

FFWPU Europe and the Middle East: Outrage in Tokyo Condemns Japanese Government Oppression of FFWPU

Knut Holdhus
March 22, 2025



A second-generation Family Federation believer street preaching - March 20, 2025, Shibuya, Tokyo



Defiant protests in Tokyo as believers voice their outrage against "unprecedented" faith suppression that violate international law

Tokyo, 21st March 2025 - Published as an article in the Japanese newspaper [Sekai Nippo](#). Republished with permission. Translated from Japanese. [Original article](#).

"Dissolution Request Violates International Law"

Second-Generation Family Federation Believers Protest

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

On 20th March, a protest was held in front of JR Shibuya Station in Tokyo against the request of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) to dissolve the [Family Federation for World Peace and Unification](#) (formerly the Unification Church). Second-generation believers of the [Family Federation](#) did street preaching, arguing that "a dissolution order based on civil law violations is a breach of international law."



The area around Shibuya station, Tokyo in February 2024

A male believer in his 20s, affiliated with a place of worship in Tokyo, stated that he had chosen his faith of his own free will. He acknowledged that "the [Family Federation](#) is viewed as a problematic organization by society," but urged people "not to judge based on biased media coverage or selective information. Please listen to the voices of active believers like us."

A second-generation believer in his 50s questioned, "Why must the [Family Federation](#) be dissolved? Very few people can provide a clear answer." He criticized the justification for the dissolution, which cited harm to public order and morals, as "vague and unconvincing".

He argued that the dissolution request violates international law and warned that "the Japanese government must not set a precedent of dissolving a [religious organization](#) for unjust reasons."



A previous demo in front of JR Shibuya Station when many members of the [Family Federation for World Peace and Unification](#) gathered on July 15, 2024

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Public urged to see the real situation behind the media misinformation as believers share their stories at conference with religious leaders

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Understanding the Real Situation

Family Federation Believers Hold Religious Freedom Conference in Takasaki


by the editorial department of *Sekai Nippo*



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Takasaki, located on the main island of Honshu. Image: Maximilian Dörrbecker (Chumhwa) / Wikimedia Commons. License: CC ASA 3.0 Unp

media.

At the conference, five believers took the stage to share their experiences. Miyuki Kowata (木幡美由紀), a **Family Federation** believer who was **abducted and confined** by her parents in 2005 for the purpose of **coercive faith-breaking**, spoke about her ordeal. Although she never lost her faith despite being deprived of her physical and mental freedom, she recalled struggling with interpersonal relationships even after reintegrating into society due to the trauma of her confinement. She emphasized,



A **Family Federation** believer speaks in Takasaki 20th March 2025. Photo: Tsuyoshi Toyoda (豊田剛)

*"Misinformation has even led to the justification of confinement. At the very least, **abduction, confinement,** and **coercive faith-breaking** must be recognized as human rights violations."*

Michihito Tamaki (玉木道人), a believer of **Sukyo Mahikari** [See editor's note below], shared his impression that **Family Federation** members he had met were completely different from the image portrayed by the media.

"Every single one of them was a good person," he said, encouraging them to "continue practicing their faith with confidence."



The headquarters of Sukyo Mahikari, and World Shrine of Sukyo Mahikari in Takayama, Gifu, Japan. Photo: 百楽苑 / Wikimedia Commons. License: CC ASA 3.0 Unp

[Editor's note: **Sukyo Mahikari** (崇教真光) is a Japanese new religious movement that was founded in 1959 by Yoshikazu Okada (岡田 良一), who later became known as Kōtama Okada (岡田 光玉). The religion is part of the broader Mahikari movement, which centers around the practice of spiritual purification through the transmission of "divine light" (*ōki* or *true light*). It claims to help cleanse spiritual impurities and improve physical, emotional, and societal well-being.

Yoshikazu Okada originally had connections to **Sekai Kyūsei Kyō** (Church of World Messiahity) before founding **Sūkyō Mahikari** in 1959. After his death in 1974, leadership disputes led to a split in the movement. His daughter, Keishu Okada, continued **Sūkyō Mahikari**, while other factions, such as **Sekai Mahikari Bunmei Kyōdan**, emerged.

Sūkyō Mahikari has spread internationally. It operates training centers and dojos where members receive teachings and practice **Mahikari no Waza**.

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Their teachings emphasize a monotheistic belief in a supreme deity and reverence for a Supreme God (Sujin). Practitioners believe in transmission of Light (*Mahikari no Waza*) and that they can channel divine energy through their hands to purify others. The religion teaches that misfortunes and illnesses stem from spiritual impurities. Past actions influence present conditions, and followers are encouraged to purify their spiritual debts.]

Featured image above: Michihito Tamaki (second from the right) speaks about his impression of the [Family Federation](#) – 20th March 2025, Takasaki City, Gunma Prefecture, Japan. Photo: Tsuyoshi Toyoda (豊田剛)

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