

## FFWPU Europe and Middle East: Abduction and Confinement Exhibition Exposes Japan's Dehumanization of Believers

Knut Holdhus  
January 30, 2025



*Abduction and Confinement Panel Exhibition held in Kurume City, Fukuoka January 26, 2025*



**Exhibition reveals dehumanization of believers, allowed to go unpunished by authorities not only turning a blind eye but working in league with perpetrators seeking to dissolve the faith**

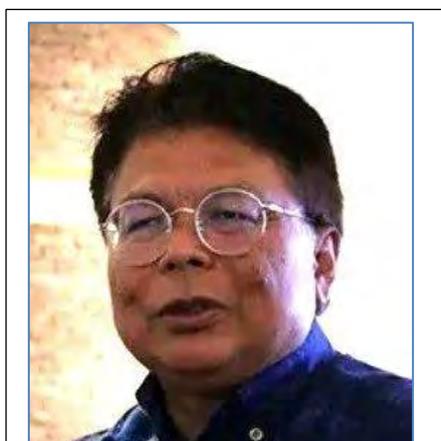
Tokyo, 28th January 2025 - Published as an article in the Japanese newspaper [Sekai Nippo](#). Republished with permission. Translated from Japanese. [Original article](#).

**"Unthinkable Inhumane Methods"**

**Abduction, Confinement, and Forced Deconversion Panel Exhibition in Kurume, Fukuoka, Japan**

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

A panel exhibition showcasing cases of abduction, confinement, and forced deconversion against former [Unification Church](#) (now [Family Federation for World Peace and Unification](#)) believers - described as "the worst human rights violation in postwar Japan" - was held on 26th and 27th January at the Kurume City Plaza in Kurume, Fukuoka Prefecture. Around 370 citizens attended the event.



*Pastor Ryuichi Sunagawa,  
Tsukishiro Christian Church,  
Nanjo City, Okinawa, Japan*

A woman in her 30s, after hearing explanations about the realities of forced deconversion, expressed her outrage, stating,

"The inhumane methods used by those carrying this out are simply unthinkable. They should be properly punished under the law."

Another woman in her 40s was visibly shaken, saying,

"I was truly shocked to learn that something like this was happening in Japan. It was even more painful to realize that trusted family members and relatives were involved."

**Interfaith Symposium on Religious Freedom**

On 27th January, the same venue hosted the "Experts and Interfaith Forum", featuring a symposium on the role of religion

and freedom of belief in modern society.

The session began with two victims of abduction and confinement sharing their personal experiences. This was followed by speeches from:



*Photo at exhibition: Toru Goto in 2008, barely able to move after being held in forcible detention by his own family in league with professional faith-breakers for more than 12 years*

Pastor Ryuichi Sunagawa (砂川竜一) of Tsukishiro Christian Church in Okinawa

Chief Priest Ryoma Fukami (深見量眞) of Kamo Shoji Temple

Shunsuke Uotani (魚谷俊輔), Secretary-General of UPF-Japan (Universal Peace Federation)

Speaking before about 30 attendees, including university professors and religious leaders from Konko-kyo [See editor's note below], the panelists addressed issues of religious persecution and freedom.

Pastor Sunagawa, deeply apologetic, said,

"I am truly sorry that Christian pastors have been involved in abduction and confinement. I sincerely apologize."

He then posed a question, "Why is the [Family Federation](#) being persecuted?" and shared his belief that

"God is preparing this [organization](#), which loves both the nation and the family, for a greater purpose."

Meanwhile, Secretary-General Uotani analyzed the current challenges facing the [Family Federation](#), which is facing a dissolution request from the Japanese

government. Outlining future prospects for the [organization](#), he suggested a possible breakthrough, stating,

"The key to influencing Japan's government lies with the United Nations and the Trump administration in the U.S."



*Shunsuke Uotani*

[Editor's note: Konkō-kyō is a Japanese religious movement founded in 1859 by Bunjirō Kawate, a farmer from present-day Okayama Prefecture. It became part of the Association of Sectarian Shintō and is considered a forerunner of Japan's post-World War II "new religions." The faith centers on the deity Konkō (Golden light shines) and emphasizes a direct, personal relationship between humans and the divine.

A key belief in Konkō-kyō is the role of the toritsugi (mediator), a figure who intercedes between people and the deity, taking on their struggles and transmitting prayers. The position of mediator is hereditary, passed down through the founder's male descendants. The faith teaches that god and humans share a bond akin to that of a parent and child, promoting gratitude, sincerity,

and harmonious living.

Konkō-kyō remains an active religious movement, with a significant following in Japan.]

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# Government Agency Not Revealing Key Documents

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## Senator Hamada's Inquiry

When the *Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology* (MEXT) requested the *Tokyo District Court* to issue a dissolution order for the *Family Federation for World Peace and Unification* (formerly the *Unification Church*), a

controversy arose following a [report by this newspaper](#) that the ministry's submitted statements contained fabricated facts.



The [report in Sekai Nippo](#) 21st January 2025 on alleged fabrications in controversial statements submitted by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) to Tokyo District Court.



Satoshi Hamada (浜田聡), member of the House of Councillors from the NHK Party. Here, July 2024. Photo: [Sekai Nippo](#)

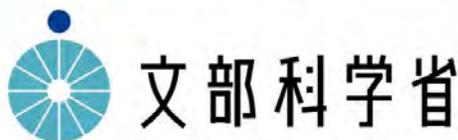
Reacting to this, on 22<sup>nd</sup> January, Satoshi Hamada (浜田聡), a member of the *House of Councillors* from the *NHK Party*, submitted a written inquiry to MEXT requesting the submission of supporting documents. On 27<sup>th</sup> January, the *Agency for Cultural Affairs*, which handles religious corporations, replied that they could not provide the documents.

Senator Hamada specifically requested the submission of documents among MEXT's court statements that were alleged to contain inaccuracies. He also inquired whether MEXT was aware of the media reports on this issue and asked for the ministry's stance on the claim that some statements were factually incorrect.



*Not disclosing requested documents concerning the [Family Federation](#): Agency for Cultural Affairs. [Public domain image](#)*

*by this newspaper* on 21<sup>st</sup> January claimed that multiple cases exist where individuals purported to be victims did not write the statements themselves and that some contained false information.



*Symbol of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) of Japan. Photo: [文部科学省 \(MEXT Japan\)](#) / Wikimedia Commons. License: [CC Attr 4.0 Int](#)*

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