

FFWPU Europe and Middle East: 2nd-Gen Unificationists To Japan - Tell The True Story

Knut Holdhus
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A second-generation believer answers a reporter's question - March 26, 2025, Shibuya Ward, Tokyo



Beyond the headlines: 2nd-gen believers push back against court's decision in dissolution case

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

Showing Unity in Crisis

Second-Generation Believers Speak Confidently at Press Conference

See also [Youth Fear State's Robbery of Places of Worship](#)

by Yasuhiro Uno (宇野 泰弘)

"We want people to know the true state of the Family Federation."



Nozomi Kojima, representative of "The Second-Generation Association for Protecting the Human Rights of Believers", speaking at a press conference on March 26, 2025 in Shibuya, Tokyo

"The voices of active believers like us are not being heard at all."

On 26th March, the day after the Tokyo District Court issued a [dissolution order](#) against the [Family Federation for World Peace and Unification](#) (formerly the [Unification Church](#)), nine second-generation believers and their lawyer, Shinichi Tokunaga, held a press conference in Tokyo, expressing their earnest desire to have their voices heard.

The press conference was organized by the Association to Protect the Human Rights of Believers' Children, led by Nozomi Kojima (小嶋希晶). Initially, four speakers were scheduled to attend, but as more people voiced their wish to participate, the number gradually increased. Among them was a male believer who traveled all the way from Osaka.

Kojima explained that, following the court's decision, they had prepared a petition to submit to the Tokyo High Court to make their voices heard. However, they are also exploring other ways to engage more effectively and directly.

One participant shared,

"I was extremely shocked by the court's decision. Under these criteria, even my religious group could be affected. Within our community, we are already feeling a sense of crisis. In today's Japan, it has become increasingly difficult for religious believers to live freely."

He revealed that after the [dissolution order](#) was reported, a friend belonging to another religious group called to express concern.

Kana Imanaka (今中華奈), 29, who shares videos online about the lives of [Family Federation](#) believers, reflected on the situation, saying,

"We should have done more to convey how the [organization](#) has been changing through our compliance declaration." [See editor's note below]

Her husband, Seima Imanaka (今中誠真), also 29, expressed his determination to continue sharing the reality of the [church](#) that the media does not cover.



Attorney Shinichi Tokunaga speaking at a press conference on March 26, 2025 in Shibuya, Tokyo

The press conference lasted an hour, including a Q and A session. Many second-generation believers were also present among the reporters' seats. None of them looked down; instead, they spoke with confidence, facing forward with unwavering determination.

The previous day's press conference at the [religious organization](#)'s headquarters had been tense, but the expressions of the second-generation believers made it clear that they were strengthening their resolve and unity in the face of the crisis.

See also [Youth Fear State's Robbery of Places of Worship](#)

[Editor's note: The 2009 compliance declaration of the [Unification Church](#) of Japan (now the [Family Federation for World Peace and Unification](#)) was a formal commitment by the organization to reform its practices in response to longstanding public criticism and legal challenges.

The [Unification Church](#) in Japan had faced numerous allegations related to recruitment tactics and donation solicitation, termed "spiritual sales" (靈感商法) by a [hostile network of activist lawyers](#) who had declared the [religious organization](#) an enemy. These issues led to multiple lawsuits orchestrated by the activist lawyers and significant media backlash. This prompted the [organization](#) to take measures to restore its reputation and demonstrate compliance with legal and ethical standards.

The [religious organization](#) pledged to stop possibly unethical donation practices, including what the [hostile network of lawyers](#) claimed amounted to "pressuring members into making large financial contributions under spiritual pretexts."

This was in response to accusations from the same [activist lawyers](#) that followers "were being manipulated into giving away substantial amounts of money or property."

The [Unification Church](#) stated it would enhance internal oversight to ensure compliance with ethical and legal standards. Measures included better training for leaders and stricter guidelines for evangelization and solicitation of donations.

After this compliance declaration, there was a significant decrease in the number of lawsuits against the [Unification Church](#) - since 2015 called the [Family Federation](#). The [religious organization](#) has used this as evidence that it has improved its practices and should not be subject to dissolution.]

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Youth Fear State's Robbery Of Places Of Worship

• March 27, 2025 • Knut Holdhus

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Second-generation believers speak out against Japanese state's robbery of all assets and places of worship



Logo of the Sekai Nippo

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Fear of Being Robbed of Their Places

Court Order to Dissolve Family Federation

[See editor's note below]

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Second-Generation Association Representative Kojima: “Believers Are Hurt”



Fear of being robbed of their places. Here, Okazaki Family Church of the [Family Federation for World Peace and Unification](#) (Koseidori Higashi, Okazaki City, Aichi Prefecture). Photo: Evelyn-rose / Wikimedia Commons. [Public domain](#) image. Cropped

Following the Tokyo District Court’s decision to [order the dissolution](#) of the [Family Federation for World Peace and Unification](#) (formerly the [Unification Church](#)), the “Second-Generation Association for Protecting the Human Rights of Believers” – led by Nozomi Kojima (小 嶋希晶) – which consists of second-generation believers of the [Family Federation](#), held a press conference in Shibuya, Tokyo, on 26th March. They expressed concerns that believers are suffering, feeling hurt, and anxious about losing their place.

Kojima stated,

“Journalists often ask me, ‘Even if the organization is dissolved, you can still continue your faith, right? There’s no problem, right?’ But our [church](#) is built on community activities, including volunteer work.”

She added,

“Being told by the government that we are not allowed to exist is deeply painful for many believers.”

Masaki Shirasu (白 敷将明 – 25), a resident of Osaka, compared the situation to losing something irreplaceable, saying,

“Losing our places of faith feels like losing something fundamental to our lives. It’s like telling a singer to sing alone on a deserted island.”

Makoto Imanaka (今 中誠真 – 29), a staff member of the [religious organization](#), acknowledged that there are people who have suffered harm from the [organization](#) but argued that the media’s coverage has caused even more believers to suffer. He emphasized,

“I want people to understand that many believers are experiencing immense hardship due to the media’s portrayal.”

Expressing concern over the widespread negative perception of religious organizations, he expressed his determination to help people see the true nature of the [Family Federation](#).



From the press conference 26th March 2025 in Shibuya, Tokyo. Attorney Shinichi Tokunaga is first from the left. Photo: [FFWPU](#)

Attorney Shinichi Tokunaga (徳 永信一), who represents believers and affiliated groups in legal proceedings, also attended the press conference. He criticized the [Tokyo District Court’s decision](#), stating,

“I am extremely dissatisfied with whether sufficient consideration was given to the disadvantages of stripping

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the [religious organization](#) of its corporate status, particularly in terms of believers' freedom of religion."

Tokunaga lamented what he saw as a lack of respect for the core religious value of forming a community where people with shared beliefs coexist. He also pointed out that the *Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology* (MEXT) had used the [organization's](#) partial refusal to answer certain government [inquiry questions](#) as a basis for presuming its wrongdoing. Looking ahead to the *Tokyo High Court* case, he asserted, "This will be a battle to overturn that presumption."

[Editor's note: The phrase "**Fear of Being Robbed of Their Places**" in the headline refers to the anxiety and uncertainty that members of the Family Federation (formerly the Unification Church) feel about losing their religious community and support system due to the court-ordered dissolution of the organization.

For many believers, their faith is closely tied to a community where they worship, engage in volunteer work, and share a common identity. The dissolution order threatens to take away this communal space, making them feel displaced or without a spiritual "home". The article highlights how members are concerned that their sense of belonging, religious practices, and way of life will be significantly disrupted.]

See also [2nd-Gen Believers: The True Story Must Be Told](#)

Featured image above: Nozomi Kojima (center), representative of "The Second-Generation Association for Protecting the Human Rights of Believers", speaking at a press conference on 26th March 2025 in Shibuya, Tokyo. Photo: Yasuhiro Uno (宇野泰弘).

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