

Statement by Shincheonji Church of Jesus Regarding the Cancellation of Venue Rental at Imjingak Peace Park



Washington, D.C, District of Columbia Oct 31, 2024 ([Issuewire.com](http://www.Issuewire.com)) - An outrageous act of oppression has occurred, blatantly denying the freedom of religion guaranteed by the South Korean Constitution. Gyeonggi Province and the Gyeonggi Tourism Organization have committed an unconstitutional, illegal act, and there is no excuse to justify their actions. How could there be religious oppression

Where is Gyeonggi Province and the Gyeonggi Tourism Organization trying to take this country? Are they so blinded by their political interests that they are willing to divide the people, split religions, and ultimately drive Korea toward ruin?

The Shincheonji Church of Jesus had planned to rent Imjingak Peace Park in Paju, Gyeonggi Province, from October 29 to 31 to host a "Religious Leaders Forum and Graduation Ceremony" on October 30. Thousands of graduates and religious leaders from Korea and abroad had already entered the country, and the preparation was complete. This was a large-scale international event involving hundreds of billions of won in budget. However, on the morning of October 29, the Gyeonggi Tourism Organization abruptly canceled the rental without any prior discussion with Shincheonji. This is not how the citizens in

a democratic country should be treated, and it seriously damages Korea's national dignity. How are we supposed to explain this to the religious leaders and graduates who travelled from around the world that have already arrived? Korea, which once championed *Hallyu* (Korean Wave) and globalization, is now incurring international shame by resorting to religious oppression. Is this a call for a demonstration from the Shincheonji Church of Jesus?

We followed all administrative procedures legally. We received approval for the rental on July 22 and paid the full fee on October 2. On October 16, we held a working meeting to discuss the event's scale, layout, safety plan, and special effects, including fireworks. The Gyeonggi Tourism Organization reviewed all event details and completed a safety inspection. Even though Gyeonggi Province designated all of Paju as a danger zone on the same day, we were informed that this measure was unrelated to our event and aimed only at preventing leafleting toward North Korea, with no restrictions or prior notice was given to us. Furthermore, on October 23 and 28, officials officially confirmed that there were no plans to cancel the rental.

Canceling a fully approved event on the day of the event due to the opposition of a particular religious group undermines administrative reliability and divides the nation. Furthermore, Gyeonggi Governor Kim Dong-yeon justified the cancellation by citing concerns of "provoking North Korea," an unfounded excuse. Other events at the same venue went on without issue. An administrative decision based on opposition from a specific religious group directly violates the constitutional principle of separation of church and state and is an unconstitutional act that cannot be tolerated in a democratic country.

Is Gyeonggi Province and the Gyeonggi Tourism Organization trying to expel Shincheonji Church of Jesus from this land? Where else does an administrative organization cancel approvals based on a single statement from a particular religious group? We are proud citizens of this country. Why should we face discrimination in using public facilities operated with our taxes?

We can no longer stand by. Do you want to see hundreds of thousands of members of the Shincheonji Church of Jesus take to the streets? The Shincheonji Church of Jesus has made countless efforts to resolve issues peacefully, but if this is the result, we will take to the streets to fight for our rights and justice.

Shincheonji Church of Jesus members are not second-class citizens to be ignored and discriminated against, and no such second-class citizens should exist in this country. Do you think that this kind of discrimination and oppression will bring peace to this nation? Do not be mistaken.

We sternly warn Gyeonggi Province and the Gyeonggi Tourism Organization to fully disclose the grounds for their cancellation decision, which should be reasonable to the public, and issue a formal apology to all Shincheonji Church members and the invited domestic and international guests. Stop all religiously discriminatory administration immediately. If our demands are not met, we will exhaust all legal avenues, and hundreds of thousands of our members will take to the streets. We will reveal the religious oppression in Korea to international human rights organizations and pursue all possible civil and criminal legal actions.

Every citizen in this country is equal. Freedom of religion is not up for negotiation. Shincheonji Church of Jesus and its members will fight to the end for the day when they can practice their faith freely and without discrimination in this country.

All Members of the Shincheonji Church of Jesus

Additional Link: <https://established.co.za/shincheonji-church-decries-venue-cancellation-by-gyeonggi-tourism-organisation/>

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