

FFWPU Europe and Middle East: Repressive Japan violating international law in attacking FFWPU

Knut Holdhus
April 18, 2025



Japan as repressive state, x-PM Koshida honoring Xi Jin-ping of Communist China, who he emulates



Repressive state violating international law as Tokyo court orders dissolution of large religious organization with 600,000 members

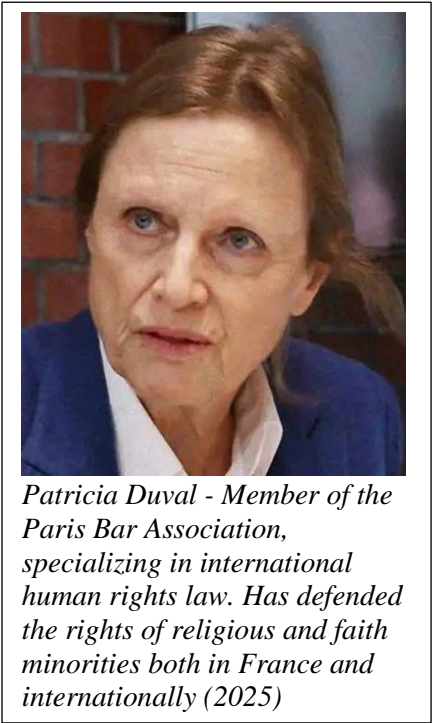
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Religious Persecution by Judiciary: Dissolution Order Violates International Law

Commentary on Public Discourse

by Seisaku Morita (森田 清策)

Government Led "Faith-Breaking" Under the Guise of Helping Second Generation Members?



Patricia Duval - Member of the Paris Bar Association, specializing in international human rights law. Has defended the rights of religious and faith minorities both in France and internationally (2025)

The Tokyo District Court has issued a [verdict](#) ordering the dissolution of the [Family Federation for World Peace and Unification](#) ([Family Federation](#), formerly the [Unification Church](#)). Few experts have opposed this, and public opinion is overwhelmingly in favor. However, from the standpoint of international law, how should we view a [dissolution order](#) issued against a religious organization that has not committed any criminal offense? Even though it is a district court decision, this marks the first time dissolution has been ordered based on civil, not criminal, grounds. That's why now more than ever, understanding the international standards regarding freedom of religion is crucial.

The May issue of the monthly magazine Hanada includes an interview with French international lawyer Patricia Duval (titled "The Request for Dissolution is a Violation of International Law and Religious Persecution"), conducted by non-fiction writer Masumi Fukuda (福田ますみ). Although the interview occurred before the court's decision, Duval - an authority on international law - firmly states that ordering dissolution based on "public welfare" constitutes a violation of international law.

One key point in the article is Duval's assertion that "judging religious issues as unlawful based on social appropriateness or societal norms is unthinkable under European human rights standards."

Religions - both traditional and new - often have beliefs and rituals that are incomprehensible by secular standards. Sometimes these are even seen as deviant. Of course, any behavior that constitutes a criminal act or harms others is unacceptable.

However, using civil law violations as grounds for dissolution, given the seriousness of restricting a fundamental human right like freedom of religion, contradicts international standards.

Article 81, Paragraph 1 of Japan's Religious Corporations Act stipulates that a religious organization can be dissolved for acts that "violate laws and significantly harm public welfare." The Tokyo District Court determined that the [Family Federation](#) had caused "unprecedented harm" based on past civil lawsuits.



page 270 of the May 2025 issue of Monthly Hanada



a violation of international law.



Duval explains that the grounds for restricting freedom of religion or belief under Article 18(3) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) do not include "public welfare" or "social appropriateness". Thus, she argues that the [dissolution order](#) request against the [Family Federation](#) is inherently

Although not mentioned in the article, Duval has stated in lectures that the UN Human Rights Committee has repeatedly advised the Japanese government to stop using "public welfare" as a reason to restrict religious freedom. The Japanese government has

ignored this.

This raises a question for the author: Why haven't Japan's international law experts and scholars of religion sounded the alarm on this fact in public discourse?

Why doesn't international law include "public welfare" or "social norms" as reasons to limit religious freedom? Unlike criminal law, which has objective standards, these vague concepts can be used arbitrarily by state powers to target specific groups, leading to religious persecution. That's the danger.



Since Japan is a signatory to the ICCPR, the government should be aware of this. In fact, three months after the 8th July 2022 shooting of former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe (安倍晋三) by suspect Tetsuya Yamagami (山上徹也), the Cabinet formally concluded that there was no legal basis to request the dissolution of the [Family Federation](#), with then-Prime Minister Fumio Kishida (岸田文雄) stating in the Diet that dissolution grounds were limited to criminal acts, not civil matters.

Yet Kishida suddenly reversed that stance overnight, saying civil matters could also qualify. At the time, many Liberal Democratic Party lawmakers were under intense media scrutiny for having received election support from the [Family Federation](#)'s affiliated groups. It seems likely that Kishida, in an effort to maintain his administration, changed the legal interpretation of religious law to deflect criticism by seeking the dissolution of the [religious organization](#).

The fact that the court went along with this reveals how little the principle of religious freedom - a foundation of human dignity - has taken root in Japan compared to the international community.

The article also illustrates, through various examples, the significant gap between Japan's understanding of religious freedom and international standards.

In lawsuits involving the [Family Federation](#), courts have ruled that deceptive proselytizing and soliciting donations based on ancestral karma were illegal. However, Duval argues that not revealing a group's religious identity at first and disclosing it later at a gathering is legally unproblematic. She also emphasizes that discussing ancestral karma and similar spiritual concepts is common in religious contexts

and poses no legal issues.

She further points out that the so-called "mind control theory" used to claim that followers were coerced into donating, lacks scientific basis and is [rejected by international standards](#).



Courtroom of the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg (2014)

As an example, Duval cites a European Court of Human Rights [ruling against a Russian court](#) that dissolved the Christian denomination Jehovah's Witnesses. The Russian court claimed the group used mind control, but the European court deemed this an "unsubstantiated speculation".

Fukuda draws a parallel, saying the Russian authorities' claims resemble arguments made by Japan's National Network of Lawyers Against Spiritual Sales (Zenkoku Benren) in the [Family Federation](#) trials - and even by Japanese courts.

She laments,



Masumi Fukuda, here delivering a speech Sep. 23, 2024 in Chiba City, Japan

"Japan was supposed to be a democratic country where religious freedom is guaranteed. Now it has sunk to the level of Russia."

Zenkoku Benren is an organization of leftist lawyers opposed to the [Family Federation](#) and its strong anti-communist stance.

Now, the [Family Federation](#) has [filed an immediate appeal](#), and the case has moved to the Tokyo High Court. If dissolution proceeds, what will happen to the human rights of the believers? (The [organization](#) has already claimed human rights violations.)

Duval points to a government initiative adopted in January last year at a Cabinet meeting focused on victim support regarding the former [Unification Church](#). It involves "special counseling" for second-generation believers.

These counselors include former or disaffected members of the [Family Federation](#). In essence, the government is [conducting "exit counseling" in schools](#) under the guise of rescuing second-

generation members - isolating children from their parents and discouraging them from continuing their parents' faith. Fukuda calls this "state-sponsored faith-breaking", a form of government-led brainwashing.



State-sponsored deprogramming: Here, from the cover of a pamphlet used in Japanese schools. It explains that they may be abused by being "forced to participate in religious activities" and "threatened by words like 'You will go to hell.'"

Duval says this deprogramming not only violates the freedom of religion under ICCPR Article 18(1) but also violates Article 18(4), which guarantees the rights of parents to educate their children according to their own beliefs.

Fukuda concludes angrily,

"Japan is no longer a democratic nation. It is increasingly resembling Russia or China."

So, what should the [Family Federation](#) do? The legal battle is likely to reach the Supreme Court. Duval advises:

"During that time, they must continue persistently appealing to the United Nations and international community about this unjust religious persecution. That's the only option."

Fukuda also warns,

"If the dissolution order is actually carried out, Japan will be seen internationally as a country where religious freedom no longer

exists. Will the judiciary be prepared for that?"

The lack of serious attention from Japanese intellectuals and citizens to this issue may itself reflect how far Japan has diverged from international standards on religious freedom.

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Masaki Kito, one of the hostile lawyers of National Network of Lawyers Against Spiritual Sales (全国霊感商法被害対策弁護団) and Nationwide Unification Church Damage Countermeasures Legal Team (全国統一教会被害対策弁護団). Photo: Screenshot / Bitter Winter

decision, the lawyers **Dr. Robert Kittel**. Photo: FFWPU

[Editor's note: from NNLASS, a network campaigning against the Unification Church / Family Federation] held a press conference on March 28, 2025 and praised the judgment. The first lawyer to speak was Masaki Kito, who played a game of smoke and mirrors. He cited the Religious Corporation Act in Japan and said the dissolution order simply removes the church's religious corporation status and tax exemption. He emphasized the point saying,

"That is not the death penalty for the religious group, after the deprivation of religious corporation status. The insistence of the Unification Church about this point is a fabrication or exaggeration."

However, the ruling from the Tokyo District Court said specifically,

"when a dissolution order for a religious corporation becomes final and binding, liquidation procedures are carried out." [emphasis added]

Trying to square himself with the court ruling, Kito nonchalantly contradicted himself and added, "[...] the dissolution order is not confiscation of assets, but simply a liquidation procedure." If the dissolution only removes the legal status of the church, then why should its assets be liquidated? Removing religious status is done with a piece of paper from the court. Liquidators liquidate. These are not the same. In fact, NNLASS has even asked the court to expedite the liquidation process.

The lawyers are trying to downplay the draconian insolvency that will be imposed on the innocent church. Why? It is so blatantly obvious that even a layman would ask,

"Why should the church that has no criminal record be dissolved?"

This question should pop into the mind of any casual Japanese observer since it is widely known that only two religious organizations in Japan have ever been dissolved. Both were based on criminal – not civil – convictions.

It took a 180-degree flip-flop to reinterpret Japanese laws to use civil misdemeanors to dissolve the church. This turnaround happened at night behind closed doors, was conducted in less than 24 hours, never subjected to legislative or judicial review, and applied retroactively – all with the sole purpose of dissolving the Unification Church. This is unprecedented in Japan and other developed democracies.



Made a 180-degree flip-flop, changing the law overnight: Former Prime Minister **Fumio Kishida**. Here, at press conference 14th August 2024. Photo: 首相官邸 (PMO) / Wikimedia Commons. License: CC Attr 4.0 Int. Cropped



International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

Worse still, in 1978 Japan voluntarily signed the United Nations International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Article 18.3 allows legislative restriction on religious freedom "only" based on "prescribed laws" that "protect public safety, order, health, or morals [...] of others." Public safety, by definition, includes:

crime prevention, fire safety, emergency medical services, and disaster preparedness. The church, in its six decades of existence, has never impinged on any of these vital "public safety" responsibilities.

More to the point, the "prescribed law" in the UN Covenant would expressly preclude any new interpretations of legal norms not backed by established precedence, especially those imposed unilaterally and retroactively. To dissolve the church, Japanese courts needed to go beyond "prescribed law." New interpretations of the law targeted only

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one religious group – the [Unification Church](#).

This



Courts used for lawfare? Here, sign outside Tokyo District Court. Photo: Screenshot from [FFWPU](#) video.

aberration of justice is the difference between prosecution and persecution. These days it is called lawfare and has been pointedly prohibited by the UN International Covenant signed by Japan. To dissolve the [church](#), domestic laws are being unilaterally reinterpreted and given precedence over a signed international treaty, thereby putting Japan in a precarious position where it betrays its international obligations. This exonerating evidence was entirely ignored in the Japanese court's [judgment of March 25](#).

The Japanese Constitution was written in the post-World-War-II era and remains the oldest unamended constitution in the world. The Preamble reads,

"We recognize that all peoples of the world have the right to live in peace, free from fear and want."

Does that include the 600,000 members of the [Unification Church](#) who have been publicly ostracized?

The 1946 document goes on to say,

"We believe that no nation is responsible to itself alone, but that laws of political morality are universal; and that obedience to such laws is incumbent upon all nations who would sustain their own sovereignty and justify their sovereign relationship with other nations. We, the Japanese people, pledge our national honor to accomplish these high ideals and purposes with all our resources."

Japanese courts need to be reminded of their country's unaltered and time-honored tradition.

Willing to tarnish Japan's image in front of international audiences to achieve their communist agenda, Kito closed his comments at the March 28 press conference saying, "In this sense [...] a small number of overseas intellectuals are defending the [Unification Church](#) without knowing about Japan." Here he is referring directly to the office of the President of the *United States of America* and his representative.



Rev. **Paula White**, here 11th June 2021 in Grapevine, Texas. Photo: Gage Skidmore. License: [CC ASA 2.0 Gen](#). Cropped

Rev. Paula White, the current Director of the White House *Faith Office* under President Donald Trump, released a video in December 2024 that shocked Japan. She connected the dots, emphasizing that Trump's strong stance for religious freedom was a bedrock for democratic nations. She said in her [taped message](#),

"Religious freedom is the foundation for all other freedoms. Japan is the United States' great ally who we have

the greatest appreciation for. However, concern has now been raised by prominent leaders around the world that believe Japan is not upholding its religious freedom commitment as a signer of the *UN Human Rights Declaration*."

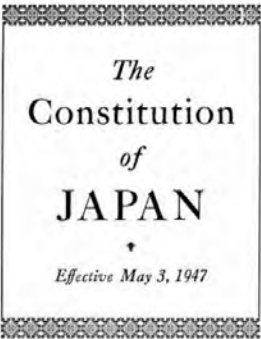


Image from a US Department of State publication, Publication 2836, Far Eastern Series 22, page 3. The Constitution of Japan was promulgated on 3rd November 1946 and became effective on 3rd May 1947. It had received the approval of the Japanese Diet and is the basis of a new era in Japanese government. Since Japan's surrender to the Allied powers in September 1945, the "Meiji" Constitution of 1889 was thus successfully revised. [Public domain image](#).

The video was prepared for a [lecture event](#), titled "The Crisis of

Religious Freedom and Democracy in Japan," held in Tokyo and organized by the Japanese Committee of the *International Religious Freedom Alliance*.

Kito and his network of 350 liberal lawyers (a figure pompously promoted in the press conference) are calling the office of the President of the *United States of America* insignificant and irrelevant (i.e., "a small number of overseas intellectuals"). In the same breath, Kito said President Trump and his team are either uninformed or ignorant, or both (since they act "without knowing about Japan.") This attitude is un-Japanese and arrogant.

Left-wing lawyers are blinded by political revenge. Ostensibly, without any thought or consideration, they willingly dishonor Japan on the global stage. The lawyers' harm to "public welfare" (the legal term used to justify the [dissolution order](#) circumventing criminal conviction) is far worse than the [church's](#) misconduct of collecting [large donations](#) from faithful followers which is litigated in civil court, when needed. More importantly, the [church](#) has instituted successful, self-imposed reforms from within and not a single civil case has been filed in the last seven years.



Karl Marx (right) and Fredrick Engels would have been proud of Japanese activist lawyers. Here, handcolored portraits of them, Marx from 1872, Engels 1877. Photo: Aristoteles / Wikimedia Commons. License: [CC ASA 4.0 Int](#)

The harm to "public welfare" by the cadre of communist cronies is established and lengthy. They have: orchestrated the kidnapping, confinement, coercion, and deprogramming of [4,300 Japanese adults](#); pitted parents against their own adult children; [extorted vast sums of money](#) from parents and relatives; choreographed a seemingly endless

stream of litigation to milk the system for funds needed to continue their charade; divided families which may take generations to heal (if ever); and undermined journalistic integrity and judicial independence. **NNLASS are anti-Japanese activists promoting a communist agenda, masquerading as "lawyers".** They shame Japan's pristine image.

In broad daylight, a leftist coup is being perpetrated in Japan. Two shots were fired, and one man was killed. This case is drawing international attention, and Japan is on the brink. If the leftists achieve their goal, this will be the most successful communist takeover in human history. Karl Marx and Fredrick Engels would be proud.

Slightly edited for publication purposes.

See [part 1](#)

Dr. [Robert Kittel](#) earned his Doctor of Education (Ed.D.) from the University of Bridgeport, Connecticut in 2004, specializing in family-value-based character education. He also holds a Master of Divinity degree from the Unification Theological Seminary, New York. Throughout his career, Dr. Kittel has been dedicated to promoting traditional family values, interfaith harmony, and youth education through his leadership roles in various organizations affiliated with the Unification Movement.

Featured image above: Japanese state waging lawfare against religious minority. Illustration: Grok xAI, April 2025

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