

FFWPU USA: I Believe In Her

Demian Dunkley
March 9, 2026



FAMILY FEDERATION

The Newsletter

March 9, 2026

Hello family. Quick Connect update. Update on True Mother's health. Rev. Dunkley's Chicago message. Rev. Doo's weekly message. FFWPU Japan filed an appeal to Supreme Court. Ambassador Sam Brownback's statement. 1000th Cheonshimwon vigil. Unification Church believers lose worship places.

News

Quick Connect: I Believe In Her



On today's Quick Connect: An update on True Mother's health, Rev. Dunkley's message from Chicago, a statement by the former Japanese church president, and statements of support from human rights and religious freedom experts.

[watch here](#)

Watch Rev. Dunkley's Sermon in Chicago



They can take away our buildings, but not our faith. It's better to be clear about God's dream, our value, identity, and our place in that dream, no matter what the blind may say.

[watch here](#)

To Our Beloved Members in Heavenly Japan



Recently, the Tokyo High Court handed down its decision to uphold the dissolution order against the Family Federation in Japan. As a result, our Japanese brothers and sisters are experiencing deep pain and confusion. Legally, the organization faces the loss of its status as a religious corporation and the procedure for the liquidation of its assets. Yet it has also been clarified that our faith itself is not being prohibited. However, separate from the legal dissolution, the wounds and pain in the hearts of our members are by no means light. When I reflect on that pain, as one of your leaders, I kneel before you to offer my deep apology and to ask your forgiveness. This is because none of us in the leadership can stand free of responsibility for what has come upon Japan.

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Update on True Mother's Health



On March 6, Dr. Hak Ja Han left the courtroom mid-hearing, citing health concerns. During the proceedings, her defense attorney requested, "The defendant's health condition is not good — please permit her to leave before evidence examination begins." The court verified the escort conditions and granted the request. She has been in pretrial detention for more than 160 days. She is 83 years old. The detention facility has not been able to meet her medical needs.

[read more](#)

Family Fed Japan has filed an appeal to the Supreme Court



As you know, at 11:00 a.m. on 4th March, the *Tokyo High Court* issued [its decision](#) and dismissed the [Family Federation's appeal](#). It is extremely regrettable that the [Family Federation's](#) arguments were not accepted in the appeal proceedings. In particular, regarding the [original decision](#) of the *Tokyo District Court*, although it deprives the believers of the preeminent human right of freedom of religion, the court readily endorsed and retroactively applied [arbitrary changes](#) to long-established legal interpretations. This constitutes a [violation of both the Constitution](#) and international law.

Furthermore, we argued before the High Court that arbitrary conjecture [not based on facts or evidence](#) violates the principle of adjudication based on evidence.

[read more](#)

Ambassador Sam Brownback's Statement on Tokyo High Court's Dissolution Decision



Read Sam Brownback, former US International Religious Freedom Ambassador's tweet about Tokyo High Court's decision.

[read here](#)

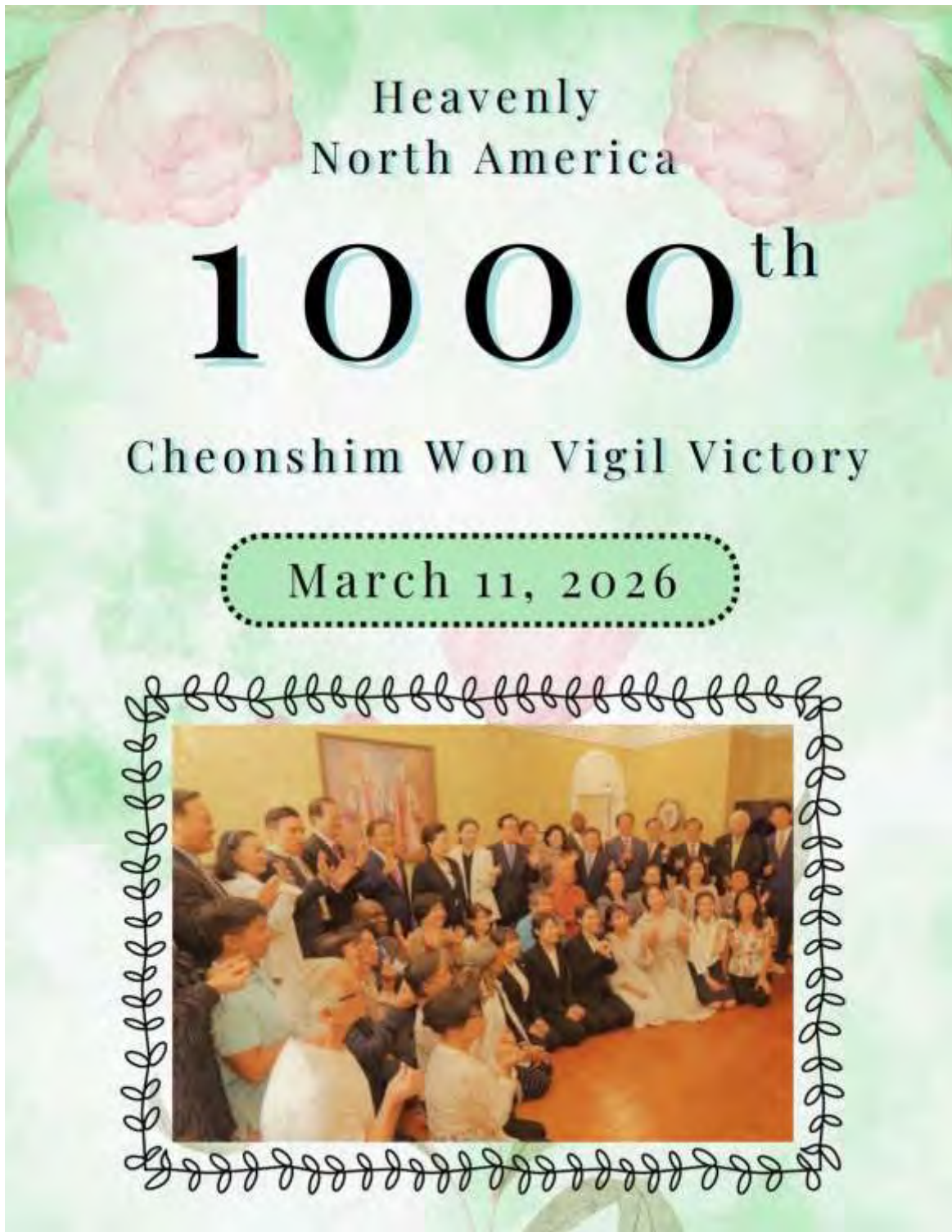
Japan: Hundreds of Thousands of Unification Church Believers Deprived of Places of Worship

by Patricia Duval, attorney and a member of the Paris Bar

The Tokyo High Court's [decision to dissolve the Family Federation](#) (formerly called the Unification Church) was announced at 11 a.m. on Wednesday, March 4. Immediately afterward, liquidator Hisashi Ito called lawyer Fukumoto, the Church's lead attorney, and told him, "The liquidators will visit all the churches across the country today. I will go to the headquarters church to explain the liquidation procedures." About an hour later, five to ten lawyers, accompanied by police officers, showed up at churches across the country to explain the liquidation procedures, seize all assets, and confiscate the keys to the places of worship. This happened in the majority of the 260 Unification Church churches nationwide.

[read more](#)

Join 1000th Cheonshim Won Vigil



This Wednesday is the 1000th vigil devotion! Join us in celebrating at 7am PST for the National Morning Devotion Call and at 10pm PST for the Night Vigil Devotion!

Join us for Morning Devotion! (7am PST)

Join Us for Las Vegas Night Vigil (10pm PST)

HJ Global News

Messages by True Parents and news on the global movement.



[watch here](#)



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Speak up on social media

Share this injustice and your personal testimony on social media. Facts and articles to share about her detention can be found in the News section of MotherOfPeace.com and by following Rev. Dunkley on X.

[get informed](#)



Support religious freedom

Your generosity is helping us fight this injustice. Help us promote religious freedom in South Korea by making a donation below.

[support here](#)



Wear the message

Show your support for True Mother with a [#ReleaseTheMotherOfPeace](#) and [FAITH FREEDOM PEACE](#) t-shirt or hoodie.

Director General Internal Guidance

To Our Beloved Members in Heavenly Japan

© MAR 7, 2026



World Mission Headquarters Director's Weekly Message (No. 08), To Our Beloved Members in Heavenly Japan, Delivered on March 6, 2026

[Click for Korea: 사랑하는 신일본 식구님에게](#)

[Click for Japanese: 愛する 神日本食口の皆様へ](#)

Beloved Japanese members and all blessed families throughout the world:

Recently, the Tokyo High Court handed down its decision to uphold the dissolution order against the Family Federation in Japan. As a result, our Japanese brothers and sisters are experiencing deep pain and confusion. Legally, the organization faces the loss of its status as a religious corporation and the procedure for the liquidation of its assets. Yet it has also been clarified that our faith itself is not being prohibited.

However, separate from the legal dissolution, the wounds and pain in the hearts of our members are by no means light. When I reflect on that pain, as one of your leaders, I kneel before you to offer my deep apology and to ask your forgiveness. This is because none of us in the leadership can stand free of responsibility for what has come upon Japan.

As I have traveled to mission locations throughout the world, what I have witnessed is that the unseem devotion and dedication of the Japanese members have permeated deeply into every corner of the globe. From the Cape of Good Hope in Africa, through Europe, Asia, and North America, all the way to Santiago in Chile, the prayers and tears of Japanese members remain embedded throughout the mission fields of the world. It is as though from that great heart we call Japan, powerful pulses of heartfelt devotion have created blood vessels that extend to every corner of the world, weaving the whole world a single living body.

Wherever Japanese missionaries went, churches were established, missions were expanded, and countless souls were brought before Heavenly Parent. Even in the most difficult circumstances, financial support and dedicated personnel were sent without reservation to mission fields, becoming the very foundation upon which countless people were saved. It would not be an overstatement to say that the global foundation we stand on today has been made possible by the silent dedication of our Japanese Members. I take this opportunity to express my deepest and most sincere gratitude on behalf of Cheon Il Guk leaders and blessed families around the world.

Beloved brothers and sisters of Heavenly Japan,

The path ahead for the Family Federation in Japan remains one that no one can easily predict. In such a heartbreaking situation, the task of finding an answer to the question of what we should do now will also weigh heavily upon us. The corporation has been dissolved. The public assets gathered through blood, sweat, and tears have been **taken away**. We have to face the reality of having no place in which to offer worship.

And yet, even in these devastating circumstances, True Parents give us hope and guidance. We know well that when True Parents first began the early church, they did so under conditions that were in many ways even more severe than what Japan faces today. It is for this reason that we can rise again. Because we know this truth, we cannot pause. And in order to go forward, we must become one.

For the sake of the dream not yet realized, we must once again gather together and advance forward. Though churches may be gone, **assets seized**, and everything taken from us, **we cannot give up on Heavenly Parent's hope because we still have our proud and precious members**. We have blessed families united in love and bound together in heart. Among them are many second-generation members who were born and raised in that environment and are actively carrying on the mission. I believe this is the "hope" that no one can ever take from us.

Beloved Japanese brothers and sisters,

As you have experienced the tremendous tsunami that has struck the Japanese church, I believe all the painful memories of the past must be flashing before you **like a kaleidoscope**. While I cannot list one by one the wounds you have carried in your hearts, I wish to reach out to you in your pain through *The Crown of Glory*—True Father's confession of his innermost heart, which he shared with us long ago.

Even though we are deceived, still believe,
Though we are betrayed, still forgive.
Love completely, even those who hate you.
Wipe your tears away and welcome with a smile
Those who know nothing but deceit,
And those who betray without regret.

...
But when I loved those who acted against me,
I brought victory.

(시조 11)

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Inquiry

Are you looking for some information?
Do you have a question or a concern?
Do you need a consultation on any matters?
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Lecture Series

English

- Discourse on True Mother's Revelations
- The Epic History of the Chosen Han People of Korea
- True Parents Way
- Divine Principle Lecture Series
- Jesus' Birth, Life, and Second Coming
- D6 Productions (Divine Principle Lectures)
- Let's Study Divine Principle
- Word for Word – Divine Principle Series
- Discovering the Divine Principle
- Online Study of Divine Principle
- Experiencing the Heart of God
- True Parents' Life Course Lectures

Other Languages

- (Arabic) شرح الداموس الإلهي
 - (French) Principe divin complet en audio
 - (French) Série Principe divin en 10 min
 - (French) Aperçu du Principe divin
 - (German) Das Göttliche Prinzip
 - (Korean) 통일원리 강의 전유상강사
 - (Japanese) Basic Principle
 - (Spanish) Principio Divino (Bolivia)
 - (Spanish) Seminario del Principio Divino
 - (Portuguese) Palavra da Verdade
 - (Portuguese) Conferências Principio Divino
 - (Portuguese) Principio Divino (HyoJin Producciones)
 - (Russian) Божественный Принцип
 - (Russian) Книга. Божественный Принцип
 - (Tagalog) Divine Principle Lectures
- Holy Song
Holy Song Compilation Committee

Latest HJ Global News



Latest EUME Weekly



This is the life True Parents lived. They walked a path of trusting even when deceived, and forgiving even when betrayed. By choosing love over hatred and faith over doubt, they confronted Satan's accusation throughout their lives — and met it with victory.

For many years, you have been receiving the teachings of True Parents. Therefore, "True Parents' DNA" flows in your blood. Even though the Japanese members stand now before fierce and raging waves, I believe you will triumph over everything. Heaven stands behind you, and True Parents are watching over and protecting you. When this trial has surely passed, Heaven will once again bless Japan with boundless and infinite blessing. The devotion that has been sown through your sacrifices will never be in vain — I believe it will once again fill our world with beautiful flowers.

Heavenly Parent and True Parents know your innermost circumstances more deeply than anyone. In this very moment, I ask that you not forget: Upon each and every Japanese member who has guarded this path with tears, Heaven is placing a Crown of Glory that shines more brilliantly than anything in this world.

Please — even on a day when your heart feels it may break apart entirely, this truth stands firm: "The true love I have upheld and protected throughout my entire life has saved Japan and saved the world." This is a truth to which Heaven, the spirit world, True Parents, and brothers and sisters of the Unification Family throughout the world will all stand as living witnesses. We can rise again. For as True Mother's words from prison declare — "Truth will, without fail, be victorious" — and this is eternal truth. We will therefore move forward toward the happy nation of freedom and peace that Heaven has opened before us.

At this time, as we long for True Mother who, even now, is walking the path of imprisonment, I would like to conclude by reading the words she gave to us before she was confined:

"Please do not worry about me. Do not pray for me. Rather, pray and offer devotion for you, for your families, for our Unification family, and for Heavenly Parent's Will to be fulfilled. Blessed families, I love you." (Sept. 22, 2025)

Once again, I bow my head in gratitude and love to our beloved Japanese brothers and sisters who, throughout their lives, have labored and devoted themselves for the providence of Heaven in this world.

And to members throughout the world who are watching over the situation in Japan, please offer your prayers and sincere devotion as comfort to the Japanese church and its members. As a condition of devotion, I ask that you reflect once more, deeply in your hearts, on this truth: without the dedication of our Japanese church and its members, our missionary foundation as it exists today could never have come to be. So that the sacrifices they made will not be in vain, please care for the churches and members in your own communities with ever deeper love.

I pray earnestly that the great comfort and peace of Heaven may rest upon all members in Japan and upon all blessed families throughout the world.



세계선교본부장 주간 메시지08, 사랑하는 신일본 식구님에게, 2026.3.6

사랑하는 일본 식구님, 그리고 전 세계 축복가정 식구님 여러분,

최근 도쿄 고등 재판소가 일본 가정연합에 대한 해산 결정을 유지함으로써 일본 식구님들은 깊은 상처와 혼란의 한 복판에 서게 되었습니다. 법적으로는 종교법인 지위를 잃고 청산 절차가 진행되는 국면이지만 신앙활동 자체가 금지되는 것은 아니라고 합니다.

그러나 해산과 별개로, 식구님들의 마음에 생긴 상처와 아픔은 결코 가법지 않을 것입니다. 그 아픔을 생각하면 지도자의 한 사람으로서 여러분께 무릎 꿇고 깊은 사죄와 용서를 구합니다. 일본의 해산 앞에 저희 모든 지도자들 또한 자유롭지 못하기 때문입니다.

세계 현장을 순회하며 제가 목도한 것은 일본 식구님들의 보이지 않은 정성과 헌신이 세계 곳곳에 깊이 스며 있다는 사실이었습니다. 아프리카의 희망봉에서 유럽 아시아 그리고 북미를 거쳐 칠레의 산티아고에 이르기까지 세계 선교 현장에는 일본 식구님들의 기도와 눈물이 곳곳에 남아 있었습니다. 마치 일본이라는 거대한 심장으로부터 우렁찬 심정의 박동으로 세상 구석구석 뿔어나간 핏줄은 전 세계를 하나의 생명체로 이루어 놓으셨습니다.

일본 선교사가 가는 곳마다 교회가 세워지고, 선교가 확장되며 수많은 생명이 하늘부모님을 앞에 세워지고 있었습니다. 특히 어려운 환경 가운데서도 경제적 지원과 인재를 아끼지 않고 선교 현장에 보내시어 수많은 사람을 살리는 밑거름이 되어 왔습니다. 오늘날 전 세계의 기반은 일본 식구님들의 말 없는 헌신이 있었기에 가능하다고 하여도 과언이 아닐 것입니다. 이 자리를 빌려 전 세계 천일국 지도자와 축복가정을 대표하여 진심으로 일본 식구님들께 감사드립니다.

사랑하는 신일본 식구님 앞에는 일본 가정연합의 상황은 누구도 예측하기 어려운 가운데 있습니다. 이런 통탄의 상황 속에서 우리는 무엇을 해야 할까 답을 구하기조차 어려운 것 또한 우리를 힘들게 할 것입니다. 이제는 법인도 해산되었습니다. 피와 땀과 눈물로 모은 공적자산도 몰수되었습니다. 심지어 예베드릴 곳조차 없는 현실이 되고 말았습니다.

이런 처참한 상황일지라도, 참부모님께서서는 우리에게 희망과 교훈을 주셨습니다. 참부모님께서 초창기 교회를 시작하실 때 어찌보면 일본의 현실보다 더 약조건에서 시작하셨음을 우리는 잘 압니다. 그러하기에 우리는 다시 일어설 수 있습니다. 그 진실을 알기에 우리는 멈출 수 없습니다. 그러기 위해서는 우리는 하나가 되어야 합니다.

무더운 꿈을 위해 다시 한번 함께 뭉치고 전진해야 합니다. 비록 교회가 없어지고, 재산이 몰수되고, 모든 것을 빼앗겼을지라도 우리에게서는 자랑스러운 식구님이 계시기 때문에 하늘부모님의 희망을 포기할 수가 없습니다. 사랑으로 뭉치고 심정으로 하나 된 축복가정들이 있습니다. 그 사이에서 태어나고 자란 수 많은 2세대들이 뜻을 놓고 활동하고 있습니다. 저는 이것이 그 누구도 가져가지 못한 '희망'이라 생각합니다.

사랑하는 신일본 식구님,

이번 일본교회에 탁선 엄청난 쓰나미를 경험하면서 과거의 아팠던 모든 일들이 주마등처럼 떠올랐으리라 생각합니다. 제가 식구님들의 아팠던 마음을 일일이 나열 할 수는 없지만, 참아버님께서 이미 오래 전에 심중을 고백하셨던 '영광의 면류관'을 통해 여러분의 상처를 조금이나마 이해하고자 합니다.

비록 속임을 당할지라도 믿어야 합니다.
 비록 배신을 당할지라도 용서해야 합니다.
 미워하는 사람까지도 송두리째 사랑하십시오.
 눈물을 닦아내고 미소로 맞이하십시오.
 남을 속이는 일밖에 모르는 자들을,
 배신을 하고도 뉘우칠 줄 모르는 자들까지도...

...
 그러나, 배신한 자들을 사랑했을 때,
 나는 승리를 쟁취했습니다. 아주.



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The Monarch Report
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On March 6, Dr. Hak Ja Han left the courtroom mid-hearing, citing health concerns.

During the proceedings, her defense attorney requested, "The defendant's health condition is not good — please permit her to leave before evidence examination begins."

The court verified the escort conditions and granted the request.

She has been in pretrial detention for more than 160 days.
She is 83 years old.

The detention facility has not been able to meet her medical needs.

Three falls inside the facility. Pain that spread beyond what painkillers could manage. Late-stage glaucoma. A serious heart condition.

At a February hearing, her attorneys told the court the facility could not provide adequate treatment — that she would need hospitalization or a dedicated nurse.

She was temporarily released twice — for eye surgery, then for heart surgery. Both times, the court rejected requests to extend those releases and sent her back.

A bail application has been pending since mid-February. No ruling has been issued.

The question is why a facility responsible for her custody cannot provide it — and why requests to allow proper treatment keep getting denied.

Imagine your grandmother — frail, in failing health — spending more than 160 days alone in a narrow, cold, hard room.

Is that not cruel?

How can this be done to someone before any verdict has even been reached?

We pray for her health and for a decision guided by conscience.

Source: news.tvchosun.com/site/data/html...



7:22 AM · Mar 6, 2026 · 13.6K Views

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Preparations Underway For Supreme Court Appeal

March 8, 2026 • Knut Holdhus



Statement issued after Tokyo High Court upholds dissolution of organization of large religious minority as preparations are being made for last resort special appeal to Supreme Court



Tokyo, 5th March 2026 – Published as an article in the Japanese newspaper *Sekai Nippo*. Republished with permission. Translated from Japanese. [Original article](#).

Former Family

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March 10, 2026



“Politically Driven Dissolution At Any Cost”

March 9, 2026



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March 6, 2026



Constitution: Dissolution Requires Public Trial

March 5, 2026



If Civil Liability Is Enough, Is Any Faith Safe?

March 5, 2026



Social Ostracism For Believers After Legal Loss

March 4, 2026



Logo of the
Sekai Nippo

Federation President Masaichi Hori Issues Statement Following Tokyo High Court Decision on Dissolution

Order

by the editorial department of *Sekai Nippo*



Japanese followers of the *Family Federation* gathering in a private home 8th March, on the first Sunday after the *Tokyo High Court* ruling on 4th March 2026. Photo: Personal

On 4th March, the *Tokyo High Court* decided to uphold the first instance ruling of the *Tokyo District Court* ordering the dissolution of the religious corporation *Family Federation for World Peace and Unification* (formerly the *Unification Church*).

See also [State Grabs 260 Churches After Dissolution](#)

See also [UN Submission Protests Mass Closure of Churches](#)

See also ["Politically Driven Dissolution at Any Cost"](#)

See also ["Loss of Appeal Part of Systemic Persecution"](#)

See also [Social Ostracism for Believers After Legal Loss](#)

See also [If Civil Liability Is Enough, Is Any Faith Safe?](#)

See also [Constitution: Dissolution Requires Public Trial](#)

In response, Masaichi Hori (堀正一), who had served as president of the *Family Federation*, released a statement on 5th March in his personal capacity. In it, Hori declared that the decision violates the principle of [trial based on evidence](#) and that preparations [[See editor's note below](#)] are underway to file a special appeal to the Supreme Court.

He also stated that he will respond sincerely to [liquidation procedures](#) and called for measures to ensure that human rights violations against believers do not occur. Hori lost his position as president when the [liquidation process](#) began following the *High Court's decision*.

The full text of the statement is as follows.

Statement Following the High Court Decision

As you know, at 11:00 a.m. on 4th March, the *Tokyo High Court* issued [its decision](#) and dismissed the *Family Federation's appeal*. It is extremely regrettable that the *Family Federation's* arguments were not accepted in the appeal proceedings.

In particular, regarding the [original decision](#) of the *Tokyo District Court*, although it deprives the believers of the preeminent human right of freedom of religion, the court readily endorsed and retroactively applied [arbitrary changes](#) to long-established legal interpretations. This constitutes a [violation of both the Constitution](#) and international law.

Furthermore, we argued before the High Court that arbitrary conjecture [not based on facts or evidence](#) violates the principle of adjudication based on evidence.

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In addition, in October last year, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights issued a [press release](#) warning that the [Tokyo District Court's decision](#) violated international law. However, the [Tokyo High Court](#) rejected the above arguments and issued [its decision](#) while completely ignoring the warnings from the international community.

Moreover, since 2022 the [Family Federation](#) has implemented a number of church reforms, including obtaining donation confirmation forms and establishing certified counselors. After the [Act on the Prevention of Improper Solicitation of Donations](#) was enacted in 2023, there have been no cases in which the [organization](#) received recommendations or orders from the [Consumer Affairs Agency](#).



No more access to its cemeteries. Here, the “Central Japan Cemetery” which spreads across a mountain area in Suzuka City, Mie Prefecture. Photo: Takahide Ishii (石井孝秀); image partially edited.

Recently, through [settlements with parties in group lawsuits](#) and through a [compensation committee](#), the [organization](#) has also addressed claims from many individuals alleging damages, even beyond what is required by law.

Despite such efforts toward reform and improvement, the [dissolution order of the District Court](#) was [upheld](#) primarily on the basis of settlements and agreements, without recognizing these reforms and without concrete evidence of legal violations. This is deeply regrettable. After consulting promptly with our attorneys, we intend to proceed with preparations for an appeal to the Supreme Court.

At the same time, on 4th March the court appointed a liquidator to oversee the [liquidation process](#). We intend to respond sincerely to the liquidation procedures.

Unfortunately, following the assassination of former Prime Minister Abe and also when the [District Court issued the dissolution order](#), numerous [human rights violations](#) occurred against members and their families, including [discrimination](#), [prejudice](#), [defamation](#), and [harassment](#). We sincerely ask everyone to ensure that such [violations against our members](#) and their families do not occur in the future.

Furthermore, we are an organization that sincerely believes in and follows [God](#), the Heavenly Parent, and works to realize God's will. Therefore, even if our corporate legal status is [denied](#), there will be absolutely no change in our commitment to continue religious activities aimed at fulfilling Heaven's will.

Rather, taking this event as an opportunity, we intend to make even greater efforts to let many people know the truth about our activities. While continuing missionary and evangelistic work, we will strive to earn the trust of society more broadly.

5th March 2026
Masaichi Hori (堀 正一)

See also “[Loss of Appeal Part of Systemic Persecution](#)”

See also “[Politically Driven Dissolution at Any Cost](#)”

See also [Social Ostracism for Believers After Legal Loss](#)

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Featured image above: Masaichi Hori (堀 正一), former president

of the [Family Federation for World Peace and Unification](#). Photo: [Sekai Nippo](#)

[Editor's note: The phrasing [準備する \(junbi suru – prepare\)](#) in the Japanese original text suggests that Hori intends to organize or initiate the filing to the Supreme Court, likely with lawyers or on behalf of interested parties (e.g., believers).]

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It is unbelievable that a democracy would dissolve a legitimate faith community that has not been convicted of a crime. Religious communities are often out of step with shifting cultural attitudes and political winds. As such, they can be viewed as controversial, polarizing or even strange, but that doesn't change their right to exist in a free society. This move by the Japanese government violates the Universal Declaration of Human Rights fundamental right to freedom of conscience. This will have a chilling effect on all religions in Japan and throughout Asia. This decision should be reversed.



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1. Argument Concerning Alleged Violation of Article 18(3) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

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Christine Chevé @ChristineC16543 · Mar 7

Thank you so much Amb. Brownback for your stance. The FFWPU has not been treated fairly. How much this decision of the Tokyo High Court must have pleased China. I love Japanese culture and Japanese people. So many friends are married with Japanese partner. Let Japan commit to

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5

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197



FFWPU Europe & Middle East @ffwpueume · Mar 7

The news about the Japanese court's decision to dissolve the Japan FFWPU is truly shocking and violates the human rights and religious freedom of Japanese citizens. The international community must respond urgently to this violation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

1

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Sophie Tanemori @sophie_wu63935 · Mar 6

This decision threatens not only one religious community but the future of religious freedom in Asia.

For the sake of justice, stability, and the moral conscience of our region,

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Japan: Hundreds of Thousands of Unification Church Believers Deprived of Places of Worship

by Patricia Duval | Mar 6, 2026 | Op-eds Global

While some had claimed the dissolution would only strip the church of its tax-exempt status, liquidators have already closed down 260 places of worship.

by Patricia Duval



Representatives of the "Second Generation Association for Protecting the Human Rights of Believers [of the Unification Church]" speak following the Tokyo High Court's decision. [Credits.](#)

The Tokyo High Court's [decision to dissolve the Family Federation](#) (formerly called the Unification Church) was announced at 11 a.m. on Wednesday, March 4. Immediately afterward, liquidator Hisashi Ito called lawyer Fukumoto, the Church's lead attorney, and told him, "The liquidators will visit all the churches across the country today. I will go to the headquarters church to explain the liquidation procedures." About an hour later, five to ten lawyers, accompanied by police officers, showed up at churches across the country to explain the liquidation procedures, seize all assets, and confiscate the keys to the places of worship. This happened in the majority of the 260 Unification Church churches nationwide.

Twenty liquidators arrived at the church headquarters in Shibuya, Tokyo, and closed it down. Employees were no longer allowed to enter the church and were ordered to stay at home.

Information about the liquidation website was published immediately after the High Court's decision. The domain had already been acquired on February 13, three weeks before the High Court's decision, and six PDF documents had already been published. Everything had been meticulously prepared.

A member of the Church reports: "Even before the High Court's decision was made public, approximately 1,000 lawyers and police officers appeared to have collaborated to ensure that the liquidation process went smoothly. Despite assurances from the government and the courts that religious freedom would be protected even after the corporation's dissolution, we quickly found ourselves unable to practice our religion. The simultaneous dispatch of liquidators to churches across the country resembled a massive investigation into a criminal organization. Churches across the country were closed during the dissolution, leaving believers without a place of worship."

All this happened after the decision to uphold the District Court's dissolution order, issued on the sole basis of decades-old civil cases brought by deprogrammed members seeking damages, in which the civil courts had concluded that the Church had violated "social norms" and "social appropriateness."

Four [United Nations Special Rapporteurs](#) issued a public statement on October 1, in which they expressed concern that a decision to dissolve the organization based on alleged harm to the vague and overly broad concept of "public welfare" was not in accordance with international human rights law, in particular Article 18.3 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which lists very restrictive grounds for limiting the right to practice one's religion.


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The Tokyo Family Federation headquarters were shut down by liquidators immediately after the verdict. [Credits](#).

The High Court, in its hundreds of pages-long decision, answered their concerns in merely two pages, in the following way:

– A dissolution order merely has the effect of depriving a religious corporation of its juridical personality. It does not entail any legal effect whatsoever that prohibits or restricts the religious activities of its adherents. This proves to be factually and utterly untrue.

– And, a conduct that constitutes a tort under the Japanese Civil Code and is clearly recognized as significantly harming the public welfare may be regarded as conduct infringing “public safety, order, health or morals, or the fundamental rights and freedoms of others,” as referred to in Article 18(3) of the Covenant.

In other words, the Court used tautological and highly fallacious reasoning: dissolution based on public welfare is legitimate, therefore it is legitimate under international human rights law.

This decision clearly violates international law and demonstrates contempt for international institutions and the human rights commitments that Japan claimed to uphold after World War II.

[Japan](#), [Religious Liberty](#), [Religious Persecution](#), [Unification Church](#)



Patricia Duval

Patricia Duval is an attorney and a member of the Paris Bar. She has a Master in Public Law from La Sorbonne University, and specializes in international human rights law. She has defended the rights of minorities of religion or belief in domestic and international fora, and before international institutions such as the European Court of Human Rights, the Council of Europe, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, the European Union, and the United Nations. She has also published numerous scholarly articles on freedom of religion or belief.



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