

FFWPU Europe and the Middle East: Japanese Authorities Falsely Claim To Be Unaware Of Violating Human Rights Of Unification Church Members

Knut Holdhus
May 23, 2024



Satoshi Hamada, member of the House of Councillors, the Upper House in the National Diet of Japan since 2019

When question brought up in Parliament, Japanese authorities claim to be unaware of gross rights violations

On May 13, 2024, Satoshi Hamada (浜田 聡 - member of the House of Councillors, the Upper House in the National Diet of Japan since 2019) asked several questions to the parliamentary Administrative Oversight Committee concerning the current case at Tokyo District Court about the Kishida administration's request for a court order to dissolve the [Family Federation](#) of Japan.

Hamada's questions are seen as an attempt to point out important perspectives that are missing from the authorities' and the media's one-sided, biased handling of the case. The apparent bias is seen by many as seriously endangering the court's impartiality in its crucial decision-making process.

Part 2 of Satoshi Hamada's questions

See [part 1](#)

Committee member Satoshi Hamada continued his questioning,



"Regarding the dissolution order for religious corporations, it is very narrowly defined under Article 81, Paragraph 1, Item 1 of the Religious Corporations Act as acts that are clearly recognized to violate laws and regulations and significantly harm public welfare. I understand that, in practice, dissolution orders have only been applied in two cases: Aum Shinrikyo (オウム真理教) and Myokakuji Temple (明覚寺).

I believe the change in interpretation by Prime Minister Kishida during the 2022, House of Councilors Budget Committee is problematic."

The background to Satoshi Hamada's question here is the fact

that in the 2022 Senate Budget Committee, Prime Minister Kishida reinterpreted the Religious Corporations Act. This has become a contentious issue.

During the committee session, he unexpectedly changed the government's legal interpretation, suggesting that unlawful acts under civil law could now be considered grounds for dissolution of religious organizations. Specifically, he stated that a dissolution order against the former [Unification Church](#) is "possible". This sudden shift in interpretation has raised concerns.

Hamada went on,

Specifically, there existed a Cabinet decision that a dissolution order could not be requested against the former [Unification Church](#) due to the absence of criminal penalties. Still, Prime Minister Kishida's stated that civil law torts are also included in the requirements for requesting a dissolution order. Thereby he changed the legal interpretation overnight. This is a significant issue.

There are numerous claims that the interpretation was forcibly changed in order to issue a dissolution order against the former [Unification Church](#) in order to maintain the Cabinet's approval ratings. No effective rebuttal has been made against these claims. I hope the courts will take this point into consideration.

Furthermore, if this case leads to the possibility of dissolving religious corporations not only for criminal cases but also for civil cases, I believe many religious corporations will live in fear of dissolution in the future.

To all those involved in religious affairs, I hope you will take note of this.

Next, regarding the [Family Federation](#), an issue that I believe should be addressed in the Diet (parliament), is the problem of forced renunciation of faith (forced de-conversion, forced apostasy, deprogramming, faith-breaking). 'Renunciation of faith' means to abandon one's religious teachings.

This involves malicious methods by which the families of members of the [Family Federation](#) forcibly try to make them leave the organization, such as by abduction and confining them with the intent to make them renounce their faith.

According to statements by the [Family Federation](#), there have been 4,300 such cases.

This issue has also been brought up in the Diet in the past.



Dr. Hitoshi Hinokida (1942-2016). Won Nobel Peace Prize in 1985 as a principal member of International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW). Worked with Mother Theresa 1980-1990. Member of House of Representatives in Japan 1996-2000. Photo (2000): [Japanese Victims' Association against Religious Kidnapping and Forced Conversion](#)

On 22nd April 2000, during a session of the House of Representatives' Committee on Audit and Oversight of Administration, Representative Hitoshi Hinokida (榎田仁議) of the Liberal Democratic Party raised this issue.

I have prepared the minutes from that session for reference. It mentions how the U.S. State Department criticized the Japanese police for not addressing this issue.

I hope you will review it. First, I would like to ask the National Police Agency: Regarding the troubles that arise from the forced renunciation of faith and the abduction and confinement of [Family Federation](#) members, could you please tell us what the National Police Agency is aware of?

Kazuhito Shinka (親家 和仁), who currently serves as Deputy Director-General in the National Police Agency Commissioner's Secretariat, replied,

"I would like to respond to your question. Regarding the occurrence of crimes against former members of the former [Unification Church](#), we have investigated to the extent possible within the Public Prosecutor's Office. However, we have not been able to confirm any cases reported by prefectural police departments."

To be continued. Part 3 coming soon.

See [part 1](#)

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Satoshi Hamada (standing at bottom) asking questions to the parliamentary Administrative Oversight Committee in the Japanese Diet 13th May 2024. Photo: Screenshot from video recording of the event.

Part 1 of Satoshi Hamada's questions

See [part 2](#)

On 13th May 2024, Satoshi Hamada (浜田 聡), member of the House of Councillors, the Upper House in the National Diet of Japan since 2019) asked several questions to the parliamentary Administrative Oversight Committee concerning the current case at Tokyo District Court about the Kishida administration's request for a court order to dissolve the [Family Federation of Japan](#).

Hamada's questions are seen as an attempt to point out important perspectives that are missing from the authorities' and the media's one-sided, biased handling of the case. The apparent bias is seen by many as seriously endangering the court's impartiality in its crucial decision-making process.

Satoshi Hamada said,

"I am Satoshi Hamada from the NHK Party [also called the anti-NHK party – NHK being the national broadcasting association]. First, I would like to ask you about the issue of the [Family Federation](#), also known as the [Unification Church](#).

As for the issue of the former [Unification Church](#), my perception of the problem is probably different from the tone of the mainstream media in general, and I disagree with the direction that the former [Unification Church](#) should be dissolved.

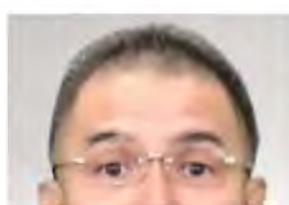
At present, a request for a dissolution order has already been filed with the court, so I hope that the court will make a thorough adjudication.

However, as for the **important perspectives that are not covered by the mainstream media, but are necessary for the court's consideration, I intend to address them in this parliament**. Therefore, I kindly ask the members of the judiciary to pay close attention to my questions and written inquiries submitted to the committee and to consider them as materials for your judgment [判断材料 – refers to information or evidence used for making judgments].

Now, my first question:

If a dissolution order has been requested for the [Family Federation](#), **shouldn't other religious organizations, involved in serious misconduct, also face dissolution requests?**

I have prepared a document submitted by lawyer Tatsuki Nakayama (中山達樹) of Nakayama International Law Office



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to the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT). This document was submitted on January 4, 2023.



Attorney Tatsuki Nakayama Jan. 2024.
Photo: Screenshot

Based on the content of this request, I will ask my question.

The three corporations mentioned here – Kigenkai [紀元会 – a small Shinto group. In 2007 a group of members killed another member.], Kukai Mikkyō Daikinryūin [空海密教大金龍院 – esoteric Buddhist group. in 2012, a group of members beat another member to death.], and Shinji Shūmeikai [神慈秀明会 – Shinto organization followed by various scandals.] – have all been involved in incidents related to **group violence and deaths**.

The petition states that dissolution orders should also be issued to these three corporations, and I believe that this is a reasonable opinion.

Therefore, my question is: Are there any plans to submit dissolution order requests for these three corporations? If not, please explain the reasons."

Akiko Honda, Parliamentary Vice-Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, replied,

"I will respond to Commissioner Hamada's question. The request for a dissolution order against the former **Unification Church** was deemed appropriate because the case, in which widespread harm was caused by the unlawful solicitation of donations by members of the said organization, falls under the grounds for a dissolution order as stipulated in Article 81, Paragraph 1 of the Religious Corporations Act. The cases related to the religious organizations you mentioned are entirely different from those of the former **Unification Church**. Therefore, requesting a dissolution order for the former **Unification Church** does not necessarily imply that the same should apply to the three organizations you pointed out, and there are no plans to do so."



Akiko Honda (LDP), Vice-Minister of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT). Here on 26th Oct. 2023. Photo: 首相官邸ホームページ / Wikimedia Commons. License: CC Attr 4.0 Int. Cropped

Continued in [part 2](#).

Featured image above: Satoshi Hamada speaking in the Japanese Diet (Parliament) 13th May 2024. Photo: Screenshot from video recording of the session.

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