

FFWPU Europe and Middle East: Michael Balcomb - Prosecutors' Case Is Political

Knut Holdhus
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IN LONG-TERM DETENTION



Yoon Suk-yeol
Former President



Kim Keon-hee
Former First Lady



Hak Ja Han
Religious leader



Son Hyun-bo
Religious leader

Four long-term detainees at Seoul Detention Center. Illustrations by Grok xAI

Current case against Mother Han (82) portrayed as part of current Lee administration's vendetta to destroy former governing party and its perceived supporters



Dr. Michael Balcomb, Nov. 2025

First part of extracts from a report by Dr. Michael Balcomb, President of the [Family Federation for World Peace and Unification](#) in Europe and the Middle East, given at an international prayer meeting for [Family Federation](#) members on Zoom 3rd December 2025. It is Dr. Balcomb's personal report, not an official [Family Federation](#) document and has no legal significance. Slightly edited.

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I think you probably want to hear from me a little bit about the situation in Korea with [True Mother](#). [...] I want to emphasize this is my personal report. [...]

I'm going to be as brief and factual as I can. There are four defendants in this case, [True Mother](#), Jeong Won-ju (정원주), Yoon Yeong-ho (윤영호), former president of our international headquarters, and his wife, Lee Shin-ae (이신애).

[Mother](#) was represented by two major law firms, 15 attorneys, a pretty big team. The prosecutor has one special prosecutor and three assistants. [...]

In any courtroom, the defendants identify themselves, the court advises them of their rights. One such right is to remain silent, and the other is to have or hope for a jury trial, which they all declined.

Then - again entirely typical - the prosecution lays out the overview of its charges. And the prosecutor wants to paint [Mother](#) as a criminal mastermind in a network of political intrigue and financial misconduct.

These charges, whether they have any basis in fact or not, are intended to prove that case. And there are six of them.

① The first one is illegal or improper donations to a member of Congress.



In same detention center as [Mother Han](#): Former President Yoon Suk-yeol of the Republic of Korea April 25, 2023

② Second, further contributions to many political figures, all of them in the party of the deposed president Yoon Suk-yeol (윤석열).

It's important to note that because the current government is on a vendetta to destroy the former administration, and as you know, President Yoon is actually in the same detention center as [True Mother](#).

③ And third, that also there were gifts to the former first lady intended to win favor. A few months ago, this was the headline story. Now it's just one among many.

④ Four, that there's been destruction of evidence, specifically accounting records.

⑤ Five, that payments to foreign politicians were made improperly, particularly in Senegal. Mind you, you remember that [True Mother](#) awarded the Sunhak Peace Prize to Macky Sall.

⑥ And finally, that there's a culture of embezzlement in the

[Family Federation](#) itself.

So those are the charges. None of them, of course, are dressed up as religious or spiritual things. The prosecutors' goal is to paint this as the way everyone else behaves.

And in addition, two of the defendants were separately accused of personal misuse of money.

But the main point they want to make - and this is their final argument - is that these other people had roles, but [Mother](#) is the spider at the center of the web, the supreme authority. So that's the kind of picture they want to paint of our [True Mother](#).

And why? Well, they have to explain what they think are their motivations, which are, 1) to gain influence in the national assembly, and 2) to gain influence with the President. And they said they have phone calls and texts as evidence of this.



In same detention center as [Mother Han](#): Former First Lady of the Republic of Korea Kim Keon-hee

And then the prosecutor added an entirely gratuitous remark which was picked up by the media,

"Where did all this money come from? It came from members using their housing funds."

That's something particular to Korea. But an equivalent in Europe would be that the members took out loans against their houses and used that money - money they really didn't have.

And then it was the turn for the defense to give an overall response. [Mother](#)'s team presented a very different view of the case.

① First of all, that this doctrine or allegation that [Mother](#) is the mastermind who controls everything is neither factual, nor official teaching. And it's unrealistic.

② Secondly, despite what they say, neither [Father](#) nor [Mother](#) ever advocated theocracy or religious rule of a nation.

And she's never claimed that political leaders must obey her. What she has said is that politics and religion must become one. But this refers to cooperating rather than one dominating the other.

So the defense's premise or main argument is,

"Look, this whole case is misguided. You are suggesting that this defendant, [True Mother](#), has some overt, illegal political motivation, but she doesn't. She's not interested in any of those things. And finally, that if anything did take place that was improper, that it was the effort or the result of Dr. [Yoon Yeong-ho](#)'s own actions."

And then, there was a little more detail on the particular points. Basically, saying that these are not criminal acts at all.

And then the court gets to respond. After the prosecution makes their case - a general overview - and the defense makes its case, then the court had a few interesting comments.

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To be continued. Part 2 coming soon.

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Reporter Jang Hyeon-eun (장현은) wrote about the hearings for the [Hankyoreh Shimbun](#), a large South Korean daily, in an article published 2nd December which in English would carry the headline “[Hak Ja Han at bail hearing: ‘I am the Mother of Peace \[...\] I am not the person the special prosecutor describes’](#).”



[Mother Han](#), now in her early eighties, has been detained since 22nd September and was indicted on 10th October by special prosecutors appointed by the current Lee administration for several alleged actions considered in breach of several South Korean laws. According to the [Hankyoreh](#), prosecutors claim that she provided funds and valuable gifts to influential figures including First Lady Kim Keon-hee (김건희) and Rep. Kweon Seong-dong (권성동) of the [People Power Party](#).



From a demonstration in support of [Mother Han](#) in Gapyeong, South Korea in November 2025. Screenshot from video by [FFWPU](#)

These actions, investigators argue, were intended to advance requests related to the [Family Federation](#)’s institutional interests. Against this backdrop, [Mother Han](#) used the opportunity offered at her bail hearing to deliver a personal, impassioned defense of both her intentions and her legacy.

Reporter Jang describes in [his article](#) how the 1st December afternoon proceedings, presided over by Judge Woo In-seong (우인성) of [Criminal Division 27](#) at the court, centered on [Mother Han](#)’s petition for release on health grounds. Her legal team emphasized the impracticality and potential harm of detaining an 82-year-old religious figure while she prepares her defense.

But the most striking portion of the session came when the court granted her the chance to speak. Seizing the moment, [Mother Han](#) framed herself not as a political actor embroiled in clandestine dealings, but as a lifelong religious leader devoted to realizing divine aspirations for peace and unity.

According to the [Hankyoreh article](#), [Hak Ja Han](#) began her remarks by reflecting on her decades-long spiritual mission. She described herself as someone who has worked well into old age “with the dream of attending the Creator, our Heavenly Parent, here on earth.” [Mother Han](#) explained,

“The Creator’s dream for April 2025 was what is the very “principle of creation” (창조의 원칙) – to live on earth as the True Parent, embracing His/Her children. Because I know this, I resolved over the course of my 80-year life to build a [palace](#) (궁전) where the Creator could dwell, in order to fulfill that dream.”



[Mother Han](#) as she appeared on South Korean TV in Sep. 2025. Photo: Massimo Introvigne / [Bitter Winter](#)

Jang’s report emphasizes that throughout her statement, [Mother Han](#) stressed the exclusively religious and humanitarian focus of her work. She insisted that she has never been concerned with the political currents of South Korea, nor has she involved herself in partisan matters.

Instead, she described her life’s purpose as nurturing a global culture of peace: teaching adherents and peace-loving persons everywhere to pray for harmony, unity, and the creation of “one human family” oriented toward the will of Heaven. Her frequent references to herself as the “Mother of Peace” and “Holy Mother” were offered not as personal aggrandizement, she said, but as titles bestowed upon her by world leaders, religious figures, and scholars who recognize her efforts to promote reconciliation and shared humanity.

[Mother Han](#) energetically rejected the portrayal of her advanced by the special prosecutor, saying,

“I am not the kind of person the special prosecutor describes.”

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One of the sacred sites of the [Family Federation](#) – the Cheon Jeong Temple in Gapyeong, South Korea. The building houses a museum in honor of the life of the [True Parents](#). Photo: FFWPU

She invited the court to visit the *Cheon Jeong Temple* – her residence and an important symbolic site for the [Family Federation](#) in Gapyeong – to see firsthand how she has lived and what she has built. Her appeal was both a plea for understanding and an implicit challenge to the narrative that her actions were politically or materially motivated.

Her attorney reinforced these themes, arguing that [Mother Han's](#) health requires humane accommodation and warning the court against potential prejudice stemming from widespread skepticism of the [Family Federation](#). Raising concerns about religious freedom and due process, the defense insisted that [Mother Han's](#) constitutional rights must be protected, and that her detention risks undermining her ability to mount an effective and fair defense.

Overall, the hearing highlighted a dramatic clash between the state's allegations of influence-peddling and [Mother Han's](#) own account of a life devoted to spiritual mission. As the case proceeds, her dual role – as a religious matriarch to millions and a defendant in one of South Korea's highest-profile political-religious trials – will remain at the center of national attention.

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Text: Knut Holdhus, editor

Featured image above: [Mother Han](#) speaking in Newark, New Jersey, USA 28th December 2019. Screenshot from live transmission by PeaceTV.

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