

FFWPU Europe and Middle East: Press Release Disclosing Key Japanese Court Documents


Knut Holdhus
May 1, 2025



Judge reading court documents behind closed doors. Illustration

Press release on disclosure of vital court documents in the Tokyo District Court dissolution case behind closed doors brought against the Family Federation

Partial Disclosure of Settled and Reconciled Cases Related to the Dissolution Order Ruling



世界平和統一家庭連合

[Family Federation](#) of Japan

Press Release

Press release issued by the the [Family Federation](#) of Japan 28th April concerning key court documents in the [dissolution order](#) case behind closed doors in Tokyo District Court. See [original article](#) in Japanese.



Judges may not have bothered to read key court documents at Tokyo District Court. Here, sign outside the courthouse

The decision by the Tokyo District Court dated 25th March 2025 (Presiding Judge Kenya Suzuki, hereinafter referred to as "the district court decision") based its [dissolution order](#) not only on final judgments in civil lawsuits involving [our organization](#), but also relied on:

Settlements made during litigation, and

Out-of-court settlements,

in order to speculate on [our organization](#)'s alleged misconduct and to significantly inflate the amount of damages. This served to overemphasize the maliciousness of the [organization](#)'s conduct.



Protesting blatantly biased verdict at Tokyo District Court. Demonstrators in front of the large Shibuya Station in Tokyo April 29, 2025

This inflation of alleged damages from wrongdoings is particularly pronounced for the period after our Compliance Declaration [See editor's note below], since 2010. That is, only two civil court rulings

concerning donations have been issued since that year. Nevertheless, the [district court decision](#) also cited:

Eight litigation settlements involving nine individuals (including those that involve donations made since 2010), and

Out-of-court settlements involving 167 individuals (also including donations since 2010),

in order to argue that "even since 2010, a considerable scale of harm that cannot be overlooked has occurred."

However, this determination was made without carefully examining - or perhaps without reading at all - the evidence submitted by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT). By lumping together settlements and out-of-court agreements, the court one-sidedly inferred that unlawful acts have been committed by [our organization](#).

In the appeal proceedings, we address in detail the content of each settlement case since the Compliance Declaration [See editor's note below]. We provide evidence and detail the specific facts and circumstances under which each settlement was reached, thereby thoroughly refuting the district court's speculative conclusions. For example, among the litigation settlements were:

Cases in which the court ruled entirely in our favor after it was proven that the plaintiffs had fabricated evidence, and

Cases where no allegations of unlawful conduct were made at all.



Protesting blatantly biased verdict at Tokyo District Court. Demonstrators in Kumamoto on the southern island of Kyushu April 29, 2025

Even among the out-of-court settlements, there are cases where false evidence was fabricated by the complainants, their attorneys, or the Ministry of Education (MEXT). These issues would have been readily apparent had the presiding judges actually read the submitted arguments and evidence from both [our organization](#) and the Ministry in the first trial. Instead, the district court judges made an extremely careless decision by ignoring the actual content and focusing solely on surface-level figures - such as the claimed damages.

Furthermore, our rebuttal makes it even more evident that the "unrealized damages" assumed in the [district court decision](#) are mere

speculation without basis.

Attached to this press release is a document that outlines specific rebuttals (case-by-case analyses) related to the settlements and reconciliations. We encourage you to review it.

[Summary of Individual Settlement Cases](#) (only in Japanese)

[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" (霊感商法) 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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Healing Bonds After Dehumanizing Faith-Breaking

• April 30, 2025
• Knut Holdhus

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Mission difficult: Healing bonds in families torn apart when following instructions from paid professional faith-breakers

Tokyo, 30th April 2025 – Published as an article in the Japanese newspaper *Sekai Nippo*. Republished with permission. Translated from Japanese. *Original article.*


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
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by the Religious Freedom Investigative Team of the editorial department of [Sekai Nippo](#)

See [article 1](#), [article 2](#), [article 3](#), [article 4](#)

Reclaiming Bonds Severed by Confinement

Uzume (pseudonym, a woman in her 50s), a believer of the [Family Federation for World Peace and Unification](#) (formerly the [Unification Church](#)), experienced [abduction and confinement](#) by relatives in her 20s. She now serves as co-representative of the private organization *Ame no Yachimata no Kai* [\[See editor's note below\]](#), which works on parent-child reconciliation.

When she was confined in a condominium room, Uzume believed to the very end,

“My parents would never [kidnap and confine](#) me.”

But upon seeing the appearance of Pastor Takeo Funada (船田武雄) – now deceased – she realized she had been deceived and became convinced she had become a victim. A few days after escaping, her parents contacted her, saying, “We want to talk again,” but fear of being kidnapped again kept her from meeting them.



Illustration of pastor **Takeo Funada** (船田武雄). Image: Grok xAI, 2025.

Since then, attempts to visit her parents ended in rejection at the door. After her family moved, their whereabouts became unknown. About 20 years later, she was suddenly contacted and informed that her father had already passed away. Uzume reflected, “I wanted to reconcile with my father, but he passed before that could happen. I hope others won’t have to live with that same regret.”

Co-representative Sarutahiko (pseudonym, 53-year-old man) pointed out that “families often expect the pastors who instructed the [faith-breaking](#) to continue supporting the parent-child relationship afterward,” but in reality, they do nothing. He explained,

“The cooperation of pastors and deprogrammers is bought with large sums of money, but once that financial exchange ends, so does their involvement.”

The group receives many consultations, such as “I can’t go home to see my parents” or “I can’t even talk to them on the phone.” Some parents have admitted tearfully, “I now believe the abduction and confinement was wrong, but during that time I was brainwashed with negative and questionable information about the [church](#). I can’t see my daughter as my daughter anymore.”

Sarutahiko, who began working on resolving [abduction and confinement](#) issues around 2012, said that after reconciling with his own parents, he became more committed to helping others achieve reconciliation.



Not always easy to create reconciliation after having been [kidnapped, held in detention](#) in order to have a family member’s [faith coercively broken](#). The illustration is from the case of Toru Goto, who was held in captivity by his own family and faith-breakers for 12 years and 5 months. Image: [National Association of Victims of Abduction, Confinement, and Forced Deconversion](#)

The turning point came when his father was hospitalized. He said,

“By facing my mother, who was rethinking her life, she gradually began to open up about what happened during the confinement.”

His mother explained the situation at the time,

“A pastor from the United Church of Christ in Japan scolded me, saying, “Your son joined a bad religion because you

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failed as a parent. You must lock him up quickly, or things will get worse.' I didn't know what to do and just lost the ability to think rationally."

Many who have undergone **faith-breaking** through **abduction and confinement** suffer long-term mental health issues, including PTSD. Sarutahiko's mother said,

"If I had known my child might develop PTSD, I never would have gone through with it."

On the lack of support for parent-child relationships after such incidents, his mother said, "I wish the child would reach out first. As a parent who did something like that, I could never bring myself to say it." Now reconciled with her son, she actively asks him to "help other estranged families reconnect" or "visit families I'm concerned about," and together they work to mend broken relationships.

About *Ten no Yachimata no Kai*



Protesting the coercive faith-breaking business in Japan. Toru Goto (second from the right, front row) and others from the [National Association of Abduction, Confinement, and Forced Deconversion Victims](#) participating in a protest march, 10th February 2025, Suginami Ward, Tokyo. Photo: Yasuhiro Uno (宇野泰弘)

The name "Yachimata" refers to the mythological "crossroads" where the god Sarutahiko appears as a guide. As a believer of the **Family Federation**, Sarutahiko established the group to help reconcile parent-child relationships shattered by **abduction and confinement**. The group provides consultations and also visits the graves of parents or believers who took their own lives due to such trauma, offering memorial services.

Doubts About Dishonest Pastors

Sarutahiko said,

"I've had chances to speak not just with the parents who did the abducting, but also with the Christian pastors who guided them. Seeing pastors lie to the point of severing family bonds, and encouraging parents to do so – something far from their real mission – made me question their roles."

He continued,

"Behind this is a dark, well-structured, and networked system of **faith-breaking**."

He emphasized,

"Even now, many families remain broken, with victims and parents still estranged. It is the mission of *Yachimata no Kai* to heal these families."

See [article 1](#), [article 2](#), [article 3](#), [article 4](#)

Featured image above: Members of "*Ame no Yachimata no Kai*" during an interview 16th April 2025 in Tokyo. Photo: Yasuhiro Uno (宇野泰弘)

[Editor's note: The Japanese expression **Yachimata (八衢)** refers to a crossroads or intersection where multiple paths converge. It is often used in a metaphorical sense to symbolize choices, encounters, or the meeting of different fates.

In mythology and classical literature, 八衢 (Yachimata) can also evoke a mystical or sacred space where important decisions or transformations occur. It appears in the name of the deity *Ame no*

yachinoko (大の八衛), associated with crossroads and divine encounters in Japanese folklore.

As for the above-mentioned association *Ame no Yachimata no Kai* (天の八衛の会), the term symbolizes a place for reconciliation, dialogue, and resolution – a meeting point where estranged families can reconnect.]

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



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