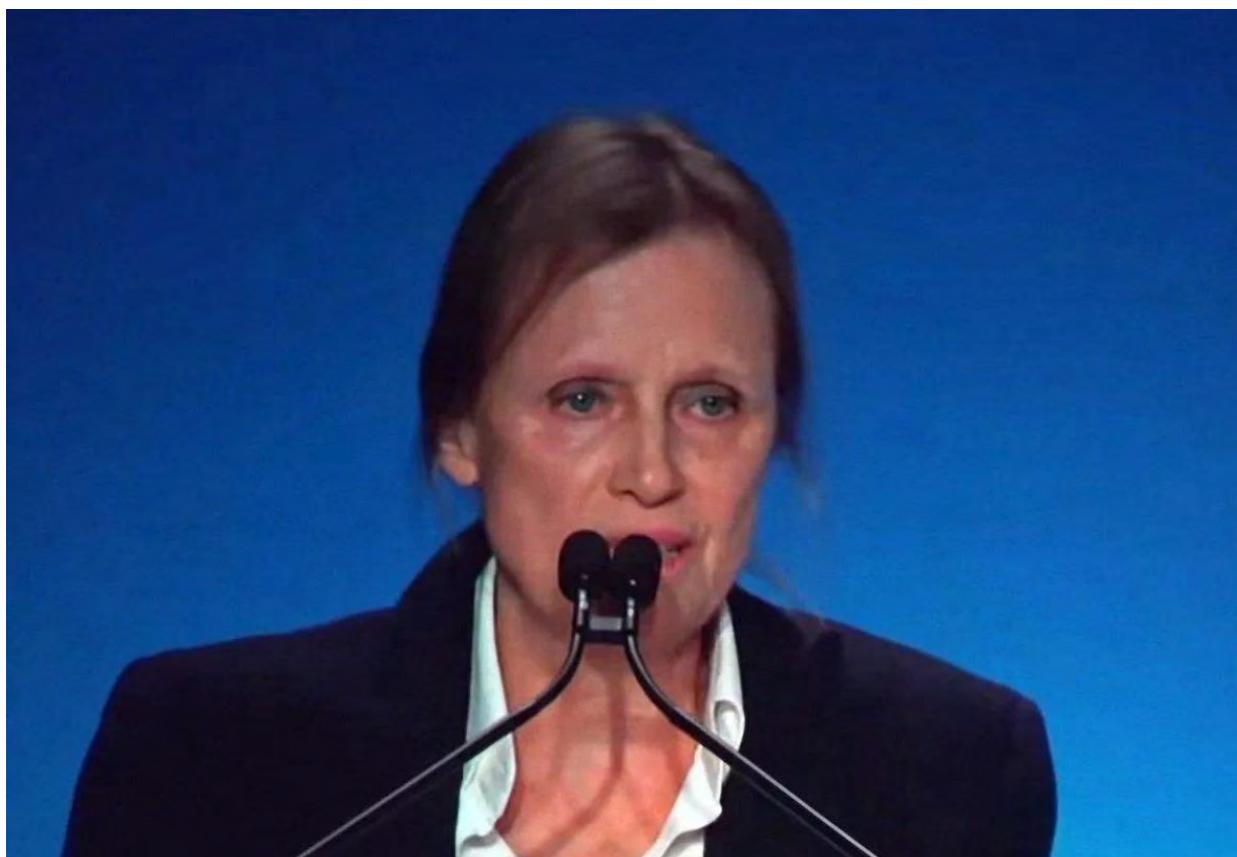


FFWPU Europe and the Middle East: Attorney Reveals the Truth Behind Japan's Persecution of FFWPU

Knut Holdhus
February 5, 2025



Patricia Duval speaking at the IRF Summit in Washington DC February 5, 2025

Stunning insight by expert on international human rights law revealing truth behind Japan's state persecution of religious minority the Family Federation at Washington DC religious freedom summit



A speech Patricia Duval, French attorney and expert on international human rights law, gave at a special sponsored dinner 5th February at the [IRF Summit 2025](#) in Washington DC.

When I started defending the Japanese [Unification Church](#) [Editor's note: In Japan, since 2015, called the [Family Federation](#)] some 12 years ago, I was told about the deprogramming of its believers that recurrently occurred in Japan. Numerous accounts were given of families abducting and confining their kin for months, sometimes for years, until they would recant their faith.

Some professional deprogrammers would step in during confinement to forcefully persuade the believers that the [Unification Church](#) beliefs were contrary to the Bible. This practice, which reminds us of heresy trials and persecutions, was done with a tacit approval and refusal to intervene from the authorities, be it police or judiciary.

Around [4,300 believers were subjected to deprogramming](#) over 40 years in Japan.

	United Nations	CCPR/C/JPN/CO/6
		Distr.: General
	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights	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

After being requested by the United Nations Human Rights Committee in 2014 to put an end to this practice, Japan pursued its fight against the [church](#) in a reinvented form.

The fruits of deprogramming are now being harvested by state authorities through the accumulation of tort cases [Editor's note: civil court cases] initiated by deprogrammed members against the [church](#) to reach the final goal of its dissolution.

Who made all that happen? The Network of Lawyers Against Spiritual Sales, an association of far left and atheistic activist lawyers with a stated purpose of eliminating the [Unification Church](#) due to its early stance against communism.



Deprogramming: Young believer being abducted in order to have his faith broken

Those lawyers who were sometime advising families to resort to deprogramming in the first place, incited the members - who finally recanted their faith - and their families to sue the [church](#) for damages.

With their reasoning based on [consumer law](#), they persuaded the courts to consider religious donations as commercial matters and the soliciting of donations as "evangelical brainwashing".

Following the shooting of Prime Minister Abe in July 2022 by a man who resented Abe's sympathy for the [church](#), scapegoating and hate speech flourished in the media.

Riding this wave, the government [filed for dissolution](#) of the [church](#), alleging that it had caused "serious harm to public welfare" due to the [various tort cases](#) it had lost. In all these

adverse tort rulings, the courts based their decisions on an alleged violation of social norms.

But what are social norms in the area of religious beliefs and practices in a country where materialistic and atheistic lobbies are at work?

Well, the social norms in Japan today include official guidelines issued for the protection of children and mention that making a child participate to religious activities is a form of child abuse.



One of the UN Special Rapporteurs who sent formal UN request to Japan, without getting a reply: Nazila Ghanea, UN Rapporteur on Religious Freedom since February 2023. Here, visiting Oslo August 22, 2023

Alerted by the Jehovah's Witnesses, four UN [Special Rapporteurs](#) have issued an open letter to the Japanese authorities to express their concern about those guidelines.

Now, based on [tort cases](#), the Japanese authorities fight for the dissolution of the [church](#), accusing it of having seriously harmed public welfare. But the UN Human Rights Committee has consistently urged Japan to stop using public welfare as a justification to limit freedom of religion or belief.

The government went further to enact a new law to criminalize so-called "unjust solicitation of donations". It sanctions the vague and arbitrary concept of "infringement of free will".

This law has been announced as being especially designed for the [Unification Church](#), but it could undoubtedly be applied against other targeted denominations in the future.

Now this situation needs urgent attention. Japan is a beautiful and liberal country, but it needs to be reminded of its commitments to respect freedom of religion or belief.

Thank you for your attention.

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UN Body Watching: Japan Triggering Hate Crimes

• July 7, 2024 • Knut Holdhus



UN Human Rights Council has expressed its concern over Japan triggering hate crimes against religious minorities

Tokyo, 4th July 2024 – Published as an article in the Japanese newspaper *Sekai Nippo*. Republished with permission. Translated from Japanese. [Original article](#)

UN Human Rights Council expresses concern over “Q&A on abuse of second-generation members of religions” and urges the Japanese government to reconsider it.

by the editorial department of *Sekai Nippo*



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From a UNHRC meeting. Here Maria Otero, Under Secretary of State for Democracy and Global Affairs, Addresses the Human Rights Council, March 1, 2010, Geneva, Switzerland. Photo: Eric Bridiers from US Mission Geneva. License: [CC Attr 2.0 Gen](#)

Labour, and welfare formulated and announced the “Q&A on Response to Child Abuse Related to Religious Beliefs” (Q&A on abuse of second-generation members of religions). Prefectural governors and municipal mayors were notified about it. It has recently come to light that **four special rapporteurs from the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) have raised concerns with the Japanese government in four areas related to this issue, including “freedom of religion or belief” and “the right to upbringing”.**

The notification, sent to the government in April this year following a resolution by the UNHRC, has been made public after a 60-day confidential period. The notification points out that the **Q&A was formulated through repeated consultations with the Japan Anti-Cult Association** – led by President Kimiaki Nishida (西田公昭) – which had **publicly made defamatory statements about Jehovah’s Witnesses and other religious minorities.** However, it was developed **without any consultation with the religious organizations that may be targeted.**

The report also points out that the **Q&A was formulated in the wake of the assassination of former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe amid growing “surveillance and stigma” against some religious groups in Japanese society.** The notification also highlights the **lack of independent expert review** and the **extremely short period of 18 days taken to formulate the Q&A.** It criticizes the **imbalance of the document,** which emphasizes the rights of children, but **lacks reference to the rights and obligations of parents and legal guardians to provide appropriate guidance to children.**

The special rapporteurs also mention the **increase in hate crimes targeting Jehovah’s Witnesses following the nationwide distribution of the Q&A.** Overall, the special rapporteurs have urged the government to reconsider the Q&A, arguing that it risks violating international treaties that Japan has ratified, such as the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* (ICCPR). In response, the government replied in June, stating that it would “take note” of the concerns.



International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

In February of this year, associate professor Kazuko Ikeya (池谷和子) of *Nagasaki University’s Faculty of Education*, who specializes in constitutional law and the protection of minors, also expressed **concern that the Q&A threatens religious freedom.**

Featured image above: *Japan being watched.* Illustration generated by Microsoft Designer Image Creator 6th July 2024.

A Special Rapporteur (or Independent Expert) is an independent human rights expert appointed by the United Nations (UN) to provide reports or advice on human rights issues from either a thematic or country-specific perspective. These experts are selected by the UN Human Rights Council and operate independently of any government, playing a crucial role in monitoring the actions of sovereign nations and democratically elected governments.

Special Rapporteurs do not receive financial compensation from the United Nations for their work. However, they receive support from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and are often funded by charities and corporations. Annually, they convene in Geneva to discuss common issues, coordinate their efforts, and engage with various stakeholders, including states and civil society organizations.

These experts frequently conduct fact-finding missions to investigate human rights violation allegations in different countries. In addition to these missions, they regularly review complaints from alleged victims of human rights abuses. If a complaint is verified, they send an urgent letter or appeal to the concerned government. Even without a specific complaint, Special Rapporteurs can intervene on behalf of individuals or groups at their discretion.

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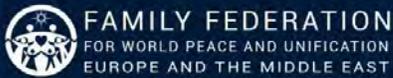
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