

FFWPU Europe and the Middle East: Japanese Media Aids Terrorist by Abusing Unification Church

Knut Holdhus
November 6, 2024



Symposium Speakers: Masaki Kubota (far right), Satoshi Nakamura (far left), and Ryuichi Sunagawa (second from left) at the Okinawa Prefectural Museum and Art Museum in Naha City, Okinawa Prefecture, November 4, 2024

Aiding terrorist: Asking the obvious at symposium: Is Japanese media sympathy for terrorist who shot Abe and harassment of minority religion due to communist influence?



[Sekai Nippo](#)

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Sympathy for Terrorist Causes Intensified Harassment of the Family Federation

Symposium on Freedom of Religion in Naha, Okinawa

by the editorial department of [Sekai Nippo](#)

Turning around public opinion to restore former Prime Minister Abe's honour

A symposium titled "Considering Democracy and Freedom of Religion" - hosted by the Okinawa Citizens' Association for the Protection of Fundamental Human Rights and

Freedom of Religion - was held on 4th November 2024, in Naha City, Okinawa Prefecture, with about 100 participants. The symposium discussed issues surrounding the government's dissolution order against the religious corporation the [Family Federation for World Peace and Unification](#) (formerly the [Unification Church](#)).



Tetsuya Yamagami, the man who killed Shinzo Abe, the former prime minister of Japan

Non-fiction writer Masaki Kubota (窪田順生), who has closely covered the [Family Federation](#), delivered a lecture. He argued that the intensified harassment of the [religious organization](#) was partly driven by media's sympathy for the terrorist assassin of former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe (安倍晋三) and collective heated reporting that justified the terrorist act.

In his analysis Kubota pointed out that "the media, acting in unison as a collective loudspeaker, consistently reported only the voices of alleged victims, shaping the current public opinion." To turn around the public opinion, he emphasized,

"We need to put more effort into restoring Shinzo

Abe's honor."



Masaki Kubota

During the panel discussion, Satoshi Nakamura (仲村覚), President of the Okinawa Policy Research Forum of Japan, suggested that a communist ideology was influencing the dissolution order. He claimed, "The ultimate goal of the dissolution order is to weaken Japan, reduce its deterrence, and turn Japan into a communist state."

Pastor Ryuichi Sunagawa (砂川竜一) of Tsukishiro Christian Church in Nanjo City questioned the media's stance, asking, "Why did the media shift the blame from Tetsuya Yamagami (山上徹也) - the defendant - to the former [Unification Church](#)? Could it be due to the influence of communism?"



Satoshi Nakamura

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Japanese media helping terrorist Yamagami accomplish his objectives

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Part 3: Biased Media: "Information Disaster" Fueled by Terrorist

by the Editorial Department of Sekai Nippo

See [part 1](#), [part 2](#)

In the media coverage of the incident when former Prime Minister Abe was shot on 8th July 2022, there was extremely little criticism of the terrorist act itself committed by defendant Tetsuya Yamagami (山上徹也).



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On the contrary, the media outlets that had opposed Shinzo Abe's politics during his tenure as prime minister, rather focused on the **Family Federation for World Peace and Unification** (formerly the Unification Church). Those news channels were rather more critical of the **religious organisation**, **emphasizing Yamagami's feelings of being a victim** due to his mother's large donations to the **religious organisation**. The defendant claimed those feelings were his motive for committing the crime.

The press conferences of *National Network of Lawyers Against Spiritual Sales*, which is in dispute with the **religious organisation**, have been widely reported. At the same time, the **claims of the religious organisation and individual believers have hardly ever been mentioned**. Amidst this, there was a **widespread one-sided discourse** demanding sanctions against the **Family Federation**. Naturally, this had a negative impact on the Kishida cabinet's approval rating in public opinion polls.

On 19th October 2022, Fumio Kishida without much effort and **without Cabinet approval**, made a change in the interpretation of the *Religious Corporations Act*. The move was criticized as "**changing one's mind like the wind**", yet both the ruling and opposition parties joined the Prime Minister in his **disregard for procedure**. At that time, the Japanese media stood by and watched as the **authorities readily violated the basic human right of "freedom of religion" guaranteed by the constitution**. This exposed a double standard that is in stark contrast to the openly opposing attitude of the media shown during the 2015 security legislation.



Jacinda Ardern, the Prime Minister of New Zealand 2017-2023. Photo: New Zealand Government, Office of the Governor-General / Wikimedia Commons. License: [CC ASA 4.0 Int.](#) Cropped

Especially since the terror attacks on the United States 11th September 2001, terrorism has been regarded as one of the greatest threats to the security of modern society. Former New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern, said of a terrorist [who was seeking notoriety], "We [...] will give him nothing, not even his name." However, the lessons learnt from that have not been heeded [in Japan]. By allowing the *Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology* to request a dissolution order – in other words, effectively giving the **religious organisation** a "death sentence" – the Japanese **media inadvertently has helped the terrorist accomplish his goals**.

At a public symposium held on 20th January 2024, author



Fumihiko Kato 20th Jan. 2024. Photo: Screenshot from video recording by UPF-Japan.

Fumihiko Kato (加藤文宏) analyzed big data using AI and announced that the huge amount of news coverage critical of the **religious organisation** was ultimately directed at the Kishida administration. In order to deflect this criticism, Fumio Kishida clearly demonstrated his stance by aiming to cut ties with the **Family Federation** and related organizations from then on, and by issuing a dissolution order against the **religious corporation** in an effort to avoid blame and regain support for his cabinet.

Under these circumstances, the **religious organisation** and ordinary believers have become targets of people's hatred. The above-mentioned Kato has **condemned the media's behavior**, which rather than checking the power, has allowed it to run amok. He calls this an "information disaster". At a press conference, the **religious organisation** revealed a number of **discriminatory incidents**, including members being fired at their workplace, cancellation of job offers, teachers criticizing the **religious organisation** during class, suicides, suicide attempts, and graffiti marking the facility as belonging to a "cult". Despite the Kishida Cabinet requesting a dissolution order, its support rate has decreased. Also, the opposition parties pursuing the matter, have been unable to escape from low approval ratings.

Some say that the one-sided media coverage bashing the **religious organisation** has led to a rift between executives and young reporters within major media outlets. 2nd-generation members of the **religious organisation** have held panel discussions with journalists and experts in open forums. In addition, meetings have been held steadily to denounce 4,300 members of the **religious organisation** being abducted and locked up in an attempt to forcibly break their faith. The **articles written by reporters who covered those events have not seen the light of day**.

However, it was reported that *Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology* Masahito Mouri (森山 敏人)



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technology Masahito Moriyama (森山正広), who filed a request for a dissolution order with Tokyo District Court, had exchanged an "endorsement-affirming form" with a [Unification Church](#)-related organization in Hyogo Prefecture ahead of the 2021 House of Representatives election. Believers had actively made phone calls to support his election.



Masahito Moriyama, Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT). Photo (2023): 首相官邸ホームページ. License: [CC Attr 4.0 Int. Cropped](#)

As a result, **the very minister who received support from that organization ended up requesting a dissolution order.** That led to voices of discontent from employees and believers of related organizations being covered by various media outlets. In the future, it should be further examined whether his action violates the freedom of religion guaranteed by the constitution. In addition, his action raises issues regarding governance.

See [part 1](#), [part 2](#)

Featured image above: Positional relationship between former prime minister Shinzo Abe and the shooter Tetsuya Yamagami on his assassination. Sourced from [Nikkei.com](#). Photo: [Asanagi / Wikimedia Commons](#). License: [CC CC0 1.0 UPDD](#)

"Media Helping Terrorist Reach His Goal" – text: Religion and politics covering team of the Editorial Department of [Sekai Nippo](#).

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