

How the dramatic death of Seoul's mayor left a country divided

He was South Korea's second-most powerful official and a potential presidential contender. Now, the death of Seoul Mayor Park Won-soon has left the country divided.

The 64-year-old former human rights lawyer had represented the victim in the first sexual assault case in South Korean history, before a shift to politics saw him serve as Seoul mayor for nine years.

But this week, his legacy was called into question. Local media reported Thursday that Park had himself been accused of sexual harassment, with police later confirming that a complaint had been *lodged*, although they didn't specify the nature of the claim.

lodge 正式提出; 存放; 小屋

Mixed reaction

Park's death prompted mixed reactions in the South Korean capital. Video on Yonhap showed mourners outside the hospital where Park's body lies crying and shouting "Mayor, you shouldn't go like this, " and "I love you, Park Won-soon."

But others are angry that a court will never hear the allegations against Park. Under South Korean law, when a suspect dies, open investigations are closed as the prosecutors have no ground to make an indictment.

Bigger picture

Park's death comes as South Korea confronts traditional domestic perceptions of sexual assault. The country has been rocked by a series of high-profile sexual assault and harassment allegations in recent years, including against entertainment stars, sports coaches and a former top prosecutor. Political leaders have not been immune.