

FFWPU Europe and the Middle East: Persecuted Japanese Unification Church, Speak Up

Knut Holdhus
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Masumi Fukuda speaking in Kumamoto, Japan June 16, 2024

Minority religion under attack in Japan urged to make itself heard

Part 1 of a speech Japanese investigative journalist and award-winning author Masumi Fukuda (福田ますみ) gave on 16th June 2024 at the "[Kumamoto Conference to Protect Freedom of Religion](#)" at a hotel in Kumamoto, a city of ca. 740,000 inhabitants on the southern island of Kyushu. The [conference](#) was attended by members and supporters of the [Family Federation for World Peace and Unification](#), protesting against the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology's request for a court order to dissolve the [Family Federation](#) of Japan.

I am Masumi Fukuda.

Thank you very much for inviting me. [...]

Previously, at gatherings in Nagasaki and other places, I have mentioned that demonstrations are a citizen's right. Given the current situation with the [Family Federation](#), I believe we should raise our voices in a noticeable way.

[...] In the 1970s, Scientology faced a similar situation in America as the [Family Federation](#) is facing now. At that time, believers from all over the world surrounded the federal courthouse in Washington, DC, in a significant demonstration, which they said was quite effective.

In the United States and Japan, there are different perceptions of demonstrations. In Japan, especially among conservatives, demonstrations are often viewed negatively. Many ordinary conservatives think that demonstrations are something left-wing people do.

However, given the current situation, as someone mentioned yesterday, remaining a silent minority is not an option. The media is heavily biased, and the true nature of the [Family Federation](#) is not being conveyed to the general public at all.



Hachiko, the Loyal Dog at Shibuya station in Tokyo

I think it is the believers themselves who should raise their voices and hold such demonstrations. I think the members in Kyushu [the large southern island] are the most enthusiastic right now. So, I hope they can show the most enthusiasm for these demonstrations and inspire a wave of support from all over the country.

Ultimately, we must hold these demonstrations in Tokyo. (Applause) Thank you. I have been talking about this with the headquarters, but it seems they are not very enthusiastic about it at the moment. However, at this point, doing nothing is not an option. It's not like you do nothing; you hold symposiums nationwide. But you still have to make your case to the general public.

During the Golden Week holidays in early May, people raised their voices at the bronze statue of "Hachiko, the Loyal Dog" (忠犬ハチ公) in Shibuya [in Tokyo]. So, I think this movement of raising voices and this enthusiasm are growing.

Anyway, the [Family Federation](#) is a religion that is currently misunderstood. As mentioned earlier, ordinary

Japanese people often say, "We know about freedom of religion," and "We know religious persecution is wrong."

But they say, "The [Family Federation](#) is not a religion; it's just a money-collecting group disguised as a religion." That is entirely incorrect. It is outright religious persecution. (Applause)



However, it is really true that this is indeed religious persecution, and that the [Family Federation](#) is a legitimate religious organization. The teachings, such as the profound and systematic [Unification Principles](#), make it a genuine religion, perhaps even more so than organizations like Soka Gakkai. (Applause)

While I have attended lectures on the [Unification Principles](#), I realized that its teachings are quite the opposite of my own lifestyle. (Laughter) I am not married, and I don't have a family or children. I believe marriage is optional, but the [Family Federation](#)'s teachings emphasize the importance of the [Blessing](#) and having a family. This is something that is shared only among believers, not with the general public.

Although the teachings differ from my own views, I think it is still possible for someone like me, who doesn't align perfectly with their beliefs, to support the [Family Federation](#). I find this somewhat unique. (Applause)

As an ordinary person, before the assassination of former Prime Minister Abe, I didn't really think deeply about religion. However, I have come to learn some terms like "the created world", which is used in the [Family Federation](#). As I learned about "microcosm", such as the human body, and "macrocosm", such as the universe, I realized how well everything is made. This led me to think that perhaps there is some intentional will behind it, and at times I contemplated the will of [God](#). But I always felt that religion was not something close to me.

To be continued. Part 2 coming soon.

Masumi Fukuda (福田ますみ) is a Japanese non-fiction author and award-winning journalist, well known for her investigative journalism. She has written several in-depth reports about the persecution of the [Family Federation](#) in Japan and has exposed how a [leftwing network of lawyers](#) uses any means to have the [Family Federation](#) dissolved. Her articles have been published mainly in Japan, but several are republished by [Bitter Winter](#), the international online magazine on religious freedom and human rights.

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in Japan, the media and the public opinion. For decades, activist lawyers in the network have been using tactics like coercing former members to join their lawsuits against the [Unification Church](#), fabricating evidence, and extorting money from a perfectly legitimate religious movement, that is constantly being persecuted and slandered by those lawyers.



From July 2023 issue of *Hanada*. Photo: [Bitter Winter](#)

The network was in fact established in order to destroy the [Unification Church](#), now called the [Family Federation](#). What the Japanese journalist is unmasking, essentially boils down to the activist lawyers, many of them communists, using trumped-up charges against a new religious movement, while the “crime” it has committed, is to be against communism.

[Bitter Winter](#), an online magazine on religious freedom and human rights, published Fukuda’s findings in a series of four articles in English. The first one appeared 23rd June, the fourth and last 27th June.



From front page of July 2023 issue of *Hanada*

The first article describes the legal battle between the [Unification Church](#) in Japan and a group of anti-cult lawyers who want to dissolve the [church](#). Fukuda argues that the [church](#) is not a “cult”, but a

legitimate religious organization, that has been persecuted and slandered by the lawyers and the media. The article also exposes the hidden motives and connections of the lawyers, who have been profiting from lawsuits against the [church](#) and collaborating with former members and other anti-cult groups. The investigative journalist claims that the request to dissolve the [church](#) is unreasonable and unjust, and that it violates the freedom of religion and human rights of the [church](#) members.

Fukuda points out that although the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) has been petitioned many times by the activist lawyers’ network to dissolve the [Unification Church](#) / [Family Federation](#), the ministry has no case to do so. The investigative reporter states,

“Although the MEXT has now exercised its right to ask questions for five times, it has not ‘collected enough evidence’. In fact, it has not found a single piece of evidence. This is the best proof that the religious organization is innocent.” (*The Plot to Destroy the Unification Church in Japan. 1. Why the Church Should Not Be Dissolved*, written by Masumi Fukuda, published in *Bitter Winter* 23rd June 2023.)

**BITTER
WINTER**

The second article [Bitter Winter](#) published, details the devious tactics of the anti-cult lawyers, who have been suing the [Unification Church](#) in Japan for decades. It is revealed how the lawyers have been manipulating the legal system, the media, and the public opinion to create highly image-tarnishing lawsuits against the [church](#). The article also exposes how the lawyers have been coercing former members to join their lawsuits, fabricating evidence, and extorting money from the church. Fukuda claims that the lawyers have been violating the law, the ethics, and the human rights of the church members.

In the third article, Masumi Fukuda makes shocking revelations about the fraudulent lawsuits that the



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anti-cult lawyers have filed against the [Unification Church](#) in Japan. The article shows how the lawyers have used false or exaggerated claims to accuse the [church](#) of brainwashing, extortion, and other abusive methods. Fukuda shows how the courts have been biased and unfair towards the church, and how some judges have ignored or dismissed the evidence presented by the church. The third Bitter Winter article claims that the lawsuits have been unjust and unlawful, and that they have caused



Activist lawyers caused great damage and suffering to [Unification Church](#) members. Here Toru Goto after 12 years of forcible detention. Photo: [FFWPU](#)



Key member of activist lawyers' network – Hiroshi Watanabe. Photo: Screenshot / [Bitter Winter](#)

great damage and suffering to the church members.

The final article in the series, brings to light the

real “anti-social” group, the anti-cult lawyers who try to destroy the [Unification Church](#) / [Family Federation](#) in Japan. This article exposes the systematic lies and disreputable tactics of the lawyers who have been spreading false information and propaganda about the [church](#). We get insights into the hidden agenda and interests of the lawyers, who have been collaborating with anti-cult groups, former members, and media outlets to discredit and harass the [church](#). The writer claims that the lawyers are the ones who are violating the social norms and values, and that they should be held accountable for their actions.

Here is an example of the fabricated evidence that Fukuda mentions,

“The plaintiff also submitted as evidence several notebooks and passbooks in which she had noted each time she made a donation or other contribution. However, when the defendants analyzed these notes, they found that some of them had not been written at the time of the donations, but later, in order to fabricate favorable evidence for the trial.”

(From [The Plot to Destroy the Unification Church in Japan. 4. The Real “Anti-Social” Group, the Anti-Cult Lawyers](#), written by Masumi Fukuda, published in Bitter Winter 27th June 2023.

Fukuda writes,

“For almost all religions, including the former [Unification Church](#), donations, endowments, and charitable gifts are expressions of piety and are offered willingly to [God](#). For example, not a few overseas Christians donated vast tracts of land or even their entire wealth before the end of their lives and died penniless. Will their relatives sue the religious corporations for depriving them of the inheritance they expected to inherit?

It is not unusual for other religious corporations to receive donations of hundreds of millions of yen. It is problematic to unilaterally criticize only large donations made for the altruistic reason of ‘promoting world peace’ or ‘the good of humanity’.



Head of the activist lawyers network – Hiroshi Yamaguchi. Photo: Screenshot / [Bitter Winter](#)

Unfortunately, however, even if the donors are convinced at the time of the donation that they are donating freely, as time goes by, their faith may wane. Their relatives may rush to the National Network of Lawyers Against Spiritual Sales to recover the donation.

The donors may be persuaded by lawyers from the Communist Party of Japan or the former Socialist Party that they have been 'deceived', and a lawsuit against the religious organization for the return of the donation may follow. In fact, there are many cases in which relatives consulted with the Network on how to force the donors-believers to sue." ([The Plot to Destroy the Unification Church in Japan. 3. Fraudulent Lawsuits](#), written by Masumi Fukuda, published in [Bitter Winter](#) 26th June 2023.)

Featured image above: Masumi Fukuda, april 2023. Photo: [FOREF](#)

"Lawyers Manipulating, Coercing, Lying" – text: Knut Holdhus

Read more about lawyers manipulating in [Illegalities of Activist Lawyers Exposed](#)

Read even more about lawyers manipulating in [Japan Times: Warning Of Terror](#)

Also [Bitter Winter](#) has more articles on Japanese leftwing activist lawyers manipulating the country's legal system.

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