

Statement on the First-Instance Verdict Concerning Dr. Hak Ja Han

August 31 Verdict – Dr. Hak Ja Han

The Family Federation for World Peace and Unification expresses deep regret over today's ruling of the Seoul Central District Court concerning Dr. Hak Ja Han.

Dr. Hak Ja Han, who was sentenced to a total of 2 years imprisonment for political collusion, is 83 years old. For more than six decades she has devoted her life to reconciliation, interfaith cooperation, humanitarian service and the pursuit of peace—most notably through sustained efforts toward peaceful reunification of the Korean Peninsula. She is widely known internationally as the Mother of Peace.

Throughout the proceedings Dr. Han has maintained her innocence. Her defence has consistently challenged the claim that she personally authorised, directed or knowingly participated in the unlawful actions alleged by the prosecution. Because important questions of evidence, individual responsibility and legal interpretation remain unresolved, her legal team will file an immediate appeal.

We are also deeply concerned by the humanitarian consequences of her prolonged detention and subsequent suspension of detention for hospitalization. An elderly religious leader was held for many months under conditions that seriously affected her health, including repeated falls and the eventual need for shoulder surgery, before any final determination of guilt. Whatever one's view of the legal case, the treatment of a person of advanced age and frail health before judgment raises serious questions, under the Constitution of the Republic of Korea, concerning the principle of proportionality, human dignity and the protection of fundamental rights.

Today's ruling is not the end of the judicial process. We trust that the appellate court will carefully, fairly and independently examine the full evidentiary record, the question of Dr. Han's personal responsibility, and the legal issues raised by the defence.

We ask our members and friends throughout the world to respond peacefully and with dignity, to remain steadfast in prayer, and to continue the work to which Dr. Han has dedicated her life: reconciliation, strong families, service to humanity and peace.