

International Taekwon-Do Federation I.T.F.



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OFFICIAL STATEMENT ON CONTINUITY, LEGACY, AND RULE OF LAW

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For six decades, the International Taekwon-Do Federation has upheld a clear, disciplined, and principled standard of conduct. It does not engage in public polemics, online disputes, or narrative warfare. It does not respond to provocation with rhetoric, nor does it seek legitimacy through volume, repetition, or sensationalism. When disagreements arise, they are addressed quietly, professionally, and lawfully, before competent courts of law or within the framework of binding out-of-court agreements. This approach is deliberate, consistent, and institutional in nature. It reflects maturity, legal confidence, and respect for due process. It is not a posture adopted for convenience. It is a documented practice demonstrated over decades of organisational life.

The International Taekwon-Do Federation, originally founded in 1966, has been domiciled in Vienna, Austria since 1985, exactly as relocated there by the Founder, the late General Choi Hong Hi. Its legal continuity, lawful existence, legitimate governance, independence, and non-political character have been conclusively confirmed by Austrian courts, including at appellate level. These rulings are final and binding and explicitly confirm the ITF's lawful existence, independence, non-political character, and the absence of any foreign state control. They are not opinions, narratives, or interpretations advanced in public discourse. They are judicial determinations issued by competent courts applying Austrian law. They establish beyond doubt that the Federation founded by General Choi Hong Hi continues to exist today as the same legal and institutional entity, uninterrupted in its continuity and fully compliant with the applicable legal framework governing associations in Austria.

These determinations are matters of law, not matters of belief. Any public assertions or publications contradicting these judicially established facts, absent a subsequent court ruling to the contrary, constitute objectively false statements under Austrian law and give rise to legal liability, including claims for injunctive relief, correction, and damages.

Taekwon-Do itself was gifted by the Founder to the world. As a martial art, a philosophy, and an educational discipline, it is deeply rooted in Korean culture and history and was shared with all who study and practice it in good faith and in accordance with its

principles. The cultural, historical, and moral lineage of Taekwon-Do to the land that gave birth to General Choi Hong Hi, to which he consciously returned, and where he now rests, is absolute, indisputable, and not open to reinterpretation.

Taekwon-Do did not emerge in abstraction, nor did it arise detached from historical reality. It is inseparably bound to its homeland, to its history with all its complexities, and to the life path of its Founder, including the challenges and controversies inherent to any figure of historical significance. This connection is established by historical fact, preserved by institutional continuity, and affirmed by the lived reality of the International Taekwon-Do Federation since its inception.

The International Taekwon-Do Federation acknowledges with respect the consistent dignity, understanding, and consideration shown by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea over decades toward Taekwon-Do practitioners from all nations, as well as the humanity and compassion extended to the Choi family during moments of profound personal hardship. Such conduct carries moral weight and warrants respect. Gratitude and reverence in this context are not political statements. They are expressions of historical honesty, cultural awareness, and basic human decency. Respect for the Founder's homeland and for humanitarian conduct must not be misrepresented as political or institutional dependence, or as external control. Any attempt to diminish, relativize, erase, or trivialize the homeland of General Choi Hong Hi, particularly in the context of Taekwon-Do, distorts history, denies cultural truth, and violates the fundamental duty of respect owed to the Founder, his life path, the art itself, and the institution he created for its preservation.

Blood-lineage narratives and succession claims propagated by certain parties that attempt to substitute personal status for lawful institutional continuity are indefensible. In particular, narratives advanced by individuals who publicly distanced themselves from the Founder and his institutional framework during his lifetime, who sought to appropriate or exert control over his legacy during his final years and after his death, and who present such claims as a basis for authority are without legitimacy. These narratives represent a deliberate misrepresentation of institutional reality for personal, political, economic, or organisational convenience. They undermine the principles of legitimacy, continuity, and responsibility upon which Taekwon-Do was structured by its Founder. Respect for the origins of Taekwon-Do is not optional. It is a non-negotiable obligation for anyone who claims to practice, teach, represent, or exercise authority within Taekwon-Do. Those unwilling to uphold this principle place themselves outside the ethical, historical, and moral context of the art itself, regardless of titles claimed or structures asserted.

The Federation is a distinct legal and institutional entity. It is not a private possession, not a personal title, not a family asset, and not an inheritable object. Its authority and continuity cannot be transferred, assigned, or claimed by any individual or lineage on the basis of blood, proximity, or personal association. This has been expressly confirmed by judicial authority.

The International Taekwon-Do Federation belongs exclusively to its members as a collective body and is governed through the legitimate and structured mechanisms deliberately designed and implemented by General Choi Hong Hi himself. Those mechanisms, rooted in statutes, elections, accountability, and institutional responsibility, have been respected, preserved, and judicially confirmed. Any assertion to the contrary is factually false and may give rise to legal liability under the applicable legal framework.

This institutional heritage includes the Federation's name, insignia, statutory authority, organisational identity, and the full body of intellectual property attributable to the organisation. These rights are inseparable from the Federation's legal existence. They do not exist independently of it, nor can they be detached from it through narrative claims, moral posturing, selective memory, or historical reinterpretation. Nothing in any out-of-court agreement, and nothing in any private arrangement, derogates from the Federation's statutory rights and duties to protect its intellectual property. Those rights and duties arise directly from applicable national and international law. The Federation is therefore obliged, and fully entitled, to enforce them wherever necessary to prevent deception, confusion, misrepresentation, and unlawful appropriation.

In 2014, despite prevailing in the relevant legal actions and acting from a position of legal strength, the International Taekwon-Do Federation made a conscious and principled decision. Solely out of respect for the memory of the Founder and in the interest of stability within the Taekwon-Do community, it extended reconciliation to an organisation created by some former members and domiciled in Spain at that time. That reconciliation was formalised through an out-of-court agreement. Its purpose was limited and specific: to conclude defined historical disputes, prevent further escalation, and impose mutual restraint, particularly by stopping litigation on specified matters and by committing all parties, including their members, to refrain from slander, calumny, and defamation.

Regrettably, that gesture of reconciliation has not been duly valued by the other party. Moreover, in parallel, other imitators, breakaway groups, and opportunistic entities have sought to exploit the Taekwon-Do legacy through the unlawful registration, misuse, or appropriation of trademarks and other intellectual property forming an inseparable part of the Federation's institutional heritage. These patterns have culminated in public campaigns and statements disseminated through media platforms and official communication channels attributable to certain organisations. In some cases, such conduct constitutes a material breach of the out-of-court agreement. In others, it has amounted to defamation under applicable law, including personal attacks directed at Federation officials and, in certain instances, even their family members. Allegations of espionage, intelligence activity, or foreign state control constitute assertions of serious criminal conduct.

By decision of July 2024, the Federal Administrative Court of Austria reaffirmed that administrative measures must be grounded in concrete and verifiable facts and may not rest on abstract geopolitical considerations or unsubstantiated assumptions. In its assessment, the Court found that no substantiated factual evidence had been presented

to establish unlawful conduct, foreign influence, or sanctions-relevant activity attributable to the ITF President or to members of his family. In particular, the Court noted that no substantiating report from the Austrian Directorate for State Security and Intelligence (DSN) was before it, and held that reliance on a speculative newspaper article, unsupported by verifiable facts, could not constitute a sufficient evidentiary basis.

The Court further clarified that sanctions-related measures cannot be applied automatically or presumptively, but require an individualized assessment consistent with fundamental human-rights guarantees, notably the right to respect for private and family life. The decision thus underscores the necessity of evidentiary substantiation in accordance with established rule-of-law principles and stands as a clear and authoritative limitation on narrative-driven accusations, confirming that unsubstantiated geopolitical rhetoric cannot substitute for proof or override established human-rights protections.

When made publicly and in direct contradiction of final judicial findings, such allegations are objectively false and unlawful and give rise to aggravated civil liability, without prejudice to any further consequences under applicable criminal law. All relevant actions have been documented, preserved, and assessed. They will be addressed through the Federation's legal counsel strictly and methodically in accordance with the law.

Let there be no misunderstanding. The International Taekwon-Do Federation will continue to act with discipline, restraint, and professionalism. It will not be drawn into public argument. It will respond through law. The same strictly legal approach will be applied to any group or individual engaging in hostile conduct, spreading falsehoods, or disseminating defamatory statements about the organisation founded by General Choi Hong Hi. Public accusations made without evidence are not expressions of opinion. They are legal liabilities. Responsibility for such conduct rests with both organisations and individuals, without exception. Accountability will follow within the applicable legal frameworks.

The International Taekwon-Do Federation did not seek this public moment. However, in the year of its 60th Anniversary, it considers it appropriate and necessary to speak clearly, firmly, and authoritatively on matters of principle for those who genuinely follow the legacy of Taekwon-Do as entrusted to us by the Founder. This moment is not about confrontation. It is about clarity, continuity, historical truth, and institutional responsibility.

This statement is not an invitation to debate. It is a statement of fact, authority, and resolve.

International Taekwon-Do Federation (ITF)