

## UPF Africa: No Peace Without Women - Africa's Invisible Architects Step Forward

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## No Peace Without Women

Africa's Invisible Architects Step Forward



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*The International Association of First Ladies for Peace (IAFLP) convened African women leaders for a landmark webinar that reframed peace not as a distant ideal — but as a skill already mastered in every home across the continent.*

### The Vision: Women as the Foundation of Peace

In our recent high-level webinar, "**No Peace Without Women,**"

The core theme: "**Women as Catalysts for Peace, Reconciliation, and Social Renewal in Africa**" emphasized that women are not merely participants in peacebuilding; they are its very foundation. [Dr. Tageldin Hamad](#), President of UPF International, noted that women serve as **catalysts**, guiding communities from pain to healing and from mistrust to cooperation. This is a "practical truth"—sustainable peace cannot be achieved without the full and equal participation of women at every level of society



## The Major Milestone: A New Chairperson for IAFLP Africa

A historic highlight of the event was the formal investiture of **Her Excellency Ambassador *Dr. Calista Mutharika*** as the Chairperson of the International Association of First Ladies for Peace (IAFLP) Africa.

As the former First Lady of Malawi and current High Commissioner to Kenya, Dr. Mutharika brings a wealth of experience in service and advocacy. In her inaugural address, she outlined **three strategic priorities** for her tenure:

1. **Strengthening Advocacy:** Systematic inclusion of women in peace processes and conflict prevention.
2. **Deepening Collaboration:** Fostering coordinated approaches between member states, civil society, and international partners.
3. **Promoting Investment:** Prioritizing education, leadership development, and economic empowerment for women and girls



**H.E. Ambassador Dr. Calista Mutharika**, Chairperson, IAFLP Africa  
Former First Lady of Malawi · Cabinet Minister · Member of the Pan-African Parliament · Malawi  
High Commissioner to Kenya · Founder: Safe Motherhood Foundation & Dignity Adolescent Girls

## Strategic Insight: The "Missing Link" and "Familiarchy"

**Mrs. Carolyn Handschin**, Director of the WFP International Office for UN Relations, provided a compelling look at what she calls the "Missing Link hiding in plain sight" of women's leadership.

She introduced the paradigm-shifting concept of "**Familiarchy**": a social organization where the family unit is the nexus of intertwined networks of love. This model moves away from the "accusation" often found in discussions of patriarchy toward an engagement that recognizes women and mothers as central to achieving global family peace.

The gathering's unanimous answer: sustainable peace is not a moral concession to fairness. It is, as First Lady **Maria de Fatima Villanova** of São Tomé and Príncipe put it, simply *the only smart strategy left*.



**“Supporting female leadership in Africa is a ‘smart strategy’ to achieve Lasting peace and true social transformation.”**

— Maria de Fatima Villanova

### **The Barrier to Break: Removing the Seat at the Table**

Despite their roles as "givers of life" and "peace givers," women face significant barriers, including cultural norms and a lack of political will. **Dr. Ntonifor Hélène Manka** reminded us that any peace excluding women is incomplete, but **peace that includes women is unstoppable**

### **Our Collective Impact**

The resonance of this message was evident in our growing digital footprint, with a reach of **551**. We concluded with a vibrant **Call to Action**, urging governments, civil society, and families across Africa to join hands in:

- Upholding the dignity and rights of women and girls.
- Strengthening family values as the moral foundation of stable societies.
- Mobilizing women's moral authority for positive continental transformation.

Together, we are raising a united voice for a new era of hope. Stay tuned as we continue to advance this mission across Africa and beyond.

 **BREAKING NEWS** 

## Universal Peace Federation International Welcomes Nomination of Dr. Hak Ja Han

***Nomination Recognizes Decades of Global Peacebuilding,  
Interfaith Dialogue and Korean Peninsula Initiatives***

**NEW YORK--(BUSINESS WIRE)—April 3, 2026-- *Universal Peace Federation***

International (UPF International) today announced that Dr. Hak Ja Han, co-founder of the Universal Peace Federation, has been formally nominated for the 2026 Nobel Peace Prize by Dr. Ján Figel', former European Union Special Envoy for Freedom of Religion or Belief and president of FOREF Europe.

The nomination recognizes Dr. Han's decades-long contributions to international peacebuilding, interfaith dialogue, humanitarian cooperation, and reconciliation efforts, particularly in relation to the Korean Peninsula. In his submission, Dr. Figel' highlighted several key initiatives:

◆ **Interfaith cooperation:** Appointment of thousands of Peace

Ambassadors worldwide to bridge religious and cultural divides

- ◆ **Korean Peninsula peace initiatives:** Organization of international “Rally of Hope” summits promoting peaceful reunification
- ◆ **Humanitarian recognition:** Establishment of the Sunhak Peace Prize honoring global peace advocates
- ◆ **United Nations engagement:** Collaboration of UPF and the Women’s Federation for World Peace through General Consultative Status with the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)
- ◆ **38th Parallel Peace Initiative:** Proposal to create an international peace park in the Korean Demilitarized Zone
- ◆ **Cultural diplomacy:** Global outreach through the Little Angels Children’s Folk Ballet of Korea

“Dr. Hak Ja Han has demonstrated a lifelong commitment to peacebuilding rooted in dialogue, cooperation, and respect for human dignity,” said Dr. Figel. “Her work has consistently brought together leaders and communities across ideological, religious, and political divides.”

“Dr. Hak Ja Han’s life work represents a remarkable and sustained investment in peace,” said Dr. Tageldin Hamad, President of UPF International. “Through institution-building, global dialogue, humanitarian engagement, and cultural diplomacy, she has helped create platforms where cooperation can flourish and where the ideals of peace are translated into practical action.”

Born in what is now North Korea and shaped by the experience of war and division, Dr. Han has dedicated her life to promoting reconciliation and strengthening families and communities as foundations for lasting peace. She co-founded the Women’s Federation for World Peace in 1992 and the Universal Peace Federation in 2005, both of which have grown into global networks supporting peace initiatives.

The nomination also comes amid reports regarding Dr. Han’s current detention, which has raised concern among observers in the international community. According to public reporting, the matter has drawn attention among policymakers and diplomatic observers.

Nobel Peace Prize nominations are confidential, and the Norwegian Nobel Committee receives hundreds of nominations each year. A nomination

does not imply selection but reflects recognition of significant contributions to peace and international cooperation.

*About Universal Peace Federation International*

Universal Peace Federation International is an international nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting peace through dialogue, education, and cooperative initiatives. UPF holds **GENERAL** consultative status with the **[UN Economic and Social Council \(ECOSOC\)](#)** and supports programs in interfaith cooperation, sustainable development, and international collaboration.

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Born in 1943 in Japanese-occupied Korea, Dr. Hak Ja Ha Moon survived communist persecution, family imprisonment, and the devastation of the Korean War as young child refugee.

At age 17 she married Reverend Sun Myung Moon and went on to raise 14 children while building a [Show more](#)



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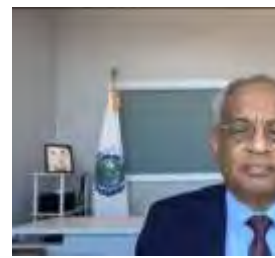
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**Universal Peace Federation - Africa Region**

“We live in a world that's more interconnected than ever before. Yet, at the same time, more divided than ever. Nations are connected by technology, by trade, and by travel. But hearts are still...

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**The Monarch Report** @monarchreport25

Born in 1943 in Japanese-occupied Korea, Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon survived communist persecution, family imprisonment, and the devastation of the Korean War as a young child refugee.

At age 17 she married Reverend Sun Myung Moon and went on to raise 14 children while building a worldwide movement dedicated to peace, interfaith dialogue, and women's leadership.

Her initiatives — including the Women's Federation for World Peace, the Universal Peace Federation, and the Sun Hak Peace Prize — have spanned continents and generations.

From speaking tours across 113 cities in 12 countries to summits with African heads of state and virtual events reaching hundreds of millions during the pandemic, she created enduring institutions that bring together parliamentarians, religious leaders, youth, and former presidents.

What began as a refugee child's survival story became a lifetime commitment to reconciliation and unity, turning personal hardship into a global platform for dialogue and hope.

Her life connects North Korean survival, Korean War trauma, and international advocacy in a way few stories can.

In a divided world searching for models of resilience and bridge-building, her journey offers a powerful example of how one person's conviction can shape movements that outlast a lifetime.

Do you believe personal faith and moral conviction can still drive meaningful global change today, or have such forces been largely replaced by secular institutions and diplomacy?



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**FFWPU Europe & Middle East** @ffwpueume · Apr 1  
Dr. Hak Ja Han is an example of a global leader who, based on her personal moral convictions and faith, has launched numerous peace initiatives and projects for world peace and deserves the Nobel Prize for her contribution to world peace. #ReligiousFreedom

**Ulrich Ganz** @ganz\_ulrich · Apr 1  
Holy Mother Han devoted her life to world peace—yet she has been imprisoned for over six months despite her age and health. This is a grave injustice and a deep disrespect for her contributions to the world.

**Christine Chevé** @ChristineC16543 · Apr 1  
A life time dedicated for the sake of world peace with a strategy : self-denial. Are we ready to take on after her example? Are we willing to see this world transformed in a world of peace? Why are the leaders of this world not ready to help her out? #GodsDreamOneFamily

**Ernst Spari** @ErnstSparix · Apr 1  
For millions worldwide Dr. Hak Ja Ha is a living example of the dignity and value of women. Korea should be proud of her leadership, moral integrity and motherly love for the people of zu this world.

**Sophie Tanemori** @sophie.wu63935 · Apr 1  
Dr. Han's life—from a childhood as a refugee amid war to embracing both family responsibilities and a global mission—reveals a rare inner strength and an unwavering sense of direction.

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