FFWPU Europe and Middle East: Family Fed Japan Establishes A Compensation Committee

Knut Holdhus
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Two Japanese men shaking hands in front of Family Federation logo. Illustration: ChatGPT

header of the official webpage of the Family Federation of Japan

Compensation Committee that will operate independently from the Family Federation to review and determine the contents of compensation for claimants neutrally and fairly

Regarding the Establishment of a Compensation Committee

Press Release

Family Federation for World Peace and Unification
Public Relations and External Affairs Bureau

Faithful believer offering donation. Illustration by Microsoft Designer

Press release issued by the Family Federation of Japan 29th October 2025 concerning the Family Federation establishing a Compensation Committee that will operate independently from the Family Federation to review and determine the contents of compensation for claimants neutrally and fairly. See original article in Japanese.

Out of reflection on the fact that our organization had faced numerous civil lawsuits in the past, we issued a Compliance Declaration in 2009 [See editor's note 1 below], and since then we have continuously worked toward church reform.

After the incident [assassination] involving former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, we further strengthened our reforms, such as by establishing specific procedures for receiving donations.

As a result of these efforts, the number of lawsuits and complaints related to donations has decreased dramatically in recent years.

However, given that

there are individuals participating in the so-called "group mediation" [See editor's note 2 below] who continue to raise claims of harm, and the Tokyo District Court's dissolution order stated that "the existence of unmanifested damage cannot be denied," and

we have received recommendations from the members of the Compensation Committee,

we have decided to change our previous policy and move forward toward becoming a religious organization that is open to society and trusted by the public, offering peace of mind and confidence to the people of Japan.

Specifically, we will shift away from our previous approach - which was based strictly on law and evidence - and will now face those who claim harm in the group mediation process directly, going beyond the legal framework to pursue an early resolution.

Masaru Wakasa, lawyer and politician (2013)

In addition, to respond appropriately to the above-mentioned court decision, we have asked independent and impartial lawyers - who can make fair and just judgments from a standpoint separate from our organization - to form a Compensation Committee, and we have begun efforts to resolve the issue through this new framework.

The Compensation Committee will operate independently from our organization, reviewing and determining the contents of compensation neutrally and fairly, from the standpoint of social appropriateness.

Our organization will, of course, accept the committee's decisions, and will fully cooperate by providing necessary materials (such as donation records) for the committee's reviews and deliberations.

(According to the committee, decisions on compensation will not be made solely on the presence or absence of records; rather, the committee will conduct hearings and other inquiries to assess the plausibility of donation facts from multiple perspectives.)

Toru Hashimoto, Japanese TV personality, politician, and lawyer. giving a campaign speech July 11, 2013 in Kyoto during a regular election for the House of Councillors

As for the members of the Compensation Committee, in addition to four lawyers from the Hashimoto General Law Office (Representative: Attorney Toru Hashimoto - 橋下徹), we have heard that Attorney Masaru Wakasa (若狭勝) will participate in specific examinations as an advisor. Attorney Kazuya Maruyama (丸山和也) is providing neutral, fair, and comprehensive guidance.

The Compensation Committee will be based in Osaka, where it will handle all administrative matters, and plans to launch a compensation application website on 31st October. Applications will generally be accepted until 31st March.

For details on the specific compensation framework and procedures, please refer to the announcements from the Compensation Committee.

[Editor's note 1: The 2009 compliance declaration of the Unification Church of Japan (now the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification) was a formal commitment by the organization to reform its practices in response to longstanding public criticism and legal challenges.

The Unification Church in Japan had faced numerous allegations related to recruitment tactics and donation solicitation, termed "spiritual sales" (霊感商法) by a hostile network of activist lawyers who had declared the religious organization an enemy. These issues led to multiple lawsuits orchestrated by the activist lawyers and significant media backlash. This prompted the organization to take measures to restore its reputation and demonstrate compliance with legal and ethical standards.

The religious organization pledged to stop possibly unethical donation practices, including what the hostile network of lawyers claimed amounted to "pressuring members into making large financial contributions under spiritual pretexts."

This was in response to accusations from the same activist lawyers that followers "were being manipulated into giving away substantial amounts of money or property."

The Unification Church stated it would enhance internal oversight to ensure compliance with ethical and legal standards. Measures included better training for leaders and stricter guidelines for evangelization and solicitation of donations.

After this compliance declaration, there was a significant decrease in the number of lawsuits against the

Unification Church - since 2015 called the Family Federation. The religious organization has used this as evidence that it has improved its practices and should not be subject to dissolution.]

[Editor's note 2: The group mediation referred to here is a mediation process between the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification in Japan and a network of activist leftwing lawyers called National Network of Lawyers Against Spiritual Sales. The hostile network of lawyers represents a group of 186 petitioners.

On 28th October 2025, the Family Federation of Japan issued a press release about the group mediation, writing,

"With respect to the group mediation currently being conducted between our organization and the National Network of Lawyers Against Spiritual Sales (hereinafter, 'the Lawyers' Group'), we hereby report that a settlement has been reached with a portion of the petitioners.

Our organization has, from the beginning, responded to each of the 186 mediation cases sincerely and individually.

We have conducted thorough fact-finding investigations and promptly submitted the results to both the petitioners and the court.

We have also provided, to the fullest extent possible, all materials in our possession that the petitioners requested for submission and have earnestly engaged in discussions.

Under these circumstances, beginning this year, the Lawyers' Group requested urgent resolution for certain petitioners, such as those aged 80 or older or suffering from serious illnesses.

In response, our organization decided to significantly change its approach - shifting from handling each case individually to pursuing early resolution as a general policy.

After multiple mediation sessions, on 27th October, we successfully reached settlement agreements with 39 petitioners who are elderly or have other special circumstances.

Our organization will continue to face each petitioner with sincerity and will remain committed to achieving an early and comprehensive resolution of this matter."]

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Yamagami Trial: Peril Of Romanticizing Terror

- October 29, 2025
- Knut Holdhus

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Editorial as Yamagami's trial opens: A fair trial must reveal the full truth without allowing misplaced sympathy for assassin's heinous act of terror.

Tokyo, 28th October 2025 – Published as an article in the Japanese newspaper Sekai Nippo. Republished with permission. Translated from Japanese. Original article.

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Today [28th October] marks the opening of the first session in the lay judge trial of Tetsuya Yamagami (山上徹也), who has been indicted for murder and other charges in the July 2022 assassination of former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe (安倍晋三).

Tetsuya Yamagami, *indicted for the assassination of Shinzo Abe, the former prime minister of Japan. Photo: Andrew2592009 / Wikimedia Commons. License: CC ASA 4.0 Int. Cropped*

A fair trial is essential – one that uncovers the truth while never losing sight of the fact that this was an act of terrorism.

The Sentence Will Be the Main Point of Contention

The defendant attacked Abe during a campaign speech for the *House of Councillors* election, using a homemade gun. This was an extremely grave act of terrorism that shook the very foundations of democracy.

However, after the *Nara Prefectural Police* leaked that Yamagami's motive stemmed from resentment toward the *Family Federation for World Peace and Unification* (formerly the Unification Church), to which his mother was a member, a wave of sympathy for the defendant began to spread.

According to reports, Yamagami intends to admit to the murder charge, with the trial focusing on his sentencing. His defense team is expected to argue for leniency, claiming that his mother's large donations to the former Unification Church constituted "religious abuse" of her child. Yet invoking such a notion – far removed from international norms – risks clouding the lay judges' judgment.

On the other hand, **prosecutors are expected to emphasize the malice and premeditation of the crime**. The evidence is clear: Yamagami built the homemade firearm himself and researched Abe's schedule in advance.

A floral tribute stand set up at Osaka Gokoku Shrine on 6th July 2024, on the occasion of the second anniversary of the death of former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe. Organized by the Itagaki Taisuke Memorial Association. Photo: Photo memories 1868 / Wikimedia Commons. License: CC Attr 4.0 Int

Still, the essence of the case lies not only in these details but in the fact that it was a terrorist attack carried out during an election speech, striking at the heart of democracy. Moreover, Yamagami attacked and killed Abe – who was not even his direct target of resentment – in order to stir public criticism of the former Unification Church and to avenge his grudge against the religious organization.

Yamagami has reportedly said that Abe "was not his true enemy." Yet he allegedly calculated that if he killed the former prime minister – Japan's longest-serving leader – based on the vague perception that Abe was "close to" the former Unification Church, the media would turn on the religious organization.

Echoes of the 15th May 1932 Incident

The aftermath of this event recalls the 15th May Incident of 1932, in which Prime Minister Tsuyoshi Inukai (犬養毅) was assassinated. The naval officers responsible received light sentences after public and press sympathy swelled in their favor, fueling an atmosphere that

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tolerated political violence.

Prime Minister Tsuyoshi Inukai (犬養毅 – 1855 – 1932). Photo: Wikimedia Commons. Public domain image. Cropped

A similar pattern emerged when *Mainichi Shimbun* faced public backlash for describing an upcoming feature on the Abe assassination as exploring the "social justification of the incident".

The social consequences have already been severe: in April 2023, a copycat attack occurred, when then-Prime Minister Fumio Kishida (岸田文雄) was targeted with a homemade explosive device.

The trial over Abe's assassination should focus squarely on the essence of Yamagami's actions and bring to light the background behind them.

Lingering Doubts About the 'Lone Wolf' Theory

Nara Prefectural Police investigated and the prosecution indicted Yamagami as a lone perpetrator. Yet questions remain.

For example, the findings of Dr. Hidetada Fukushima (福島英賢) of *Nara Medical University Hospital* – who treated Abe – stated that Abe's heart had suffered major damage, while the police autopsy results reportedly differed sharply. There are also reports that the fatal bullet has not been located.

These are not mere "conspiracy theories", but reasonable questions that must be addressed. The court is expected to hear testimony from the medical examiners involved, and satisfactory explanations are essential. Only through that process can the full truth of the incident be brought to light.

Featured image *above: The scene of the assassination of Shinzo Abe in front of Yamato-Saidaiji Station in Nara City, Japan. Photo: (撮影) 一般社団法人板垣退助先生顕彰会（アップロード）/ Wikimedia Commons. License: CC ASA 4.0 Int. Cropped*

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