

Oral Statement on Chairman Lee Man-hee's Pretrial Detention in the Republic of Korea

The case of Chairman Lee Man-hee before the Human Rights Council



Sydney, New South Wales Sep 30, 2026 ([Issuewire.com](https://www.issuewire.com)) - On 18 September 2026, CAP Freedom of Conscience delivered an oral statement during the general debate under Item 3 of the 63rd session of the UN Human Rights Council, devoted to the promotion and protection of all human rights.

The statement raises the case of Chairman Lee Man-hee, the 95-year-old founder and leader of the Shincheonji Church of Jesus and a veteran of the Korean War, who is currently held in pretrial detention at the Seoul Detention Center in the Republic of Korea on non-violent charges.

CAP Freedom of Conscience expresses serious concern regarding what appears to be a politically driven and discriminatory investigation targeting a religious minority, as well as the conditions of detention. Despite his fixed residence and the absence of any flight risk, Chairman Lee was held in cells without air conditioning during Seoul's most severe heatwave, raising grave concerns for the health of a 95-year-old detainee.

The statement recalls that such treatment runs counter to the Republic of Korea's international obligations: Article 9 of the ICCPR requires detention to be necessary and proportionate; Article 10 guarantees humane treatment; the Nelson Mandela Rules entitle detainees to healthcare equivalent to that available in the community; the Tokyo Rules make pretrial detention a measure of last resort; and Article 18 protects freedom of religion or belief — a right CAP Freedom of Conscience considers disregarded in this case.

CAP Freedom of Conscience urges the Council to call on the Republic of Korea to honour its treaty obligations by offering alternatives to detention, allowing an independent medical assessment, and ensuring a fair and impartial trial.

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CAP LC Video (YouTube)

CAP LC's own video of the full oral statement, as published on its website.

youtube.com/watch?v=IFdF4cvfSqE

UN Web TV (Source)

The official UN recording of the General Debate session.

webtv.un.org/en/asset/k11/k118fegrj7

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