

FFWPU Europe and the Middle East: Demian Dunkley's Statement on Japan's Dissolution Court Ruling

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March 27, 2025



Entrance of Family Federation for World Peace and Unification (FFWPU) headquarters of Japan (Tokyo, Japan)



Rev. Demian Dunkley, May 2023

Statement from Family Federation of USA as Japanese court ruling sets dangerous precedent for freedom of religion

by Rev. Demian Dunkley, President, [Family Federation](#) USA

March 25, 2025

We Are Deeply Grieved - But Not Surprised

The [Family Federation for World Peace and Unification](#) in the United States stands in solemn solidarity with our brothers and sisters in Japan following the [court's decision](#) to allow the Japanese government to dissolve [FFWPU](#) Japan.

"The [church](#) and the concept of religious freedom are now battling for survival in Japan's legal system."

(All quotes sourced from The Washington Times unless otherwise noted)



Prime Minister Fumio Kishida swayed by communist campaign, April 16, 2023

Let Us Be Clear: No Crime Was Committed

For the first time in Japan's postwar history, a peaceful [religious organization](#) is being dismantled by the state without a single criminal conviction. The [court's decision](#) does not mark justice - it marks a turning point in Japan's democratic identity.

Japan's Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports and Technology (MEXT) conducted a thorough investigation and concluded that the [Family Federation](#) violated no criminal law. On October 17, 2022, Prime Minister Fumio Kishida stated in Parliament that the [church](#) could not be dissolved on that basis. Yet the very next day, [Kishida reversed course](#), claiming the government could pursue dissolution based solely on civil complaints. This reversal opened the door for a legal reinterpretation that undermines religious freedom not just in Japan - but globally.

As the U.S. State Department observed, this move "marked a [deviation from the norm](#)" in Japan's treatment of religious

organizations.



Senator Satoshi Hamada, House of Councillors, NHK Party - here speaking in Yokohama City, Japan on January 26, 2025

This Is Not Justice - It Is Lawfare

On March 13, 2025, Senator Satoshi Hamada [publicly questioned](#) the Ministry of Education about [falsified evidence](#) used in the court proceedings. Referring to a post by lawyer Shinichi Tokunaga:

"The crime of the century: MEXT filed a request for a dissolution order based on [falsified statements](#). A designated agent of MEXT, who is a government official, [falsified evidence](#) to be used in court proceedings. If Japan grants the dissolution order based on [fabricated evidence](#), it will become a disgrace to the world." - Attorney Shinichi Tokunaga (on X)

Hamada asked if the Ministry had any response to the charge that the government had purposely [fabricated witness testimonies](#) in order to smear the [church](#). As if in admission of guilt, the Ministry's representative [did not deny the charge](#).

Hamada concluded that the government's failure to respond was "significant," calling the legitimacy of the entire process into question.

"The government seeks to dissolve the [church](#) and liquidate and absorb all assets. The [church](#) will cease to exist."



Hiroshi Yamaguchi, founder of National Network of Lawyers Against Spiritual Sales (NNLASS)

Who Are the Architects of the Dissolution Campaign?

The driving force behind this case is a political-legal alliance. MEXT has [relied heavily on](#) the National Network of Lawyers Against Spiritual Sales (NNLASS) - a [group of leftist lawyers](#) formed in the 1980s to oppose the [Unification Church](#) and its anti-communist stance. In 1987, NNLASS founder Hiroshi Yamaguchi stated plainly:

"The aim of the lawyers' association is to convince the Ministry of Education to revoke the religious corporation status of the [Unification Church](#)."

That campaign, dormant for decades, is now being carried out - under the pretense of protecting "public welfare."

The Real Reason: Ideological Hostility

For over 60 years, the [Family Federation](#) has stood for [God](#), family, and freedom. [Rev.](#) and [Dr. Moon](#) founded the International Federation for Victory Over Communism (IFVOC) to [counter Marxist ideology](#) with spiritual truth. In Japan, IFVOC worked closely with leaders in the Liberal Democratic Party, including Prime Minister Abe and his predecessors. This made the movement a prime target for ideological opponents.



Declared the 'final war' against the [Unification Church](#): Kazuo Shii, here March 20, 2023

"This is the [final war](#) against the [Unification Church](#)." - Kazuo Shii, Chairman, Japanese Communist Party.

Based on the evidence and statements presented in the Akahata and Sunday Mainichi [See editor's note below] [interviews with Kazuo Shii](#), it is clear that this war was never about [FFWPU](#)'s religious practices or political controversy - but the endpoint of an organized, [45-year ideological war](#).

However, it gets worse.

Religious Freedom in Japan Is Under Threat - And It's Spreading

Governments in Rwanda, Kenya, and the Czech Republic have already followed Japan's lead in restricting or shutting down religious organizations based on a reinterpretation of the law to revoke religious freedoms. If Japan - a respected liberal democracy - can do this, others will follow.

At the 2025 [International Religious Freedom Summit](#), former

House Speaker Newt Gingrich [issued a warning](#) that could not be clearer:

"A government which can block you from approaching [God](#) can block you from anything. This is a key test of the future of Japan - a key test of the future of religious liberty."



Newt Gingrich, Speaker of the House of Representatives in the American Congress 1995-1999, here delivering a video message to the IRF Summit in Washington DC 5th Feb. 5, 2025

Silence is not an option. Sign the petition. Share it with your friends and family. Let Japan know we are watching.

Petition To Protect Religious Freedom In Japan

peacestartswithme.lpages.co/religious-freedom-petition

To our members: remain steadfast in faith. We are preparing our appeal and we will not stop until this injustice is overturned. The [Family Federation](#) was born to stand for truth and freedom - and we are not afraid.

Rev. Demian Dunkley

President, [FFWPU](#) USA

[**Editor's note:** "Akahata" (Red flag) is short for Shimbun Akahata, the party organ daily newspaper of the Japanese Communist Party. The "Sunday Mainichi" is the Sunday edition of "Mainichi Shimbun, one of Japan's largest national dailies.]

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the [Family Federation for World Peace and Unification](#) (formerly the [Unification Church](#)) in response to a dissolution request filed by the [Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology](#) (MEXT). The [Family Federation](#) plans to file an immediate appeal with the [Tokyo High Court](#). This marks the first case of a religious organization being dissolved based on civil law violations. However, concerns remain about the expedited legal process, and as previously reported, suspicions of false testimony in key evidence raise fears that dissolving a religious corporation as a non-contentious case [\[See editor's note below\]](#) could excessively infringe upon religious freedom guaranteed by the Constitution.

Related Article:

- [“Poorly Compiled Evidence Including Falsehoods” – Seishiro Sugihara, Former Professor at Musashino Women’s University](#)
Evidence fabrication allegations kept behind closed doors

Religious organization plans to immediately appeal Tokyo District Court decision

Tetsuya Yamagami (山上徹也), the suspect in the July 2022 assassination of former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe (安倍晋三), allegedly told police that his motive stemmed from resentment toward the [religious organization](#) due to his mother's substantial financial donations. Following this, the media scrutinized the [organization's](#) ties with politicians. Amid opposition party criticism of the ruling [Liberal Democratic Party](#) (LDP) in the Diet, Fumio Kishida (岸田文雄), Prime Minister at the time, declared a severance of ties with the [organization](#). Without cabinet approval, in response to questions in the Parliament, he had reinterpreted the *Religious Corporations Act's* dissolution requirements. This led MEXT to invoke its reporting and inquiry rights seven times, culminating in the dissolution request in October 2023.

In the legal precedent set by the Aum Shinrikyo dissolution case, courts were cautious in dissolving the religious corporation, emphasizing that the Constitution protects religious freedom. The dissolution was interpreted as applying only in cases of criminal law violations. However, the courts later expanded this interpretation to include civil law violations, as seen in the appeal decision regarding fines imposed on the [religious organization](#) for refusing to respond to inquiries. The [Supreme Court](#) [finalized this ruling](#) on 3rd March, fueling concerns that the dissolution decision was politically driven.

MEXT justified the dissolution by claiming that since around 1980, the group had engaged in deceptive recruitment tactics and pressured members into making large donations through fear-based tactics, constituting repeated civil law violations. The ministry estimated the number of victims at approximately 1,550, with financial damages amounting to 20.4 billion yen (approximately \$135 million), including settlements.

The [religious organization](#) countered by arguing that donations are part of religious activities and not a conduit for illicit financial gain. The [Tokyo District Court](#) held four closed-door hearings, examining testimonies from both current and former members. During these proceedings, it was revealed that an ex-member who testified for MEXT was unaware of the contents of their own written testimony, raising concerns about the [reliability of the evidence](#). In February, the [religious organization](#) released a report titled [“Fabricated Evidence by MEXT – The Government’s Grave Crime Exposed in the Dissolution Lawsuit.”](#)

International concerns over Japan’s ruling

Concerns over the dissolution order have spread internationally. On March 24, former U.S. House Speaker Newt Gingrich posted on X (formerly Twitter), warning,

“The current attack on the [Family Federation](#) in Japan is an attempt to weaken the U.S.-Japan alliance and facilitate reconciliation between Japan and the Chinese Communist Party.”

“A crisis for religion as a whole”

Family Federation President Tanaka holds press conference

Following the [Tokyo District Court's](#) dissolution order, [Family Federation](#) President Tomihiro Tanaka (田中富広) held a press conference on 25th March at the [religious organization's](#) headquarters in Shibuya, Tokyo. He criticized the decision as “clearly unjust” and argued



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that "the state persecutes religion, posing a crisis for all religious organizations."

Tomihiko Tanaka on 25th March 2025. Photo: FFWPU

Tanaka emphasized that the ruling relied entirely on claims made by former members who were allegedly forced to renounce their faith through abduction and confinement, calling it "completely unacceptable". He warned,

"If our assets are confiscated, our activities will be severely restricted." He vowed to "put forth maximum effort in the appeal process to overturn the decision."

The [organization](#) plans to file an immediate appeal with the *Tokyo High Court* within two weeks.

The [religious organization's](#) legal counsel, Nobuya Fukumoto (福本修也), criticized the ruling, arguing that it could lead to the breakdown of families and promote discrimination against believers and staff. "Did the judges consider these consequences? This is an absolutely outrageous verdict," he said. He further warned,

"Very few religious organizations exist without some disputes with members. This is a threat to the entire religious landscape."

Additionally, he accused MEXT of submitting "[fabricated testimonies](#)" in its case against the [Family Federation](#).



Attorney Nobuya Fukumoto, here at press conference on 8th September 2023. Photo: Screenshot from video by FFWPU

[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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