

The Collapse of Truth and Justice in South Korea?

Harsh Reality for the Grieving Families

Five months have passed since the Sewol ferry disaster, but many questions remain unanswered. Instead of offering an apology and explanation for failing to take effective executive actions in the critical hours after the ferry accident, South Korean President Park Geun-hye has condemned those who asked questions about her whereabouts during the time of the accident. President Park has also ordered the local public prosecutor to track anyone making negative comments on the internet about her. The ferry victims' families were placed under illegal surveillance with no legitimate reason and the government manipulated public sentiment by releasing false information about the families to the media to instigate reports that painted the families in negative light.

Unbalanced Scale of Justice

It has recently come to light that during the 2012 presidential campaign season in South Korea, the Korean National Intelligence Service was deeply involved in swaying public opinion in favor of now-President Park by using social media to praise Ms. Park and smear her rival candidates. Since then, the Central District Court has convicted the former intelligence chief of violating a law that prohibited the agency from engaging in domestic politics but dismissed charges against him of violating Korean election law, sparing the President from a possibly serious political stigma.

Broken Promise and Unheard Voices

In order to console the public amidst the scandals surrounding both the ferry accident and the 2012 election, as well as to help her party in upcoming local elections, President Park had promised to support a special law that would give investigation and prosecutorial rights to an independent committee to probe the numerous issues circling around the ferry disaster. Only five months later, President Park has flipped her stance and dismissed the legislation, despite hundreds of legal scholars and lawyers in South Korea have indicated that President Park's argument against the special law is flawed and confirmed that the special law does not violate Korea's constitution. Over five million people have raised their voices in support of the ferry victims' families and the special law by signing a petition and participating in peaceful rallies. Such public efforts are being continually ignored by President Park and the ruling party.

We demand an enactment of the special law to find truth and justice for the Sewol victims and their families.

We demand an immediate end to the disruption of democratic values in South Korea.



President Park Geun-hye
of South Korea