

30,000 Voices Silenced: The Fight for Religious Freedom in South Korea



Chicago, Illinois Nov 29, 2024 ([Issuewire.com](https://www.issuewire.com)) - Shincheonji Church of Jesus and global religious leaders have united to condemn what they call blatant religious oppression by Gyeonggi Province and the Gyeonggi Tourism Organization. On November 27th, 1,735 individuals, including 402 organizations, 758 religious representatives, and nearly 1,000 opinion leaders, gathered in front of the Gyeonggi Provincial Office to demand accountability for the last-minute cancellation of a major religious event. The event, initially scheduled to host over 30,000 participants from 78 countries, was unilaterally canceled on the day it was set to begin, despite prior assurances from the tourism organization.

Leaders from various faiths, including Protestant pastors and Buddhist monks, delivered a joint statement denouncing the cancellation of the “Religious Leaders Forum and Graduation Ceremony for Freedom, Peace, and Unification.” They emphasized that the decision violated the constitutional rights to religious freedom and the principle of separation of church and state. Critics argue the cancellation was influenced by pressure from vested-interest groups, calling it a clear example of biased and discriminatory religious suppression.

The joint statement highlighted the global significance of the canceled event, which aimed to promote peace and celebrate religious unity. The leaders decried the immense financial and psychological

damages incurred, stating, “Other events held at the same venue faced no sanctions, making it clear this was targeted religious oppression.” They called for an official apology from Gyeonggi Province Governor Kim Dong-yeon and disciplinary action against those responsible.

The rally participants demanded swift and transparent action to prevent similar incidents in the future. Their demands include strengthening fair rental procedures, ensuring religious groups are not subjected to undue pressure, and reaffirming South Korea’s commitment to religious freedom and equality under the law. The attendees urged Gyeonggi officials to “restore the prestige of the Republic of Korea as a nation where the rule of law and principles are alive.”

An official from Shincheonji Church of Jesus commented, “The international outcry demonstrates the severity of this injustice. It is imperative for Gyeonggi Province to acknowledge its wrongdoing, issue a formal apology, and take concrete steps to protect religious freedoms moving forward.”

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