

FFWPU Europe and Middle East: Paper Reveals Hidden Story Behind Dissolution

Knut Holdhus
April 1, 2026



Scene from video with actors enacting a deprogramming (faith-breaking) [See editor's note 3 below] story from real life in Japan. In this scene, a young man is being abducted by his family and relatives in league with and guided by professional faith-breakers to be brought to a secret location where he will be locked up and subjected to coercive faith-breaking (deprogramming) [See editor's note 3 below]. More than [4,300 members](#) of the [Family Federation](#) in Japan became victims of such inhuman violations of human rights, but the police and authorities turned a blind eye to it. Screenshot from video by the [National Association of Victims of Abduction, Confinement, and Forced Conversion](#).



Tokyo newspaper exposes the forces the Japanese media don't mention in the Family Federation dissolution case even though they were instrumental in bringing about the outcome they have been campaigning systematically for during the last 50 years

Tokyo, 27th March 2026 - Published as an article in the Japanese newspaper [Sekai Nippo](#). Republished with permission. Translated from Japanese. [Original article](#).

The Organization Must Address the Issue of Coercive Faith-Breaking (Forced Renunciation of Faith)

Dissolution Order Against the Family Federation

by Yoichiro Miyata (宮田陽一郎), head of the editorial and commentary department of [Sekai Nippo](#)



Placed under the control of a liquidator: Here, one of 260 closed [Family Federation](#) churches, this one in Chiryu, Aichi Prefecture, Japan Edited by Copilot adding "No entry" ribbon

On 4th March, the Tokyo High Court issued a [decision](#) in the [immediate appeal](#) regarding the request for a dissolution order against the [Family Federation for World Peace and Unification](#) (formerly the [Unification Church](#)), upholding the [dissolution order](#) handed down by the Tokyo District Court in March of last year.

As a result, the [Family Federation](#) has lost its status as a religious corporation, and [liquidation procedures](#) have begun. Churches across the country have been placed under the control of a liquidator, and believers are currently unable to come and go.

Since the 2009 compliance declaration [See editor's note 1 below], damage caused by donation-related issues within the [Family Federation](#) has decreased sharply. Nevertheless, the [High Court](#) piled inference upon inference and rejected the [immediate appeal](#), stating that the "possibility" of unlawful acts could not be denied. It must be said that

this is an unjust decision, far removed from the principle of adjudication based on evidence. It is only natural that the [Family Federation](#) has filed a [special appeal](#) with the Supreme Court.



For [mass deprogramming](#): Akira Koike, 30th March 2023



Kenji Miyamoto (1908-2007), chairman of the Japanese Communist Party (JCP) 1958-1977

Previously, the requirement under the Religious Corporations Act for issuing a dissolution order - "acts that clearly violate laws and significantly harm public welfare" - had been limited to criminal cases. However, following the July 2022 shooting of former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe (安倍晋三), and amid opposition parties' pursuit of alleged "ties" to the [Family Federation](#), the then-Kishida administration made a stopgap but significant [reinterpretation](#), stating that "civil torts could also be included" in the requirements. Considering that this led to the [High Court's decision](#), it can be said that Japan's "rule of law" is being seriously shaken.

Regarding the [High Court decision](#), the Japanese Communist Party's newspaper Shimbun Akahata featured the headline on its front page on 5th March: "Unification Church: High Court Also Orders Dissolution" and "Immediate Appeal Rejected; Liquidation Procedures to Begin". The article also quoted Secretary-General Akira Koike (小池晃), who commented:

"Thanks to the truly tremendous efforts of the victims and their legal team over many years, this represents major progress in the form of a dissolution order."

The [Family Federation](#), together with its affiliated organization the International Federation for Victory Over Communism (IFVOC), has strongly criticized communism, which denies the existence of [God](#). For this reason, the Communist Party has historically regarded both groups as enemies.

In particular, the Communist Party openly displayed hostility after its supported candidate lost the Kyoto gubernatorial election in April 1978, bringing an end to 28 years of progressive prefectural administration. During that election campaign, the International Federation for Victory Over Communism (IFVOC) sharply criticized then-Communist Party Chairman Kenji Miyamoto (宮本顕治) over a prewar "lynching murder incident" [See editor's note 2 below], contributing to the party's defeat. Afterward, Miyamoto declared,

"Leading the effort to eliminate the Federation for Victory Over Communism will be recorded in history as a 'holy struggle'."



Toru Goto, member of [Family Federation](#) held captive for 12 years and 5 months by his own family and professional faith-breakers who attempted to break his faith

Meanwhile, in relation to the [Family Federation](#), there were numerous cases in which believers were [abducted and confined](#) by opposing groups and pressured to renounce their faith. Since 1966, more than [4,300 believers](#) have reportedly been confined. Particularly between 1978 and 1986, there were successive cases in which believers were [forcibly hospitalized](#) in psychiatric institutions, some of which were affiliated with communist groups.

Additionally, when the Federation for Victory Over Communism promoted a movement in the 1980s to enact an anti-espionage law, left-wing groups including the Communist Party launched a "spiritual sales" campaign to block it. Lawyers with close ties to the Communist Party formed the National Network of Lawyers Against Spiritual Sales.

Relatives of believers, alarmed by media reports about "spiritual sales", consulted with Christian pastors opposed to the [Family Federation](#), which led to an increase in [abductions and confinement](#) cases. [Toru Goto](#), who was confined for [12 years and 5 months](#), was one such individual, held in a condominium

room by family members, pastors, and professional deprogrammers.

On the other hand, the National Network of Lawyers Against Spiritual Sales actively pursued the "destruction of the [Family Federation](#)", including supporting lawsuits for damages filed by former believers who had renounced their faith. These legal battles have, in part, influenced the dissolution order.

Criticizing the [Family Federation](#) is a matter of freedom. However, forcing believers to renounce their faith tramples on the constitutionally guaranteed freedom of religion and is absolutely unacceptable. The [Family Federation](#) must communicate to the public that such issues lie behind the dissolution order.

[Editor's note 1: 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](#).]

[Editor's note 2: The "lynching murder case" (リンチ殺人事件) refers to what is commonly known in Japan as the Japanese Communist Party lynching incident.

In 1933, during Japan's prewar period of intense political repression, members of the underground Japanese Communist Party abducted and interrogated a fellow party member they suspected of being a police informant. The victim, Takiji Kobayashi (note: the exact victim often cited is party member Yoshio Yamamoto or similar depending on sources), was beaten and tortured during internal questioning. He subsequently died from the abuse, making it effectively an internal "purge killing."

The incident became a long-standing political liability for the Communist Party. Decades later, critics - especially anti-communist groups - used it to argue that the party had a history of violent internal discipline.

Kenji Miyamoto, who later became a prominent leader of the party, was accused of involvement in the incident as a young activist. Miyamoto denied direct responsibility, and the Communist Party has maintained that the accusations were exaggerated or politically motivated.

However, anti-communist organizations have repeatedly highlighted the case as evidence against the party.]

[Editor's note 3: Coercive faith-breaking ("deprogramming") in Japan refers to the practice of coercively attempting to separate individuals from their religious affiliations or beliefs, typically through intervention by family members, professional faith-breakers (deprogrammers) or organizations hostile to new religious movements (NRMs). This phenomenon often targets members of such movements, e.g. relatively large faiths like the [Family Federation](#) or Jehovah's Witnesses, but also smaller groups like Happy Science (Kōfuku no Kagaku) and other newer religious movements.

However, also Soka Gakkai, a Buddhist-based lay organization with more than 8 million Japanese members, and affiliated with Nichiren Buddhism, has occasionally been subject to faith-breaking attempts.

The practice gained attention in the latter half of the 20th century, particularly in the 1980s and 1990s.

Parents or concerned family members often hired faith-breakers who taught them how to abduct and forcibly detain believers. Almost all such cases involved confining the individual believer and cutting him or her off from the religious community. During the confinement, the believer was subjected to intense questioning or indoctrination designed to break his or her faith. The aim was to "rescue" the person from what the family often had been tricked by faith-breakers or lawyers to regard as harmful influence from the religious organization.



Also subject to faith-breaking attempts: Members of Soka Gakkai. Here students belonging to the faith in 2001

Critics of forced de-conversion argue that it violates fundamental human rights, including freedom of thought, religion, and association. Reports of psychological trauma and accusations of unlawful detention have sparked debates over its ethical and legal implications. In response, some religious groups, particularly NRMs, have lobbied for greater protections against such practices.

Japanese courts have been inconsistent in addressing cases of coercive faith-breaking. While some verdicts have condemned the practice as illegal detention, others have been more lenient, citing family concerns about "mental health" or alleged "exploitation" as mitigating factors.]

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July Verdict Likely – Long Appeals Process Looms

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Trial of Mother Han nears final phase with final hearing in June and verdict likely by July, but the full legal process could

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Mother Han Released 34 Days On

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The South Korean news agency [News1](#) reported on 31st March 2026 about the latest developments and the hearings the same day in the case against [Hak Ja Han](#) (한학자) – also called [Mother Han](#) – the co-founder and current leader of the [Family Federation for World Peace and Unification](#) – in Korea often referred by as [Unificationism](#) (통일교).



Logo of News1



Kweon Seong-dong (권성동), here portrait January 2025. Photo: [국민의힘TV / Wikimedia Commons](#). License: [CC Attr 3.0 Unp. Cropped](#)

This high-profile legal case brings together politics, religion, and allegations of corruption. At the center of the proceedings on 31st March was Kweon Seong-dong (권성동), a senior lawmaker from the conservative *People Power Party*. Although South Korean courts usually require the defendant to be present, [Mother Han](#) did not attend due to her current [medical treatment](#).

According to [News1](#), the case revolves around accusations of “political-religious

collusion”, a term used in South Korea to describe improper or unlawful cooperation between religious groups and political actors. Prosecutors allege that figures associated with [Unificationism](#) attempted to influence political outcomes – particularly the 2022 South Korean presidential election – through financial support and organized voter mobilization. In return, they were suspected by special prosecutors appointed by the current Lee Jae-myung (이재명) administration of seeking favorable treatment or policy support from politicians.

The [News1](#) article, written by reporter Yoo Soo-yeon (유수연), describes that a key moment in the proceedings occurred when Kweon Seong-dong (권성동) was called to testify as a witness in court. His testimony was considered important because of his alleged involvement in meetings with senior [Unificationism](#) officials during the election period. However, during questioning, Kweon refused to answer certain key questions – specifically those related to accusations that he received 100 million Korean won (in April 2026, roughly 69,000 U.S. dollars) in illegal political funds.

His refusal came after the court explicitly warned him that giving false testimony could lead to charges of perjury. Faced with this legal risk, Kweon chose to exercise his right to remain silent on that issue rather than provide an answer that might later be used against him. This moment highlights a common legal tension in such cases: witnesses who are also defendants in related proceedings must carefully navigate between testifying truthfully and avoiding self-incrimination.

[News1](#) writes that the broader case also involves allegations that the [Family Federation](#) attempted to financially

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support political campaigns. According to Kweon's testimony, during a meeting in late 2021, [Yoon Yeong-ho](#) (윤영호), then a senior [Unificationism](#) official, suggested providing billions of won to support his party's presidential campaign. Kweon claims he rejected the offer, stating that such practices were no longer acceptable in modern South Korean politics, which now relies more heavily on public funding and regulated donations.

Yoon Yeong-ho, former director general of the director general of the international headquarters of the [Family Federation](#), here 11th February 2022. Screenshot from live transmission by [FFWPU](#)

He further testified that [Yoon Yeong-ho](#) or another [Unificationism](#) representative expressed interest in having then-presidential candidate Yoon Suk Yeol (윤석열) attend a "Korean Peninsula Peace Summit" an event organized by [Unificationism](#). Kweon said he told them this would be difficult because of the [religious organization's](#) controversial reputation among the public. [Unificationism](#) has long been persecuted by fundamentalist Christians in South Korea, and their numerous media outlets.

According to the [News1 report](#), in a subsequent meeting, [Unificationism](#) officials allegedly reiterated their willingness to provide support – this time suggesting it could channel donations through multiple regional party organizations. Again, Kweon claims he warned that such actions could violate the law if the funds were linked to the [religious organization](#).

Another notable aspect of the testimony concerns a cultural detail that may seem unusual to international readers. Kweon acknowledged that he once performed a "deep bow" to [Hak Ja Han](#) during a visit to the *Cheon Jeong Temple* (천정궁), a [Unificationism-related](#) site. In Korean culture, especially in political contexts, such gestures can be a sign of respect toward elders or influential figures, particularly around the Lunar New Year. [News1](#) describes how Kweon defended his actions as a routine expression of courtesy rather than evidence of undue deference or allegiance, saying,

"Whether at a temple or a senior center, it is standard for politicians to offer a deep bow when visiting after Lunar New Year. If they give you votes, what wouldn't you do?"

Despite his denials, prosecutors presented evidence that appears to contradict Kweon's claims. One piece of evidence is a diary entry written by [Yoon Yeong-ho](#), which reportedly includes a note suggesting financial support may have been provided to Kweon. When confronted with this, Kweon questioned whether denying the allegation in court could expose him to perjury charges, given that the matter is still under appeal in a separate trial. Ultimately, he declined to answer.

The [article](#) also touches on another allegation: that Kweon may have passed along information about a possible investigation into [Hak Ja Han](#) to [Unificationism](#) official [Yoon Yeong-ho](#). Kweon denied any improper conduct, describing the information as a vague rumor rather than confirmed intelligence. He stated that he simply mentioned it in passing out of personal familiarity with the individuals involved, not as an attempt to interfere with an investigation.





Mother Han being released on 27th March 2026 for urgent medical treatment after being held detained in a tiny cell for more than six months. Photo: FFWPU

In addition to Kweon's testimony, the [article](#) highlights procedural tensions between the court and the special prosecution team. The prosecutors criticized the court for quickly approving a [suspension of detention](#) for [Hak Ja Han](#) without giving them sufficient time to present their views. As a result of that decision, she was [temporarily released](#) from custody until the end of April. The court responded that there were valid reasons for its decision but did not elaborate in detail.

[News1](#) reports that the trial is expected to conclude on 12th June, when both sides will present their final arguments. This final hearing will include the prosecution's sentencing request, as well as closing statements from the defense and the defendants themselves. Such hearings mark the final stage of a criminal trial in South Korea before the court delivers its verdict.

[Mother Han](#) was [released from detention](#) on 27th March for urgent medical treatment and will at least until the end of April not be able to appear in the court hearings of her case. Her current absence does not, however, automatically delay the legal process. As long as her lawyers are present and the court accepts her medical condition, the trial – especially the scheduled final hearing – can proceed as planned.

If 12th June is the final hearing, a verdict might realistically come sometime in late June to July. The court sets a sentencing date, usually 2-6 weeks after the final hearing. In complex or high-profile cases, it can even take longer.

After the verdict both prosecution and defense have 7 days to file an appeal. Appeals go to a High Court (second instance), and potentially to the Supreme Court (final instance). This means that the June trial outcome is not necessarily final. The full legal process could continue for months or even years.

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Text: *Knut Holdhus, editor*

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