

FFWPU Europe and the Middle East: Japanese Attack Unificationism in a Nutshell

Knut Holdhus
June 20, 2024



Norishige Kondo - Bordeaux, France June 12, 2024

Victim of abduction and attempted forced de-conversion gives overview of Japanese onslaught on the Family Federation since Abe assassination

Part 1 of edited version of a presentation by Norishige Kondo (近藤徳茂), author and Deputy Director of the Legal Affairs Department of the [Family Federation](#) of Japan, on 13th June, the second day of the 2024 CESNUR Conference, during session 8 (plenary, chaired by Dr. Eileen Barker), which had the theme "The Unification Church and Japan: What Is Exactly Happening?" Kondo is a victim of kidnapping, forcible detention and attempted faith-breaking.

The 2024 CESNUR Conference was held from 12th to 15th June at the University of Bordeaux Montaigne in Bordeaux, France with the theme: "[The Contribution of Minority Religions to](#)

[Society](#)". The conference was co-organized by: [Center for Studies on New Religions](#) (CESNUR), Université Bordeaux Montaigne - CLIMAS (Cultures et littératures des mondes Anglophones), and [International Society for the Study of New Religions](#) (ISSNR).

I will talk about the [Family Federation](#) dissolution issue in Japan.



Shinzo Abe, Prime Minister of Japan 2012-2020, delivering a message via video at a Rally of Hope in Gapyeong, South Korea 12th September 2021

First, let's look at the course of the dissolution case, the chronology of events after the Abe assassination incident on 8th July 2022.

The lawyers' group National Network of Lawyers Against Spiritual Sales (NNLASS), which is hostile to the [Unification Church](#), held a press conference and accused the [Unification Church](#) of being a "great evil".

In August 2022 Prime Minister Fumio Kishida proclaimed without careful investigation, "The Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) will cut the ties with the [Unification Church](#)."

19th October 2022, Kishida changed the interpretation of the Religious Corporations Act (RCA) overnight so that the [Unification Church](#) could be dissolved.



Front page of Japanese Consumer Laws News July 2022

On 13th October 2023, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) filed a lawsuit to the court requesting the dissolution of the [Unification Church](#).

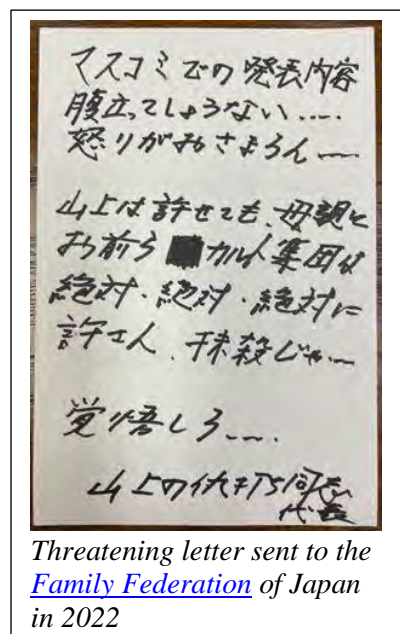
In a periodical named Consumer Law News, the July 2022 issue, Lawyer Hiroshi Yamaguchi, a core member of National Network of Lawyers Against Spiritual Sales (NNLASS), hostile towards the [Unification Church](#), published an article and stated, "Consultation cases for claims against the [Unification Church](#) have decreased recently."

However, after the Abe assassination, the same month that periodical was published, National Network of Lawyers Against Spiritual Sales (NNLASS), including Yamaguchi, accused the [Unification Church](#) and made it appear as if it still caused serious damages.

The media accused the [Unification Church](#) of being "anti-social", claiming that it previously had lost torts. The media blamed lawmakers from the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) who had ties with the [Unification Church](#).

And those media attacks caused hostility against the [Unification Church](#). Extreme right-wing groups screamed through loudspeakers in front of the [Unification Church](#) headquarters, "Get out of Japan!"

Writing denouncing the movement was painted on the wall of a local church: "Cult out of Japan!"



Threatening letter sent to the [Family Federation](#) of Japan in 2022

Threatening letters were sent to the headquarters and local churches.

Finally, on 31st Aug. 2022, Prime Minister Kishida proclaimed, "The Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) will cut ties with the [Unification Church](#)."

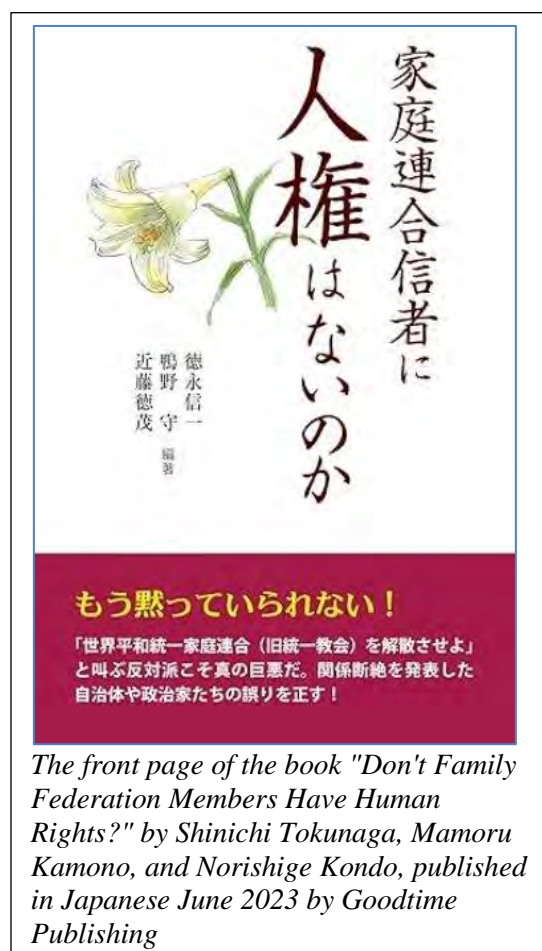
However, most [Unification Church](#) believers work in regular companies, hospitals, banks, and even at the national and local government levels.

In order for LDP lawmakers to follow this direction, they would have to investigate the beliefs of everyone they contact, and if anyone is identified as a [Family Federation](#) believer, sever ties. This violates the Japanese Constitution.

Prime Minister Kishida then took extraordinary actions, one after the other, to support this outrageous proclamation.

In the end, he rushed to order the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) to file a lawsuit against the [Family Federation](#), requesting its dissolution to the court.

I'd like to present a list of disputed points in the dissolution case. On a legal level, following the interpretation change by Prime Minister Kishida, MEXT claims civil torts are included in the concept of "violation of law" as one of the requirements of dissolution.



The front page of the book "Don't Family Federation Members Have Human Rights?" by Shinichi Tokunaga, Mamoru Kamono, and Norishige Kondo, published in Japanese June 2023 by Goodtime Publishing

Based on this legal claim, MEXT claims that the [Unification Church](#) case constitutes a violation of law, quoting the following reasons:

- The [Unification Church](#) lost 22 tort cases. Later they revised the number of cases to 31.
- 257 people wrote testimonies against the [Unification Church](#). Later 30 more persons were added.
- On a legal level, the [Unification Church](#) asserts that the legal claim of MEXT is contrary to precedent-setting rulings.
- In [Unification Church](#) cases torts were established by deviation of social norms. The level of illegality is very low.
- In order to include torts as requirement for dissolution, torts must be interpreted as "illegalities", which is a very vague concept. Dissolving a religious corporation by such a vague concept is a violation of due process.

On a factual level, the [Unification Church](#) asserts the following:


- In the past, groups of believers taught the [Unification Church](#) doctrine to visitors by video lectures at their institutes. They tended to introduce the church name to

the visitors after they had learned the doctrine, but before they decided to join the [Unification Church](#).

- In civil cases this practice has been judged to be both lawful and unlawful.
- More than half of the ex-members who filed lawsuits against the [Unification Church](#), or who wrote the testimonies against it, were victims of deprogramming.
- The courts basically issue judgments in accordance with apostates' narratives.

"The Committee is concerned at reports of abductions and forced confinement of converts to new

religious movements by members of their families in an effort to de-convert them (articles 2, 9, 18, 26). The State party should take effective measures to guarantee the right of every person not to be subject to coercion that would impair his or her freedom to have or to adopt a religion or belief."

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|  United Nations | CCPR/C/JPN/CO/6 |
| International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights | Distr.: General 20 August 2014 Original: English |
| Human Rights Committee | |
| Concluding observations on the sixth periodic report of Japan* | |

From header of UN document with United Nations' recommendations to Japan on human rights of believers. Under the heading "Abduction and forced de-conversion", it states:

As for the deprogramming issue, in 2014, the UN Human Rights Committee issued a recommendation to the Japanese government to resolve the situation of deprogramming in Japan.

Originally, the government should have addressed this issue, but instead the Kishida administration now tries to dissolve the [Unification Church](#) using testimonies from deprogrammed apostates. This is an outrageous human rights violation.

I also am a victim of kidnapping, and there are some more victims here at this conference.

To be continued. Part 2 coming soon.

More on Japanese onslaught: [Japan: 4300 Abductions and Forcible Detentions](#)

And more on Japanese onslaught: [Illegalities of Activist Lawyers Exposed](#)

Yet more on Japanese onslaught: [Lawyers Manipulating, Coercing, Lying](#)

Still more on Japanese onslaught: [Biased Information from Leftwing Lawyers](#)

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Press release claims Japanese government made decision based on biased information

The [Family Federation of Japan](#) issued a **press release** on 12th October 2023,

In response to the policy of requesting a dissolution order against our corporation



Symbol of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology of Japan.

Photo: [文部科学省 \(MEXT Japan\) / Wikimedia Commons](#). License: [CC Attr 4.0 Int](#)

文部科学省

On 12th October, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) announced that it will file a

request for a dissolution order for the [Family Federation for World Peace and Unification](#) (hereinafter referred to as "the Corporation") to the Tokyo District Court. We would like to announce our views on this.

The [corporation](#) is extremely disappointed, and it is deeply regrettable that such a decision has been made: It is particularly distressing that the Japanese government made that momentous decision based on biased information from a **group of leftwing lawyers established with the aim of destroying our corporation**.

On 19th October last year, **Prime Minister Kishida overnight forcibly changed the long-standing government's interpretation of the law** that "civil law torts are not included" in the legal violation requirement for requesting a dissolution order for a religious corporation. "Civil law torts may also be involved," he replied in the Diet. This is clearly a result of the opposition's pursuit and **pandering to public opinion** and will remain a **stain on Japan's constitutional history**.



From a large [Family Federation](#) demonstration against a biased Japanese media 18th August 2022 in Seoul. Photo: [IMAP](#)

What changed everything was the assassination of former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in July last year. Our religious [organisation](#) is no different from what it was before. Nevertheless, the environment surrounding our [organisation](#) went through a roller coaster transformation, and before we knew it, we were being **portrayed as "absolutely evil" monsters in media** reports.

Since receiving certification by the Tokyo Metropolitan Government as a religious corporation on 15th July 1964, our religious [organisation](#) has to this day been engaged in evangelism, education, and various social activities with the aim of spreading the founders' teachings of "living for the sake of others". Our dream has been to realize world peace through ideal families centered on God. Our aim has been to become an organisation that lives for Japan and the world.

During that time, we received a lot of criticism, but since the Declaration of Compliance in 2009, we have been actively engaged in church reform, especially by appointing leaders from a new generation of future leaders. We have continued to promote reforms up to the present. In September last year, we

Family Federation
May Backfire

June 13, 2024



Press Release
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established a “Church Reform Promotion Headquarters” within the corporation to work on further reforms.

In that sense, the government’s request for a dissolution order is extremely unfortunate for both the older generation of church members and the new second and third generations who will be taking over the church.

We are convinced that we are not the kind of religious [organisation](#) to receive a dissolution order from the government. Those who have been in direct contact with our congregations, those who have known us for many years, will agree. However, we are keenly aware that we were not able to convey a true picture of our religious [organisation](#) to the majority of the public, who swallowed the media reports that only spewed out **flimsy information by left-wing lawyers** on TV shows and in other media outlets.

We intend to present our legal arguments in court. In addition, we will continue to actively disseminate information and do other activities so that the public can come to understand our religious [organisation](#) as well as possible.

Featured image above: *Sign at the entrance of the headquarters of the [Family Federation](#) of Japan in Shibuya, Tokyo. Photo: FFWPU*

“Biased Information from Leftwing Lawyers” – the text consists of press release from the Family federation of Japan on 12th October 2023.

More about biased information: [Response to Scandalous Bias](#)

Even more about biased information: [Pure Activism in Japanese Media](#)

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