

National

Fly-by-Night Justice Minister's Brother Released on Bail

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Fly-by-night justice minister Cho Kuk's younger brother has been released on bail just days after Cho's wife Chung Kyung-shim was released. Cho and his family were charged with corruption, document forgery and shady financial dealings.



Chung Kyung-shim leaves a remand jail in Uiwang, Gyeonggi Province on Sunday. /Newsis

Cho Kwon was released on bail because the court decided to postpone a ruling on the case as it wants to deliberate the evidence. He was indicted on Nov. 18 and the period he can be detained on remand ends on May 17. But the court granted him conditional bail, which is effectively house arrest.

Cho Kwon ran a school foundation owned by the family and was an executive of a construction company. He was in charges of inflicting around W11.5 billion in financial damage on the foundation by issuing false documents to obtain loans (US1\$=W1,225).

Legal experts say the presiding judges appear to have had a change of heart or disagreements about what seemed a clear-cut case.

A court source said Cho had to post W30 million bail and pledge not to destroy evidence as he faces trial without a lawyer. He will be banned from leaving his home in Busan, and must not contact any witnesses.

Cho Kuk is thought to be a crony of the president's, who pushed through his appointment even after the scandal and massive protests. With his brother's release, only a cousin of the ex-justice minister's now remains in jail on related charges.

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