned simply as a place for dialogue and coexistence among faiths.



Prayer vigil outside Seoul Detention Center September 28, 2025 in support of detained [Mother Han](#)

Nevertheless, through careless remarks and misleading insinuations, lawmakers have unfairly tarnished the reputations of countless individuals who have participated in good faith.

Beyond Politics: A Question of Fairness

The deeper question is why the Democratic Party continues to single out the [Family Federation](#) with such intensity. The [organization](#), regardless of its past controversies, has also contributed to international peace efforts, education, and humanitarian work. Many of its members are ordinary citizens - South Korean taxpayers - some of whom may even support the Democratic Party itself. In any democratic society, religions have both the right and the responsibility to cooperate with the government for national stability and prosperity. Patriotism and faith, while distinct, often align in their pursuit of societal harmony. To depict such cooperation as political collusion risks undermining religious freedom and civic fairness alike.



Young members of the [Family federation](#) praying outside Seoul Detention Center on a rainy day in October 2025 in support of detained [Mother Han](#)

What began as political oversight now resembles a campaign of vilification - one that blurs the line between legitimate investigation and persecution. The language used by some lawmakers, and echoed uncritically by segments of the media, has created a moral panic that obscures truth and fuels prejudice.

The Need for Balance

[Segye Ilbo](#) writes that ultimately, the issue is not about defending one religion over another. It is about maintaining fairness, due process, and respect for human rights - principles essential to a functioning democracy. When political power is wielded selectively against a specific faith group, it damages public trust and weakens the very institutions meant to uphold justice.

The [Family Federation](#)'s members are now enduring profound emotional and social hardship. They are citizens of this nation, entitled to the same dignity and legal protection as anyone else. If Korea's political leaders continue to sacrifice impartiality for the sake of political advantage, they risk losing credibility not only with religious communities but with the broader public as well.

In the end, the question remains: Is the Democratic Party genuinely pursuing truth - or simply targeting a convenient enemy? The answer may determine not just the fate of one religious organization, but the integrity of South Korea's democratic values themselves.

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Mother Han (82) In Poor Health In Damp, Cold Cell

• October 16, 2025
• Knut Holdhus



Prosecutors appear merciless and rigid by insisting on keeping frail old religious leader already in poor health in harmful detention cell conditions

Extracts from a message delivered by Hoon-sook Moon at a prayer vigil in Gapyeong, South Korea 16th October. Translated from the transcription of the original Korean. Slightly edited.



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A group of demonstrators protesting the detention of [Mother Han](#) outside Seoul Detention Center 1st October 2025. Photo: Masataka Asaoka

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Heartfelt greetings to all [blessed](#) families around the world who are offering their devotion day and night.

At 10:20 this morning, [...] I visited [True Mother](#) at the detention center [...].

When we entered the visiting room, we felt deeply sorry – [Mother](#) was already seated, waiting for us. Until the visit officially began, she sat with her eyes closed in silence, waiting. That time of waiting felt so long, so heavy with emotion, that it is hard to express in words how sorry and heartbroken we felt.

When the visit began, [Mother](#) spoke about what she needed. The detention center has a system for sending in food, but the list of items allowed is very limited. Even when we send food, it can never be enough, and for that we feel truly, truly sorry.



[Hak Ja Han](#), Holy Mother Han, here in Gapyeong, South Korea 20th July 2025. Screenshot from video recording by [FFWPU](#)

[Mother](#) said her health has declined, and that she has been taking a lot of Tylenol [\[medication used to treat mild to moderate pain and fever\]](#). I told her that while that may help in the short term, taking it long-term could affect her liver.

When I asked what was most uncomfortable for her physically, she said the hardest thing was that the environment is very damp and cold – her arms and legs ache, and her body feels sore.

Even at the Cheon-jeong Temple, she used to sweat so much at night that she had to change clothes several times, so the humid conditions in the detention center are especially difficult for her.

[Mother](#) has had arrhythmia symptoms [\[See editor's note 1 below\]](#) for about ten years and had been managing them well, but she recently underwent surgery.

At a time when she should be resting after surgery, she was sent to the detention center – returning her to the same condition as before the operation.



A group of demonstrators protesting the detention of [Mother Han](#) outside Seoul Detention Center 1st October 2025. Photo: Masataka Asaoka

Even so, today her voice was strong and full of spirit, and we were deeply grateful. She has lived a life of endurance and patience, so she rarely expresses that she is in pain.

In the forty years I have known her I do not think I have ever heard her

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Featured image above: Hoon-sook Moon delivering her message at a prayer vigil in Gapyeong, South Korea 16th October 2025. Screenshot from live transmission by [FFWPU](#).

[Editor's note 1:

Mother Han's arrhythmia has been diagnosed as atrial fibrillation (AFib), which is the most common type of irregular heart rhythm (arrhythmia). Normally, the heart's electrical system makes the upper chambers (atria) contract in an organized way, pumping blood into the lower chambers (ventricles).

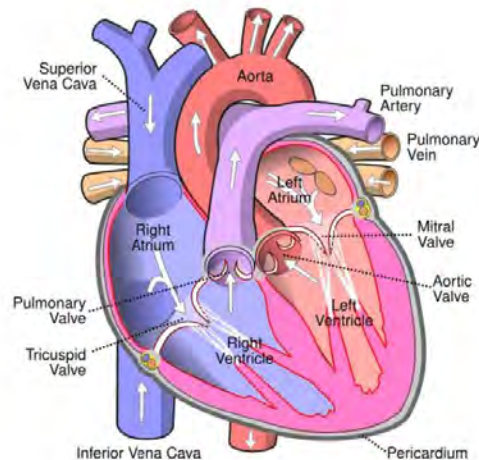


Diagram of the human heart. Illustration: Wapcaplet / Wikimedia Commons. License: [CC ASA 3.0 Unp](#)

In atrial fibrillation, the electrical signals in the atria become rapid and chaotic, causing the atria to quiver instead of contracting effectively. One key feature of atrial fibrillation is an irregular and often rapid heartbeat. Patients may feel palpitations, fluttering, or pounding in the chest. The irregular heart rhythm may cause an inefficient blood flow from the atria to the ventricles and an increased risk of blood clots forming in the atria, which can travel to the brain and cause a stroke.]

[Editor's note 2: Yu Gwan-sun (유관순, 1902–1920) was a famous **Korean independence activist** during the period of Japanese colonial rule (1910–1945). She was born 16th December 1902, in Cheonan, Chungcheong Province, Korea. She died on 28th September 1920, at age 17, in Seodaemun Prison, Seoul.

Yu Gwan-sun was a high school student at Ewha Haktang (now Ewha Womens' University) when the March 1st Independence Movement (삼일운동) broke out in 1919 – a nationwide, peaceful protest demanding Korea's independence from Japan. She helped organize and lead demonstrations in her hometown of Cheonan. Even after many leaders were arrested, she continued to rally people, waving the Taegukgi (Korean flag) and shouting “대한독립 만세!” (“Long live Korean independence!”).

Yu was arrested by Japanese police, tortured, and imprisoned in Seodaemun Prison in Seoul. Despite harsh treatment, she continued to declare “Korea's independence” from her cell. She died at just 17 years old, reportedly from injuries inflicted during torture.

Today she is one of Korea's most revered national heroines – a symbol of courage, patriotism, and faith. Her story is taught in Korean schools, and March 1st (Samiljeol) is a national holiday commemorating the independence movement. She is often compared to figures like Joan of Arc, for her youth, conviction, and martyrdom for her country.]

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