

FFWPU Europe and the Middle East: When Japan's government couldn't find evidence against FFWPU they created it

Knut Holdhus
February 27, 2025



Haruyo Matsushima (pseudonym, rear) and her daughter Mayumi Adachi (pseudonym) speaking in an interview in Tokyo



Fabricated evidence? Woman denies signing government's document presented in court in support of dissolution of religious minority the Family Federation

"I Never Wrote This" - Fabricated Evidence in Court?

Tokyo, 27th February 2025 - Published as an article in the Japanese newspaper [Sekai Nippo](#). Republished with permission. Translated from Japanese. [Original article](#).

[Scoop 3] Unknown Wording, Unrecognized Signature - Was It Submitted as Evidence Without Proper Verification?

Named Individual Denies Involvement

Suspicion of Fabricated Testimony in Ministry of Education's Request for Dissolution of Family Federation

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

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The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) submitted a written statement as evidence in its request to the Tokyo District Court for the dissolution of the [Family Federation for World Peace and Unification](#) (formerly the [Unification Church](#)). However, our newspaper received information from the person who allegedly signed the document, stating, "I did not write this," and "It is not true." We conducted a direct interview with the named individual.

The interviewee was Haruyo Matsushima (pseudonym, in her 70s), the mother of Mayumi Adachi (pseudonym), a practicing member of the [Family Federation](#) residing in Nerima Ward, Tokyo. According to Matsushima, she was informed by her daughter Adachi that a written statement in her name had been submitted by MEXT. Matsushima firmly denied authoring it, stating,

"I did not write this."

While she acknowledged that the signature on the document appeared to be in her handwriting, she insisted,

"I have no memory of signing it."

Furthermore, she stated that she had "never read the document" and had "never been asked to verify it."



*Hiroshi Yamaguchi, activist
leftwing lawyer and founder and
leading member of National
Network of Lawyers Against
Spiritual Sales (NNLASS)*

Matsushima's husband, at the invitation of their daughter Adachi, had participated in the activities of the [religious organization](#) and made financial donations. However, he later became distrustful of the [organization](#) and, with the assistance of attorney Hiroshi Yamaguchi (山口広) from the National Network of Lawyers Against Spiritual Sales (Zenkoku Benren), filed a claim for a refund of his donations. The settlement payment has already been completed.

The written statement in Haruyo Matsushima's name was one of the attached documents sent to the [Family Federation](#) in October 2022 when her husband filed a request for a donation refund. It was presented as a formalized record of Matsushima's "testimony," implying that she had also requested the [religious organization](#) to refund the money to her husband.

However, when Matsushima reviewed the document for the first time through her daughter Adachi, she found several discrepancies with her own understanding.

Matsushima has long opposed her daughter Adachi's faith, questioning the [religious organization](#)'s large financial donations and [mass wedding](#) ceremonies. She expressed skepticism, stating, "I have only a negative impression of the [Unification Church](#)." While she wants to respect her daughter's decisions, she revealed her emotional distress, saying, "I have felt deeply hurt, unable to discuss the issue with my family or anyone around me."

Despite her concerns about the [religious organization](#), Matsushima has maintained a neutral stance regarding her husband's demand for a refund, explaining,

"It doesn't make sense to ask for money back after having agreed to donate it in the first place."

She also expressed reluctance toward holding the [religious organization](#) accountable in such a manner.

Regarding the signature on the document, Matsushima stated that if she had signed it, it was likely done at home. However, she had no memory of being presented with a document with only the signature section left empty, nor did she recall being asked to sign anything by her husband. Additionally, she stated,

"I have never met Attorney Yamaguchi, nor have I ever visited his office."

Given these statements, there is a possibility that MEXT, having obtained the document from Zenkoku Benren, failed to conduct proper fact-checking or verification with the individuals involved before submitting it as a victim's testimony in support of dissolving the [religious organization](#). The procedural "darkness" surrounding this non-contentious case [See editor's note below] that is not a public trial appears to be deep.

[Editor's note: A non-contentious case refers to a legal matter where there is no dispute between parties. These cases typically involve administrative, procedural, or uncontested legal actions, such as probate (handling a deceased person's estate), uncontested divorces, adoption, or registering a trademark. Since there are no opposing parties or legal conflicts, these cases usually proceed smoothly through the legal system without litigation.]

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Seishiro Sugihara, professor of the former Musashino Women’s University

Dissolution Request to Become a Major Issue

by the editorial department of Sekai Nippo

Part 1 of the article

See part 2, part 3

See also Flawed, Deceptive Evidence Gathering by State

See also Alleged Evidence Tampering in Dissolution Case

This paper reported about fabrications in the statements submitted as evidence by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) to the Tokyo District Court in its request for a dissolution order against the Family Federation

for World Peace and Unification (formerly the Unification Church). We spoke regarding the issue with professor Seishiro Sugihara (杉原誠四郎) of the former Musashino Women’s University.



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

Q: As reported by this paper on 21st January, there are multiple pieces of information suggesting that the statements submitted as evidence by MEXT in its dissolution request were not actually written by the individuals identified as “victims”, and that they contain falsehoods contrary to fact. What do you think about this?

This was entirely predictable from the beginning.

Originally, when MEXT submitted the dissolution request to the Tokyo District Court, it announced the number of “victims” and the total “financial damage”. However, this total was merely the sum of the amounts claimed by individuals who identified themselves as “victims”.



Imbalanced scale of justice. Photo: 99joseph / Wikimedia Commons. Public domain image

To understand this, one can compare it to an ordinary criminal case. In criminal cases, prosecutors collect evidence to prove a crime, but not everything collected is immediately treated as evidence. Prosecutors assess the evidentiary value and credibility before determining which materials can serve as valid evidence.

However, in this dissolution request by MEXT, the evidence submitted to the court was merely a collection of “victim” reports, without any means of verifying their evidentiary validity. MEXT simply compiled the claimed damages and submitted them as they were.

Given this, it is entirely foreseeable that statements could exist where the supposed “victims” themselves did not write them, or where falsehoods contradicting the facts were included. This is not surprising at all.

Using such materials as grounds for dissolution and requesting a dissolution order is clearly an overreach as an administrative act. If a dissolution request can be made based on such unfairly collected evidence, then any “harm” reported by former believers who left their faith or by associates of believers could serve as grounds for dissolution.

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Reinterpreted: The Religious Corporations Act of Japan. here, front page of 2018 English version.

Q: Senator Satoshi Hamada (浜田 聡) submitted a written inquiry to MEXT requesting fact-checking regarding this

newspaper's report, but MEXT did not respond. What do you think about the fact that the proceedings are being conducted in a closed, non-public manner?

The Tokyo District Court is handling MEXT's dissolution request as a "non-contentious case" proceeding. Since this is not a trial in the usual sense, it is understandable that the process is not public. The secrecy of the proceedings is stipulated under the "Non-Contentious Case Procedures Act".

However, **if a religious organization is dissolved through such a non-public process, it means that its right to a public trial under Article 32 of the Constitution is not guaranteed, making this clearly unconstitutional.**

Regarding [Senator Hamada's inquiry](#), while MEXT did not respond, it is generally permissible for the deliberations of MEXT's *Religious Affairs Council* to be non-public due to the sensitive nature of the issues discussed. However, if the evidence that formed the basis of their conclusion includes falsehoods, this will inevitably become a major issue in the future.

What is particularly concerning is the **Religious Affairs Council** itself. Despite having multiple religious representatives as members, it **approved the dissolution request based on such poorly compiled materials** – this is a serious problem.

Continued in [part 2, part 3](#).

See also [Flawed, Deceptive Evidence Gathering by State](#)

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Featured image above: Seishiro Sugihara, born in 1941 in Hiroshima Prefecture. Completed a master's degree in education at the University of Tokyo Graduate School in 1967. Served as a professor at Josai University and Musashino Women's University (now Musashino University).

Notable publications include *The Ideal Separation of Religion and State and Constitutional Revision* (Jiyusha, 2015). Co-authored *The Disease Called Shigeru Yoshida* (Jiyusha, 2021). Photo: [Sekai Nippo](#)

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Senator Satoshi Hamada (浜田 聡, House of Councillors, NHK Party) speaking on 26th January 2025, in Yokohama City, Kanagawa Prefecture, Japan. Photo: Yasuhiro Uno (宇野泰弘)

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Huge Scandal: “Ministry Is Falsifying Affidavits”

• January 21, 2025 • Knut Holdhus



Several witnesses claim Japanese government ministry has been falsifying multiple affidavits in current case against the Family Federation



Logo of the Sekai Nippo

Tokyo, 21st January 2025 – Published as an article in the Japanese newspaper *Sekai Nippo*. Republished with permission. Translated from Japanese. *Original article.*

[Breaking News] Elderly Mother: “I Never Said ‘Get the Money Back’” – Ministry of Education Falsifies Affidavits

by the Religious Freedom Investigative Team of the editorial department of *Sekai Nippo*

See also “Poorly Compiled Evidence Including Falsehoods”

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The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) has filed a dissolution order against the [Family Federation for World Peace and Unification](#) (commonly known as the [Family Federation](#), formerly the [Unification Church](#)) with the Tokyo District Court. It has come to light that affidavits prepared by MEXT and submitted to the court contain statements that differ from the truth, as alleged by individuals identified as "victims". Although the trial is being conducted behind closed doors, there appear to be multiple cases in which affidavits, submitted as evidence of "unlawful acts" to justify the dissolution of the [Family Federation](#), were not written by the purported victims themselves and contained false information.



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](#)

"Well, to tell the truth, I never asked (son's name) to get back the money I donated. So they're just using me for their puposes."

Kimiyo Sagayama (pseudonym), a resident of Aichi Prefecture whose name appears on MEXT's affidavit, said this to her daughter, Miyuki Kawaguchi (pseudonym). Last summer, upon learning that her mother's name was included in MEXT's affidavit, Miyuki visited her mother, who lives alone, to confirm whether she had personally written the affidavit, which listed a total damage amount of approximately 35 million yen.

The mother then stated to her daughter, whom she had converted to the faith, "I don't even want the money back." Miyuki, who is over 60, has practiced the faith alongside her mother for more than 30 years and knew that Kimiyo had made donations of her own volition.



Disputed donations. Here, woman offering donation that her son later wanted refunded. Illustration: Microsoft Designer Image Creator, 21st January 2025.

However, the affidavit bearing Kimiyo's name claimed that she had been "incited"

to make donations by Miyuki. The unnatural claim that her mother, who had introduced her to the faith, was influenced by her own daughter left Miyuki exasperated but unsurprised. "That's what I thought," she said, suspecting that MEXT may have embellished the story by drafting a template of alleged victim narratives and supplementing it with details obtained through interviews. It is highly likely that Kimiyo, an elderly individual, was made to sign the affidavit without fully understanding its contents.

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1. [\[Series\] Freedom of Religion Under Threat \(56\) – Epilogue – part 1: Anti-Religious Secularism and State Persecution](#)
2. [\[Series\] Freedom of Religion Under Threat \(58\) – Epilogue – part 3: Personal Salvation and Contributions to Society](#)

Kimiyo, who is over 90 years old, has been a member of the [Family Federation](#) for 38 years and introduced her daughter Miyuki to the faith. Both Kimiyo and Miyuki also converted their respective husbands, and in 1992, they participated in the International [Blessing Ceremony](#) held in Seoul, South Korea, to renew their marriages in the ceremony of the [religious organization](#).

Kimiyo has been devout in her faith, but as she has aged, and her health has declined, she has become less able to attend church. Then, two years ago, the assassination of former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe occurred, which triggered a wave of intense criticism against the [Family Federation](#).

In early 2023, Miyuki was summoned by her elder brother during the New Year holiday. With their younger brother also present, Miyuki faced pressure from her brothers to "leave the [Family Federation](#)". Mivuki

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refused on the spot. However, according to her, Kimiyo is now effectively estranged from the **federation** against her will due to the influence of her sons. Miyuki laments,

“Taking advantage of her dependency on them in her advanced age and frailty, they have forced her to deny her entire life’s faith. That’s unfilial.”

Having heard her mother’s voice directly state, “I never said I wanted the money back,” Miyuki feels a deep fear that the government is leveraging family members’ anxieties exacerbated by the critical media coverage, along with affidavits containing falsehoods, to force the dissolution of the **Family Federation**.

The request for a dissolution order against the **Family Federation** is currently being deliberated in the *Tokyo District Court*. According to reports by NHK and major newspapers, four hearings have been held so far.



The flag of NHK (Nippon Hoso Kyokai), the state-owned Japan Broadcasting Corporation, **Public domain** image. Cropped



Logo of the Yomiuri Shimbun, Japanese national daily, the largest in circulation of the country’s “big 3” dailies. **Public domain** image

The Yomiuri Shimbun online edition (13th December 2024) reported that “current members claim that the allegations by former

members contain falsehoods.”

According to sources close to the **religious organization**, two witnesses presented by MEXT during the hearings admitted that there were discrepancies between the actual facts and the contents of their affidavits.

Basis for dissolution order wavers

It is not only the Sagayama family who are alleging that MEXT (*Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology*) falsified their affidavits. A 60-year-old male believer, Shinji Toyama (pseudonym), claims that MEXT’s affidavit wrongly stated that he had been threatened by other believers, who told him he would face misfortune if he did not resolve ancestral grievances, leading him to make donations. Toyama, however, had informed relevant parties that “the motivation for his donations was different.”

Toyama has been a believer for about 30 years and has consistently donated to support Japanese believers involved in missionary and volunteer activities abroad. Around the time of the former prime minister’s assassination, however, financial difficulties left him struggling. He contacted a helpline, the number for which he found on a TV program discussing



Japanese man offering a donation to support missionary work. Illustration: Miocrosoft Designer Image Creator, 21st January 2025.

the **Family Federation**, hoping to get his donations refunded. He was then referred to a lawyer who facilitated a meeting with two MEXT officials, where he cooperated with their inquiry.

When his refund efforts stalled, Toyama approached the **organization** directly, engaged in negotiations with its representatives, and ultimately reached a settlement. Regarding MEXT’s affidavit, Toyama stated, “That document wasn’t written by me.” The affidavit concluded with the sentence, “I only hope that the **organization** will be dissolved,” but Toyama insists he never made such a statement during the MEXT interview. Furthermore, he claims that MEXT officials never informed him that the affidavit was intended to support a dissolution order against the **organization**. Toyama requested multiple corrections to the affidavit, but none were made.

Similarly, Mayumi Adachi (pseudonym), a current female believer living in Nerima Ward, Tokyo, discovered that an affidavit submitted by MEXT under her mother’s name had been filed. Upon directly asking her mother, Adachi was told clearly, “I didn’t write it.”

Adachi's father had previously sought a refund of their donations, represented by Hiroshi Yamaguchi, a lawyer affiliated with the *National Network of Lawyers Against Spiritual Sales*. However, the donation repayments had already been completed and the matter resolved amicably. Why an affidavit supposedly written by her mother, who denies authoring it, was submitted in the trial for a dissolution order remains entirely unclear.

According to one source, some affidavits prepared by MEXT touch on the **Family Federation's** doctrines, referring to the biblical figure of humanity's ancestor as "Eve" in English. However, within the **organization**, they follow the terminology of the Japan Bible Society's version of the Bible, referring to her as "Eva". "This discrepancy alone shows that the document wasn't authored by the individual but was instead written by MEXT," an affiliate of the **religious organization** stated.

The emerging pattern of MEXT using believers' names to include false or exaggerated claims in affidavits highlights concerns about the ministry's approach. Moreover, since the trial is closed to the public, there is no mechanism to check MEXT's potential abuse of power, which remains a troubling issue.

The main basis for MEXT's request for the dissolution order against the **Family Federation** is the **organization's** loss in 32 civil lawsuits and the submission of approximately 300 affidavits from alleged victims. However, claims from these "victims" that MEXT fabricated the contents of affidavits to align with the ministry's objectives are mounting. This development significantly undermines the credibility of MEXT's arguments.

See also ["I Never Wrote This" – Fabricated Evidence in Court?](#)

See also ["Poorly Compiled Evidence Including Falsehoods"](#)

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Featured image above: Miyuki Kawaguchi (pseudonym) during an interview on the afternoon of 19th January 2025, in Aichi Prefecture, Japan. Photo: Takahide Ishii (石井孝秀)

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From the header of the website of the [Family Federation in Japan](#).

[Federation for World Peace and Unification](#) (formerly the [Unification Church](#)) announced on its official website that several pieces of evidence submitted by the [Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology](#) (MEXT) to the [Tokyo District Court](#) as part of its request for a dissolution order contained “intentionally and systematically falsified information”.

The [Family Federation](#) claimed that these fabricated pieces of evidence were uncovered during the process of refuting and countering the allegations in court and were further exposed during witness examinations held late last year. The [religious organization](#) argued that the fabrication of statements by MEXT has significant implications for religious freedom and stated that, in addition to informing its members, it was publicly disclosing this issue to uphold the public’s “right to know”.

Among the 294 written statements and testimonies submitted by MEXT under the names of former members, it was revealed that 33 individuals were not former followers but rather included relatives of members, MEXT officials, and opposition lawyers. Additionally, of the remaining 253 individuals (excluding eight former second-generation followers), approximately 90% had joined more than 15 years ago, with some having left the [religious organization](#) decades earlier.

Meanwhile, there were 19 statements from first-generation members who joined the [Family Federation](#) after it issued its “Compliance Declaration” in 2009. Of these, 18 statements were reportedly created based on interviews conducted by MEXT, with the final documents



signed
and
sealed by
the

Japanese government official getting woman to sign document containing evidence tampering. Illustration: Microsoft Designer Image Creator, 20th February 2025.

individuals concerned.

Regarding the alleged systematic fabrication of false information in MEXT’s statements, the [Family Federation](#) asserted that the ministry resorted to falsifications because it believed it would otherwise be unable to file for the dissolution order or win the case. The [organization](#) strongly condemned MEXT, stating,

“The crime of fabricating evidence to request the dissolution of a religious corporation is extremely grave.”

Featured image above: Japanese government officials submitting documents containing fabricated “evidence” to the court of law. Illustration: Microsoft Designer Image Creator, 20th February 2025.

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Sales Consultations – Only 20% Related to the Former **Organization Church**; 40% of Monetary Troubles Date Back Over 20 Years”.

The *Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology* (MEXT) has requested *Tokyo District Court* to issue a court order to dissolve the **religious organization**. The authorities have largely built their case on terms taken from consumer affairs laws, even to the extent that donations are called “spiritual sales”.



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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](#)



Consultation hotline. Illustration: Microsoft Designer Image Creator, 16th January 2025

According to the *Sankei Shimbun* it turns out that less than 20% of the cases handled by the “Spiritual Sales Consultation Hotline” operated by *Japan Legal Support Center* are associated with the **Family Federation**. Furthermore, 41% of the monetary disputes involving this **organization** occurred more than 20 years ago. A critical question is how the *Tokyo District Court* will interpret the

continuity of these issues, a key argument in the petition by the administration led by the Liberal Democratic Party for the dissolution of the **religious organization**.

According to the large newspaper, this hotline, established in November 2022 to replace the government’s previous phone consultation service, has fielded 10,003 inquiries over the last two years, ending in November 2024. Of these, 1,979 (19.8%) were linked to the **Family Federation**. The names of other implicated organizations have not been revealed by the *Japan Legal Support Center*.

The timeline of financial troubles involving the **Family Federation** provides some insight:

- 5% occurred within one year prior to the consultation.
- 2% occurred within three years.
- 3% occurred within five years.
- 11% occurred within ten years.
- 12% occurred over ten years ago, but within twenty years.
- 41% occurred more than twenty years ago.

The *Sankei Shimbun* points out that this distribution suggests a reduction in incidents over time, particularly after the **organization** introduced a compliance declaration in 2009, which committed to stricter adherence to laws and regulations.

According to the newspaper, MEXT has based its dissolution request on the argument that the **Family Federation** meets the criteria for organizational dissolution, namely illegality, maliciousness, and continuity. These elements are central to the Ministry’s claim that the **federation** has engaged in systematic and ongoing “harmful activities”.

According to informed sources, the *Tokyo District Court* is expected to conclude its review of the case by the end of January 2025. A judgment may be announced as soon as March.

On 15th January, the **Family Federation** issued a statement emphasizing the declining number of complaints linked to the **organization** in recent years. The statement read,

“The analysis of the hotline, which specifically targeted our **organization**, highlights that ‘troubles’ involving us have significantly decreased in recent years.”



Weighty arguments on scale of justice presented by **Family Federation** to *Tokyo District Court*. Photo: 991joseph / Wikimedia Commons. **Public domain image**

This issue has sparked significant public and legal interest, with many watching closely as the court deliberates the fate of the **organization**.

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watching closely as the court deliberates the fate of the organization. Central to the decision will be whether the [federation's](#) past activities, many of which predate 2009, still bear relevance to its current operations and whether they satisfy the criteria for dissolution under Japanese law.

See also ["Anti-Cult" Forums' Role in 2022 Abe Assassination](#)

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

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