

FFWPU Europe and the Middle East: Japan Protests Against Unjust Dissolution of FFWPU

Knut Holdhus
October 9, 2024



Participants in the demonstration that started in front of Fukuoka City Hall and marched through the downtown area of Fukuoka City, on the southern Japanese island of Kyushu on 6th October 2024



Members of minority religion marching to protest unjust dissolution attempt by the Kishida administration

Tokyo, 7th October 2024 - Published as an article in the Japanese newspaper [Sekai Nippo](#). Republished with permission. Translated from Japanese. [Original article](#). It is about demonstrations in large cities on the southern Japanese island of Kyushu where members of the former [Unification Church](#) (now known as the [Family Federation for World Peace and Unification](#)) expressing their strong opposition to what they view as an unfair or unjust order to dissolve their organization.

"We strongly oppose the unjust dissolution" - Members of the former [Unification Church](#) march in protest.

by the editorial department of [Sekai Nippo](#)



Members of the [Family Federation](#) protesting against the unjust dissolution of their movement. Here, the flag of the federation waving in Japan

On the afternoon of 6th October 2024, the "Fukuoka Citizens' Association for the Protection of Fundamental Human Rights and Freedom of Religion", organized by volunteers from the [Family Federation for World Peace and Unification](#) (formerly the [Unification Church](#)), held a demonstration march through the busy streets around Fukuoka City Hall. About 400 people participated in the demonstration.

The demonstrators, along with campaign vehicles, appealed to the citizens with slogans such as "We strongly oppose Fukuoka City unjustly refusing without legal grounds to rent out public facilities." and "We strongly oppose the unjust dissolution order against the [Family Federation](#)."

At the same time, the "Kitakyushu Citizens' Association for the Protection of Freedom of

Religion" also held a demonstration march from Kitakyushu City Hall to Kokura Station, with about 150 participants. The man leading the march emphasized, "We have not done anything wrong, so it is important to voice that." A second-generation believer who participated said, "I want to continue working towards the realization of a society where freedom of religion is guaranteed."

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New Japanese Anti-Government Protests Spreading

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Demos and rallies held throughout Japan as part of anti-government protests

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Family Federation believers hold rallies and protest marches in various places, advocating for the protection of religious freedom.

A member of the city council in Kitakyushu, which passed a resolution to sever relations, also participated.

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Prime Minister Shinzo Abe on 8th July, followers of the **Family Federation for World Peace and Unification** (formerly known as the **Unification Church**) held rallies and marches across the country, calling for freedom of religion.



From the demo in Kitakyushu City 30th June 2024. Photo: Kennosuke Teraguchi (寺口賢之介) / *Sekai Nippo*

In Kitakyushu City, on 30th June, about 300 believers and supporters protested against the city council's decision to sever ties with the **Family Federation**. They marched from the Kitakyushu Municipal Chamber of Commerce and Trade to Kokura Station, shouting, "The government's request for a dissolution order is unjust."

Prior to the march, a rally was held where **Shingo Inoue** (井上真吾), a member of the city council who attended as a guest, took the stage. He reflected on the unanimous decision made in December 2022 to pass a resolution confirming non-involvement with the former **Unification Church**, which was deemed "anti-social" due to "numerous victims resulting from spiritual sales" and "extortion of donations".

Although he had supported the resolution at that time, he recalled feeling a strong sense of discomfort, questioning whether it was an issue of freedom of thought and belief. He now pledged to fight for the religious freedom of the **Family Federation**, even at the cost of his political career.

In Shinjuku Ward, Tokyo, on 30th June, about 100 followers held a protest march, claiming that the declaration by the *Liberal Democratic Party* to sever ties with the **Family Federation** was infringing on the followers' human rights. They chanted slogans such as "Protect freedom of religion".



Discussions about faith experiences and social contributions were held at the 'Akita Rally to Protect Freedom of Religion' on 30th June 2024, in Akita City. Photo: Shiro Ito (伊藤志郎) / *Sekai Nippo*

On the same day in Akita City [northwestern Japan], a rally was held with the theme "Why Do People Have Faith?" It was attended by about 100 persons. Kimitsugu Usui (薄井君次), a representative of second-generation believers, introduced activities such as holding a bazaar at the church in support of the Noto peninsula [earthquake-stricken area] and visiting about 130 religious organizations to promote interfaith dialogue.

During a panel discussion, there was a speech by Kiaki Kojima (小嶋希晶), the president of "Association to Protect the Human Rights of Second-Generation Believers". She mentioned that although they have been interviewed by many media outlets, recently experts have been saying that they were envious of second-generation believers. She emphasized that the media-reported picture of the **Family Federation** causing damages is far removed from the actual situation of the **Family Federation**.

On 29th June in Niihama City, Ehime Prefecture [on southern island of Shikoku], a symposium was held with the participation of over 200 **Family Federation** members and supporters. Representing



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the members, a 74-year-old woman expressed her concern about the current situation, stating, "The media consistently presents biased reports, making it seem as if believers have no human rights." She also voiced her deep concern about being labeled as part of an "evil religion" and even being called an "anti-social force".



Toru Goto speaking in Niihama City, Japan 29th June 2024. Photo: [Sekai Nippo](#)



Location of the cities mentioned. Illustration: Maximilian Dörrbecker (Chumhwa) / Wikimedia Commons. License: [CC ASA 3.0 Unp](#)

Following the testimony of second-generation believers, Toru Goto (後藤徹) gave a lecture. He had been abducted and confined for 12 years and 5 months by his relatives and professional faith-breaker Takashi Miyamura (宮村峻) in order to force Goto to abandon his belief. He cited examples of human rights violations targeting the faith of the [Family Federation for World Peace and Unification](#), such as the dismissal of employees found to be

believers, and the refusal of rental contracts to [Family Federation](#) employees. "Outrageous discrimination and human rights violations take place behind the scenes," he said, referring to the media's biased reporting after the assassination of former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe.

Featured image above: Members of the [Family Federation for World Peace and Unification](#) and the Tokyo Fellowship Family Church march in a demonstration shouting, "Protect freedom of religion and human rights" – on 30th June 2024, in Shinjuku, Tokyo. Photo: Reika Kato (加藤玲和) / [Sekai Nippo](#)

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