

FFWPU Europe and Middle East: Masumi Fukuda's Hidden Story Japan Doesn't Want You to Hear

Knut Holdhus
July 1, 2026



Masumi Fukuda speaking at the [press conference](#) in Brussels on June 29, 2026

Investigative journalist takes you inside the hidden plot to eradicate a religion: Japan's campaign against faith minority Family Federation



The head table of speakers at the [press conference](#) at the Press Club in Brussels on June 29, 2026

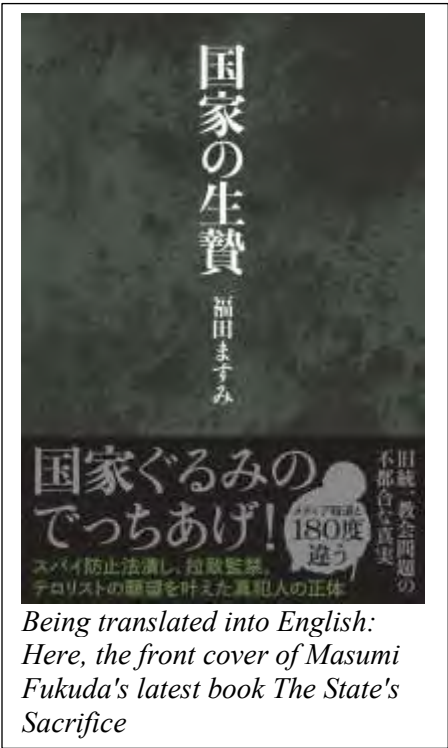
Part 1 of a speech given by Japanese investigative journalist and prize-winning author Masumi Fukuda (福田ますみ) at a [press conference](#) on the theme "Japan: The Hidden Story Behind the Eradication of a Religion", held at the Brussels Press Club in Brussels, Belgium on June 29, 2026, organized by [Human Rights Without Frontiers](#) (HRWF), an independent non-profit NGO. Translated from the transcription of

the original Japanese, slightly edited.

First of all, thank you very much to everyone for taking time out of your busy schedules to gather here today.

As I was just introduced, my name is Masumi Fukuda. I am a freelance journalist from Japan.

As was also mentioned, I am not a believer in this [religion](#). In fact, I am not affiliated with any religion at all. I am simply an independent freelance journalist.



Last November, I published a [book](#) entitled The State's Sacrifice (国家の生贄 - Kokka no Ikenie). It is a nonfiction work compiled and revised from a [series of articles](#) that I had been publishing in a monthly magazine since the end of 2022.

Allow me to briefly introduce myself. Including [The State's Sacrifice](#), I have published seven books.

One of my earlier nonfiction books, Fabrication (Detchiage), became a bestseller with over 230,000 copies sold. It received a major literary award, was adapted into a film last year, and was released on Netflix this year, where it ranked No. 1 in the Japanese film category for two consecutive weeks. The year before last, I also received the Wilbur Award in the United States, which honors outstanding works related to religion.

Readers of my latest book, [The State's Sacrifice](#), have reacted with great astonishment. They have written comments such as:

"Terrible wrongdoing was taking place where ordinary citizens could not see."

"This reveals truths that the media refuses to tell."

"It is filled with facts everyone should read."

I believe that nearly everything I wrote in this rather thick [book](#) will be completely new information to most Japanese citizens. However, it is unquestionably true. On the cover, it says:

"We must not turn our eyes away from the truth."



This [book](#) is a report about the former [Unification Church](#). Today, what I want to tell you is precisely what is written in this [book](#).

Many of you probably think of Japan as an advanced democratic nation where freedom, human rights, and religious liberty are firmly established. However, today's Japan is no longer such a country. Freedom of religion is being violated. The foundations of constitutional government and the rule of law are being shaken. Japanese democracy itself is facing a crisis.

Some of what I say will overlap with previous speakers, but first I would like to explain the former [Unification Church](#) - now officially called the [Family Federation for World Peace and Unification](#) - a religious organization that [originated in Korea](#). Until 2015, its official name was the [Holy Spirit Association for the](#)

[Unification of World Christianity](#), commonly known as the [Unification Church](#). For familiarity's sake, I will continue to use the name "[Unification Church](#)".

Once again, let me emphasize that I am not a member of this [church](#). I am simply an ordinary citizen.

As already explained, dissolution proceedings have already begun against this [religious corporation](#). Its

headquarters and [churches throughout Japan](#) have been placed under the control of court-appointed administrators and effectively closed. Members are no longer allowed to enter their churches.

In other words, believers can no longer gather for worship. They have lost the places where they held services and religious ceremonies. Nearly 2,000 staff members employed by the [church](#) across Japan have also been affected, and many have already been dismissed by the court-appointed administrators. As you can imagine, it is extremely difficult for them to find new employment.



Forced to hold worship services privately, in members' homes. Here, a prayer meeting in April 2026

After the assassination of former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe (安倍晋三), something completely unexpected happened to ordinary members of the former [Unification Church](#).

They began experiencing various forms of persecution and discrimination. Some members have committed suicide. Some lost their jobs after their employers learned that they belonged to the [church](#). Students were deeply shocked when they heard teachers telling classmates that the [Unification Church](#) was an evil religion. Volunteer organizations affiliated with [church](#) members found that local governments rejected all of their offers of community service.

The [church](#) received numerous threatening letters. [Church](#) buildings were vandalized with large graffiti calling them a "cult". For a time, the internet and social media were flooded with defamatory attacks against the [church](#).

The most serious discrimination has been directed toward [church](#) employees. Some have been unable to rent apartments. Others have had lease renewals denied. Some have been refused credit cards. There have even been cases where people seeking medical treatment were turned away because the name of the [church](#) appeared on their health insurance information.

As I said earlier, Japan is a country that constitutionally guarantees freedom of religion.

So did this [religious organization](#) receive a dissolution order because it committed extraordinarily serious crimes?

Many of you may know about the Aum Shinrikyo incident in the 1990s. In 1995, Aum Shinrikyo released sarin gas in the Tokyo subway. Including its other crimes, 29 people were killed and nearly 6,000 were injured. Its founder and senior leaders were sentenced to death for murder. Naturally, because of these horrific crimes, Aum Shinrikyo received a dissolution order.

But is the [Unification Church](#) similarly an evil organization? Did it also commit mass murder? The answer is no. The situation is completely different. As an organization, the [Unification Church](#) has not committed a single criminal offense. Neither its leaders nor any of its tens of thousands of members have committed murder or violent crimes. So why is the [Unification Church](#) being dissolved?

The primary reason is disputes over donations.

To be continued. Part 2 coming soon.

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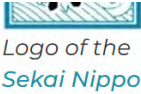
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... article in the Japanese newspaper [Sekai Nippo](#). Republished with permission. Translated from Japanese. [Original article](#).



Human Rights Advocates Criticize Family Federation Dissolution in European Press Conference

by the foreign news department of [Sekai Nippo](#)

A press conference protesting what participants described as the unjust [dissolution order](#) against the [Family Federation for World Peace and Unification](#) (formerly the [Unification Church](#)) was held on 29th June at the [Press Club](#) in Brussels, Belgium. Along with nonfiction writer Masumi Fukuda (福田ますみ), representatives of international human rights organizations criticized the dissolution of the [Family Federation](#) and expressed serious concerns about the state of religious freedom in Japan.



Masumi Fukuda speaking at the press conference in Brussels on 29th June 2026. Screenshot from live transmission by [HRWF](#)

See also [The Hidden Story Japan Doesn't Want You to Hear](#)

Fukuda, author of *The Sacrifice of the State* (国家の生贄), a book addressing the issues surrounding the [dissolution order](#) against the

[Family Federation](#), criticized the ruling, saying,

“This [dissolution decision](#) is unjust and cannot be regarded as the result of a rigorous trial based on evidence.”

She further argued,

“Although the existence of illegal conduct was never proven, the [decision](#) was nevertheless handed down because of biased media coverage portraying the [Family Federation](#) as a ‘cult’.”

When asked why Japanese politicians have been reluctant to speak out on the issue, Fukuda replied that “simply defending the [Family Federation](#) has become taboo.”

As the reason for this, she pointed to the *National Network of Lawyers Against Spiritual Sales* (Zenkokubenren), a left-leaning lawyers’ organization politically opposed to the [Family Federation](#). She stated that “for many years the lawyers’ network has spread the social stigma that the [Family Federation](#) is a problematic organization,” adding that society as a whole has been strongly influenced by this perception.

See more from Masumi Fukuda’s speech: [The Hidden Story Japan Doesn’t Want You to Hear](#)

Willy Fautré, director of the international human rights organization [Human Rights Without Frontiers](#), said,

“For a nonviolent



Willy Fautré speaking at the press



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religious organization to be dissolved by court order constitutes one of the most serious interferences with freedom of religion in a democratic country.”

He continued,

“Such measures have traditionally been viewed as problems associated with authoritarian states. However, Japan’s decision could have repercussions for other countries as well.”



Patricia Duval speaking at the press conference in Brussels on 29th June 2026. Screenshot from live transmission by [HRWF](#)

French international human rights lawyer Patricia Duval stated that the [dissolution order](#) against the [Family Federation](#) “is not merely the dissolution of a legal entity; it is an issue concerning the eradication of a faith.”

She further claimed that there are efforts within the educational system to [separate children from their parents’](#) religion, adding,

“This could be described as a form of deprogramming under another name – a serious interference with religious freedom.”

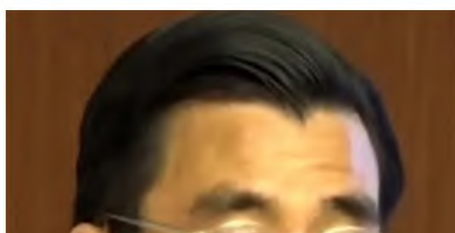
Norishige Kondo (近藤徳茂), who formerly served as deputy director of the church’s Legal Affairs Office, criticized the Supreme Court’s 22nd June decision to reject the [religious organization’s final appeal](#), thereby making the [dissolution order](#) final, saying that “there are serious problems with the court’s factual findings.”

He emphasized that the number of unlawful acts had declined substantially after 2009, and that by the time the government filed its petition for dissolution, such incidents had become extremely rare. Nevertheless, he argued that “the [Tokyo District Court](#) found unlawful conduct based on [speculation](#) without sufficient concrete evidence.”



Norishige Kondo speaking at the press conference in Brussels on 29th June 2026. Screenshot from live transmission by [HRWF](#)

He added, “Despite this being contrary to the principle that judicial decisions should be based on evidence, both the [High Court](#) and the [Supreme Court](#) upheld those findings.”



In addition, Kimihiro Okamitsu (岡光君啓), a second-generation member of the [Family](#)



Kimihiro Okamitsu speaking via video from Japan at the press conference in Brussels on 29th June 2026. Screenshot from live transmission by [HRWF](#)

[Federation](#) and former head of a facility of the [religious organization](#) in Tokyo's Shinjuku (新宿) district, delivered a video message describing the events on the day of the [Tokyo High Court's ruling](#) in March.

"Just 15 minutes after the [judgment](#) was handed down, the court-appointed liquidator demanded that we vacate the premises immediately," he said.

"That was not simply a matter of real estate – it was the moment when the foundation of our faith was trampled upon."

He questioned whether "a measure that [deprives believers of their places of worship](#) and their religious community can truly be regarded as a guarantee of freedom of religion."

See also [The Hidden Story Japan Doesn't Want You to Hear](#)

Featured image above: Participants at the press conference criticizing the dissolution order against the [Family Federation for World Peace and Unification](#) (formerly the [Unification Church](#)) at the Brussels Press Club on 29th June 2026. From right: nonfiction writer Masumi Fukuda; Willy Fautré, director of the international human rights organization [Human Rights Without Frontiers](#); Norishige Kondo, former deputy director of the [religious organization](#)'s Legal Affairs Office; and international human rights lawyer Patricia Duval. Photo: [Sekai Nippo](#)

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