

There is chaos both internally and externally, but we move forward with hope

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Heavenly Korea Leaders Special Dinner Meeting with True Mother
Yongpyeong Resort, South Korea



It's very good that you came.

There is chaos both internally and externally, at home and abroad. We certainly still have issues to resolve internally ourselves, but we move forward with hope.

Due to the Halloween tragedy in Itaewon yesterday, they have announced a period of mourning. I can't say exactly when this Halloween culture came to our country, but it wasn't emphasized so much in the 1990s nor in the 2000s.

For a long time, though, I've been saying that we must begin a revolution of the culture of the heart.

The original dream of the Creator, Heavenly Parent, was to meet the sons and daughters on earth through True Parents and live together with them. Thus the founding philosophy of the Sunhak Educational Foundation and Sunmoon University is Ae-cheon, which is to love Heaven first, Ae-in [Love humanity] and Ae-guk [Love your Nation]. If we had led the youth with these lessons and goals.... People of Korea, in particular, known as the Han people and the people clad in white, have practiced filial piety to their parents and devotion in front of Heaven. This tradition, however, weakened as it came into contact with modern civilization.

Through our founding ideals and True Parents' thought, we are also teaching the virtues of being filial to our parents, respect for our teachers, love for one another, and the need for unity. I am not sure of the meaning of ijimeru, but this strange school culture has caused a great deal of controversy within Japan.

There is also school violence erupting in Korea. Why would this be happening?

We are approaching the sixtieth anniversary of the Unification Church. A day or two ago, I mentioned at Sun Moon University that culture is changed through one righteous person. Then, why haven't we been able to change the culture despite the passage of 50 or 60 years? We need to reflect on this.

And so what should we do? Throughout this time, we have taught about purity in our churches. Now we have a second, a third and even a fourth generation. Through seeing the creation that God our Creator made, it is my hope that the young people of our world can naturally come to feel and realize something, and reflect, saying: "Ah, through looking at these trees..." What is the name of this trail in Mona Park...? Through this grove of thousand-year-old trees, we should educate many from the younger generation in this world.

In a natural way, they should be able to study and learn, through the natural world, about the culture of the heart - the culture in which people revere Heaven and love their parents. The original, beautiful natural principles of creation should be followed, rather than following a wrong culture that comes in from outside. The unfallen creation continues to flow and prosper in accordance with the principles of creation. It is only fallen humankind that creates the many problems.

Therefore, we must be able to demonstrate this. We must be able to teach. Thus, when I think of Mona Park on Mount Balwang, the natural beauty there, and about Heavenly Parent and about True Parents, I appreciate CEO Shin and the staff here for developing this facility.

We want all the people visiting here to like it just as much, grow the love in their hearts and practice it in their lives.

I do not know when or how Halloween originated. However, having lived in the United States for over 40 years, I believe it is intended to ward off misfortune and is a time to share love with the children you are raising. Is it a business? I would say that it was not originally like this, but it has become increasingly so over time. It is truly sad to see how this has evolved into something different from what it was originally, and how problems have happened with young people.

As citizens of Cheon Il Guk and as blessed families of Cheon Il Guk, we cannot just be quietly observing the situation, can we? We should immediately take command and educate people, shouldn't we? So please reach out and let people know.

So now it is October, and tomorrow will be the eve of November.

I am saying, "Victory for the future together with you in this beautiful nature! Also, by working hard to bear beautiful fruits in the future, and in order to change the bad customs of this world into the beautiful customs of Cheon Il Guk, let's combine our strengths, eat something nice together, and move forward toward a tomorrow filled with hope."

This is the reason I invited you here today.

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South Korea: How the Halloween tragedy unfolded

2 November



GETTY IMAGES

By Oliver Slow

BBC News

After more than 150 people died in a deadly crush in Seoul on Saturday night, the BBC looks at how the tragedy unfolded.

Gathering crowds

Thousands of mainly young people had converged in Itaewon in the centre of the South Korean capital of Seoul.

It's a lively party spot with many narrow streets and alleys filled with bars and restaurants.

Some accounts say more than 100,000 had descended on the area that evening.

The neighbourhood is served by Itaewon metro station, and videos on social media show streams of people arriving to celebrate Halloween from early evening on Saturday.

Nuhyil Ahammed, 32, was in the crowd. The IT worker from India lives nearby and had been to Halloween parties in Itaewon before, but says things were very different this year.



NUHYIL AHAMMED

Large crowds gathered in Itaewon a few hours before the crush

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"It was crazy," he told the BBC. "From 5pm there were too many people on the streets. So I was thinking, what's it going to be like from seven or eight?"

Around this time, social media messages were being posted online with people saying that the streets of the district were so crowded they felt unsafe.

The first call to police from Itaewon came at 18:34 local time - several hours before the deadly crush took place in an alley off the main road.

"That alley is really dangerous right now people going up and down, so people can't come down, but people keep coming up, it's gonna be crushed. I barely made it to get out but it's too crowded. I think you should control it," the caller said.

The police officer asked if the caller meant that people weren't flowing well, that "they get crushed and fall, and then there's going to be a big accident?"

Yes, the caller responded - "this is so chilling right now".

The police officer told the first caller they would send someone "to go and check it out" - but no significant reinforcements were sent for hours.



GETTY IMAGES

South Korea's police chief has said their emergency response was "inadequate"

Authorities said they had 137 officers on the ground at Itaewon that night. But they were clearly outmatched by the many thousands that flocked to the area.

Videos show people converging into a narrow alley next to the Hamilton shopping mall where the worst overcrowding was reported.

There were at least ten more emergency calls from the area in the next three and a half hours, for which the **police have taken the unusual step of releasing transcripts.**

Emergency calls made before Itaewon crush



1 - 18:34	4 - 20:53	7 - 21:07	10 - 21:51
2 - 20:09	5 - 21:00	8 - 21:10	11 - 22:11
3 - 20:33	6 - 21:02	9 - 22:00	22:15 - Fatal crush

All local times (GMT +9)

Source: South Korean police and Yonhap news agency

BBC

The next few calls started coming in about two hours later, from 20:09 onwards.



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Callers described seeing people stumbling after they were pushed, and getting injured. At 20:53, one caller described a harrowing situation near a nightclub on the alley.

"I feel like I am going to get crushed... many people are being crushed... it is chaos." They repeatedly begged "please help us".

The caller was reassured that police would be sent to the scene. But records show they were not, and out of the 11 phone calls made to police, they only mobilised officers for four of them.

The police did not dispatch anyone in response to calls made from 21:07 onwards - the hour leading up to the crush.

The crush

In the last call at 22:11 - one of the briefest made - the caller said: "It feels like people can get crushed here."

Minutes later, the deadly crush began.

At about 22:15 a number of people on the sloping pathway fell over. Crowds pressing from both ends of the alley made it impossible to get out.



Source: BBC Research based on verified videos posted on social media

BBC

Social media footage shows some people trying to climbing up the sides of the buildings to escape.

At 22:24, fire authorities say they received reports that 10 people were pushed down under the crowd and experiencing breathing difficulties.

At 22:27, the first four ambulances were dispatched, followed by six more a few minutes later, according to the authorities.



GETTY IMAGES

The clogged streets made it difficult for emergency workers and ambulances to reach the area

"People began pushing from behind, it was like a wave - there was nothing you could do," Mr Ahammed said, who found himself caught up in a huge crowd.

"People were suffocating, screaming, getting squeezed, falling... there were just too many people"

By 23:00, 30 more ambulances were deployed, as well as more than 100 national disaster medical assistance teams, with all Halloween events being called off by authorities at 23:19.



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Dealing with disaster

Videos from the scene show dozens of people attempting CPR on victims in the street. Dead bodies lay covered with blue sheets.

Ana, a 24-year-old from Spain was also in the area, with her friend, Melissa, a 19-year-old from Germany. The pair were in a bar and tried to leave at about 23:00 when they saw ambulances trying to enter the alley and police asking people to move to make way for dead bodies and the injured.

"There were so many people that they needed normal people to do CPR. So everyone started jumping in to help," Ana told the BBC.



Watch: Seoul crush witnesses recount 'out of control' scene

The first confirmed death toll was issued at 02:30. Official said that 59 people had died and a further 150 were injured. An hour later the numbers had risen to 120 dead with 100 injured, and climbed further still as the night wore on, soon surpassing 150.

Within hours of the tragedy unfolding South Korea's President Yoon Suk-yeol had held an emergency meeting, and announced an investigation into the cause of the crush. On Sunday morning he announced a period of national mourning.

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