

FFWPU Europe and Middle East: Does Japanese Supreme Court Ruling Impact Unification Church Dissolution Case?

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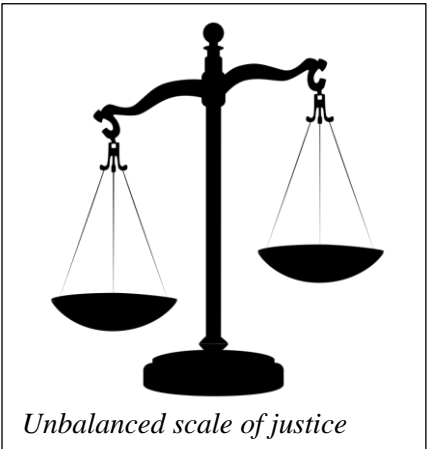
Japanese Supreme Court judges

Large daily reports that Supreme Court ruling weighs in on current Family Federation dissolution case with ominous precedent set



One of Japan's major newspapers, the Mainichi Shimbun, reported in an article by Kenji Tatsumi on 4th March about a Supreme Court ruling involving the [Family Federation for World Peace and Unification](#), formerly the [Unification Church](#).

The First Petty Bench of the Supreme Court, with Justice Makoto Nakamura (中村誠) as presiding judge, issued a verdict 3rd March that upheld a previous ruling by Tokyo High Court in August 2024 that had imposed a 100,000 yen (ca. \$ 670) fine on Tomihiro Tanaka (田中富広), the chairman of the [Family Federation](#) in Japan. Its appeal was thereby dismissed, and the verdict finalized the proceedings regarding the fine. The ruling was reached unanimously by all five justices.



Unbalanced scale of justice

The large daily doesn't state it, but many might say that the verdict was as expected in a country with a widespread culture of presumed guilt, where government prosecutors secure convictions in 99.9% of criminal cases and win 98% of appeals. See "[Does Japan Have an Independent Judiciary?](#)"

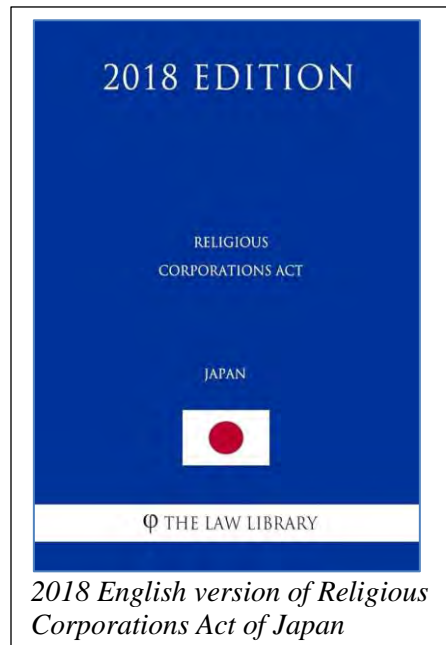
The Mainichi article was headlined "['Also Civil Wrongdoings a Requirement for Dissolution Order' - Supreme Court's First Ruling on Fine Against Former Unification Church](#)". The piece mentions that the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) had originally asked Tokyo District Court to fine the [religious organization](#) for failing to answer some of the hundreds of questions that MEXT had given the [Family Federation](#). The questioning was part of an investigation required by law in

order for the authorities to be able to request a court order to dissolve the [organization](#) that until 2015 in Japan was called the [Unification Church](#).

The left-center Mainichi Shimbun claimed that the [Family Federation](#) "refused to respond to the investigation". What the newspaper failed to mention is that the [religious organization](#) claimed that many of the questions were impossible to answer to. One reason could be that it would give away sensitive personal information about members. Another reason was that some questions were so detailed that it would have taken up to one year to answer them properly. See "[Impossible Questions Reveal Kishida Bias](#)".

The major daily also points out that the Supreme Court for the first time stated that "civil law violations are included as a requirement for a dissolution order."

While the legal process regarding the dissolution order remains separate, the issue of whether a wrongdoing according to civil law qualifies as a requirement for dissolution is a key point of dispute in both cases. The Supreme Court's decision may thus influence the forthcoming judgment on the government-requested dissolution order.



According to the Mainichi Shimbun, the Religious Corporations Act specifies that "acts that violate laws and regulations and are clearly recognized as significantly harming the public welfare" constitute grounds for a dissolution order. The act further allows authorities to invoke the right to ask investigative questions if there is suspicion of such acts.

Between November 2022 and July 2023, MEXT exercised this right on seven occasions, referencing civil lawsuits where former followers had claimed that they suffered financial harm due to the [religious organization](#)'s wrongdoings according to civil law. However, as the [organization](#) declined to answer several questions it claimed to be "impossible", in September 2023 MEXT requested the lower court, Tokyo District Court, to fine the [Family Federation](#) for noncompliance.

In addition, the daily paper writes that in the current Tokyo District Court trial regarding the authorities' request for a dissolution order, the relatively large [religious organization](#) has repeatedly stated that only criminal acts can be considered a

prerequisite for dissolution, not acts classified by civil law as wrongdoings.

The court hearings in the dissolution case ended in January 2025, with a verdict expected in the near future.

Text: Knut Holdhus

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forcibly de-converted – primarily affecting members of the *Family Federation for World Peace and Unification* (formerly the *Unification Church*) – was held in Tokyo on 1st and 2nd March 2025. The event was organized by the *North Tokyo Association for the Protection of Freedom of Religion and Fundamental Human Rights*, which consists mainly of believers.

On 1st March, Toru Goto (後藤徹), representing the *National Association of Victims of Abduction, Confinement, and Forced Deconversion*, who was confined for 12 years and 5 months, and non-fiction writer Masumi Fukuda (福田ますみ) took the stage. Goto emphasized the importance of freedom, which he came to deeply appreciate after his long-term confinement. He stated,

“Faith and freedom are precious, and we must eradicate abduction and confinement to protect them.”

He also pointed out that half of the testimonies submitted by alleged “victims” at *Tokyo District Court* as evidence for the dissolution order against the *Family Federation* were from individuals who had left the religious organization after being abducted and confined. He argued that this issue is closely connected to the legal proceedings for the church's dissolution.



Toru Goto, member of *Family Federation* held captive for 12 years and 5 months by his own family and professional faith-breakers who attempted to break his faith. Photo: FOREF



Masumi Fukuda, here delivering a speech 23rd Sep. 2024 in Chiba City, Japan. Photo: Tsuyoshi Toyoda (豊田剛)

Fukuda expressed the view that one cannot discuss the issues of the religious organization without addressing the abduction and confinement problem. She criticized Japanese society for ignoring this matter, warning, “We must not turn a blind eye to this postwar Japan’s worst human rights violation.” She further urged believers, “Don’t stay silent – continue speaking out.”

On the second day, politicians took the stage, including *House of Councillors* member Satoshi Hamada (浜田聡) and Norio Hosoya (細谷典男), a city council member from Toride, Ibaraki Prefecture. Hamada, who had submitted a written inquiry regarding allegations that the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science



House of Councillors member Satoshi Hamada (left) answering questions from the audience on the afternoon of 2nd March 2025 in Tokyo. Beside him: Norio Hosoya. Photo: Tsuyoshi Toyoda (豊田剛).

and Technology (MEXT) fabricated testimonies for the dissolution order, remarked, “The fact that MEXT has not denied this fabrication is a significant point.” He added, “If true, this is a serious matter, and I intend to continue pursuing it.”

Hosoya criticized the movement to label the *Family Federation* as “anti-social” and exclude it from society despite the lack of solid proof of wrongdoing. He warned that such actions are characteristic of totalitarianism and urged, “We must nip the seeds of totalitarianism in the bud before they grow.”

Additionally, the symposium featured a lecture by the representative of *Ame no Yachimata no Kai* (天 (あめ) の八衢 (やちまた) の会), an organization dedicated to repairing relationships between confined believers and their parents. Drawing from personal experience, the speaker emphasized that resolving the abduction and confinement issue requires parent-child reconciliation and stressed the necessity of dialogue.

Featured image above: Toru Goto (center), representing the *National Association of Victims of Abduction, Confinement, and Forced Deconversion*, and non-fiction writer Masumi Fukuda (right), attending

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the symposium in Tokyo on the afternoon of 1st March 2025. Photo: Takahide Ishii (石井孝秀).

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