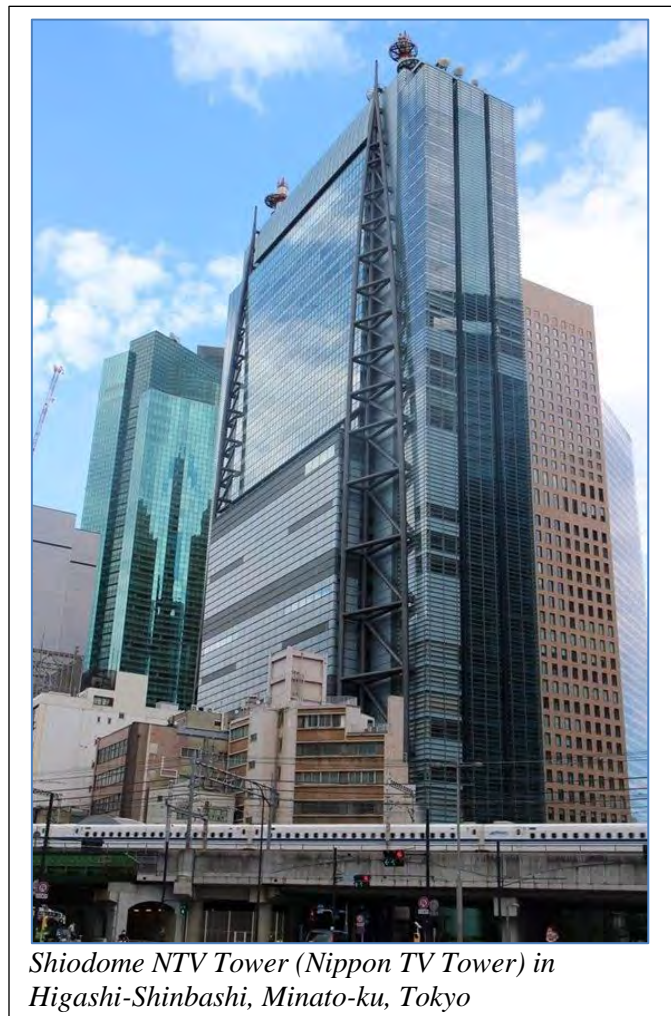


# FFWPU Europe and the Middle East: Media Making Terrorist Yamagami, Murderer of Japanese PM Shinzo Abe, into a Hero

Knut Holdhus  
September 9, 2024



## Japanese media rapidly making terrorist Yamagami into protagonist in their narrative



Tokyo, 9th September 2024  
- Published as the 27th article in a series in the Japanese newspaper [Sekai Nippo](#). Republished with permission. Translated from Japanese. [Original article](#)

**Series: Freedom of Religion Under Threat - Part 4: Media Crossing the Line**

## Making Yamagami into a Protagonist Before His Trial

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

See [1st article](#), [2nd article](#), [3rd article](#), [4th article](#), [5th article](#), [6th article](#), [7th article](#), [8th article](#), [9th article](#), [10th article](#), [11th article](#), [12th article](#), [13th article](#), [14th article](#), [15th article](#), [16th article](#), [17th article](#), [18th article](#), [19th article](#), [20th article](#), [21st article](#), [22nd article](#), [23rd article](#), [24th article](#), [25th article](#), [26th article](#)



*The immediate aftermath of the assassination of former Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, in the vicinity of Kintetsu Yamato-Saidaiji station northern entrance on 8th July 2022*

It has been two years since the incident that occurred at the north exit roundabout of Yamato-Saidaiji

Station in Nara Prefecture at 11:36 AM on 8th July 2022. During the Obon holiday on 13th August this year, Nippon TV aired a dramatization of the "Shinzo Abe Shooting Incident" in a two-hour special titled "The World's Astonishing News".

The narration began as follows:

"When did the man begin preparing for the attack? Why was former Prime Minister Abe targeted? We will recreate the events based on the police report, statements that have come to light, and interviews with those involved."



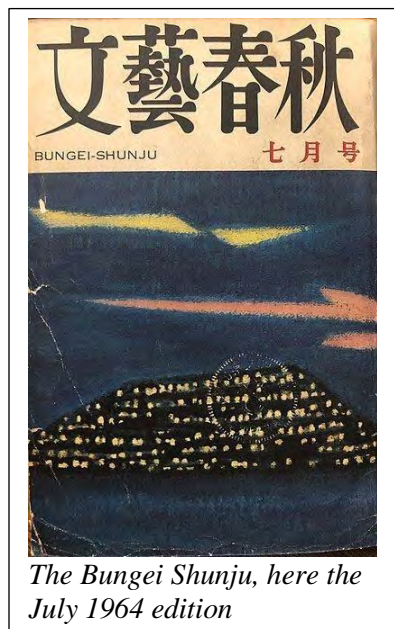
The main character in this dramatization is "the man" - namely, the suspect Tetsuya Yamagami (山上徹也), who was arrested at the scene. An actor who closely resembles him plays the role, including scenes of interrogation by the police.

The narration mentions "statements that have come to light", but there is nothing new. The suspect stated,

"My mother became deeply involved with a religious organization and donated large sums of money. That ruined our family life. I initially thought about targeting members of the religious organization, but that seemed difficult, so I targeted former Prime Minister Abe instead."

The main character speaks this way during police interrogation, and the drama unfolds with the narrator revealing,

"It later became known that this religious organization is the [Family Federation for World Peace and Unification](#), commonly known as the [Unification Church](#)."



Amid the intense media coverage following the incident, print media such as the monthly general magazine Bungei Shunju (文藝春秋), extensively covered the defendant's life story. While adapting this into a television drama may seem like a new experiment, it poses a significant problem.

This is because, as mentioned at the end of the drama,

"Yamagami has been indicted on charges including murder, and while the details of the incident and the core motive behind the crime will be clarified in court, there is currently no prospect of when the trial will begin."

Since the details have not yet been made clear, the drama risks manipulating public perception before the trial has even taken place.

Based on a court case where former members won a lawsuit against the [religious organization](#), the program also dramatized the case of a woman who had become a member at the age of 17. The drama

depicted her experiences: attending retreats to study the teachings, participating in "spiritual sales", being matched with a Korean partner for a [mass wedding](#), and eventually leaving the [organization](#) because of being "persuaded by her family". Through the experiences of this former member, the program criticized the [religious organization](#).

Meanwhile, the reenactment of the incident reaches a climax with dramatic sound effects reminiscent of a morality tale of good triumphing over evil, interpreting the defendant's words posted on the bulletin board of a reporter's blog, "I will risk my life to become the liberator of all those associated with the [Unification Church](#)," and "Strangely enough, I too want a gun so badly I would give anything for it." These words were interpreted as a declaration of his resolve to carry out the shooting.

In the drama, Abe's cause of death was explained by the Nara Prefectural Police as "a fatal injury caused by damage to an artery under his left collarbone from a bullet that entered through his left shoulder." However, the content of a press conference held by Nara Medical University Hospital, where Abe received emergency treatment, was ignored. The hospital had stated that "a bullet that entered from the right front side of the neck damaged the heart and major blood vessels, leading to death from blood loss."



Regarding the question why former Prime Minister Abe was targeted, the drama portrayed a scene where the main character watches on his computer a video message from Abe. This message was sent to an event held by the Universal Peace Federation, a group related to the [religious organization](#). The drama also suggested that the crime was committed because the suspect believed Abe's grandfather, former Prime Minister Nobusuke Kishi (岸信介), had invited the [religious organization](#) to Japan, and that Abe himself was also connected to it.

The program also showed a photo of [Unification Church](#) founder [Sun Myung Moon](#) meeting with Kishi and touched on the "ties" between the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) and the [religious organization](#). As criticism of the [religious organization](#) and the LDP grew, the government requested a court order to dissolve the [organization](#).



[Sun Myung Moon](#) and Nobusuke Kishi, Prime Minister of Japan 1957-1960, shaking hands in Tokyo

This drama does not evoke strong anger toward the suspect who killed former Prime Minister Abe. When the defendant is made the protagonist, his background, circumstances, and feelings are expressed in a way that evokes sympathy for him as a person.

In contrast, the followers of the [religious organization](#) were depicted in a dehumanized way - portrayed as being brainwashed with doctrines during retreats and being pushed to split with their boyfriend or girlfriend. The defendant is portrayed more humanely. The way the media has created the "Yamagami Story" and portrayed the suspect and the followers differently may have led to a case of misrepresentation of some kind.

[12th article](#), [13th article](#), [14th article](#), [15th article](#), [16th article](#), [17th article](#), [18th article](#), [19th article](#), [20th article](#), [21st article](#), [22nd article](#), [23rd article](#), [24th article](#), [25th article](#), [26th article](#)

Related to terrorist Yamagami portrayed as hero: [Media Helping Terrorist Reach His Goal](#)

Related to terrorist Yamagami portrayed as hero: [Kishida Administration Giving in to Terrorism](#)

Related to terrorist Yamagami portrayed as hero: [Kishida Has Opened Can of Worms](#)

Related to terrorist Yamagami portrayed as hero: [Bizarre Atlantic Report Condoning Terror](#)

Related to terrorist Yamagami portrayed as hero: [Japan Times: Warning of Terror](#)

Related to terrorist Yamagami portrayed as hero: [Did constant hate-mongering cause terror?](#)

Related to terrorist Yamagami portrayed as hero: [Inhuman Government-Supported Mass Deprogramming](#)

More, related to terrorist Yamagami portrayed as hero: [Collusion to Rob Minority of Its Rights](#)

And more, related to terrorist Yamagami portrayed as hero: [State and Media Creating "Today's Non-Citizens"](#)

Still more, related to terrorist Yamagami portrayed as hero: [Japan Criticized for Glaring Rights Violations](#)

Even more, related to terrorist Yamagami portrayed as hero: [Japan Following the Way of China](#)

And still more, related to terrorist Yamagami portrayed as hero: [12 Religious Freedom NGOs Denouncing Japan](#)

And even more, related to terrorist Yamagami portrayed as hero: [Conference on Religious Freedom Violations](#)

Still more, related to terrorist Yamagami portrayed as hero: [Japan: Threat to Religious Freedom](#)

Even more, related to terrorist Yamagami portrayed as hero: [Call to End Witch Hunt](#)

More, related to terrorist Yamagami portrayed as hero: [Government's Foul Play Pointed Out](#)

More, related to terrorist Yamagami portrayed as hero: [Japan: 4300 Abductions and Forcible Detentions](#)

And more, related to terrorist Yamagami portrayed as hero: [Illegalities of Activist Lawyers Exposed](#)

Yet more, related to terrorist Yamagami portrayed as hero: [Lawyers Manipulating, Coercing, Lying](#)

Still more, related to terrorist Yamagami portrayed as hero: [Biased Information from Leftwing Lawyers](#)

Even more, related to terrorist Yamagami portrayed as hero: [Dangerous Precedent to Crush Religions](#)

Even more, related to terrorist Yamagami portrayed as hero: [Kyodo News: 100s of Rights Violations Claimed](#)

Even more, related to terrorist Yamagami portrayed as hero: [Fabricated Torts Part of Wily Strategy in Japan](#)



# Media Generating Sympathy For Terrorists

September 6, 2024 • Knut Holdhus

Share:     



*Sympathy for terrorists created by media's generous coverage of motive and background of assassins and would-be assassins*



Logo of the Sekai Nippo








Tokyo, 5th September 2024 – Published as the 26th article in a series in the Japanese newspaper Sekai Nippo. Republished with permission. Translated from Japanese. Original article

Series: Freedom of Religion Under Threat – Part 4: **Media Crossing the Line**

Classic impression manipulation without remorse

by the Religious Freedom Investigative Team of the editorial department of Sekai Nippo

See [1st article](#), [2nd article](#), [3rd article](#), [4th article](#), [5th article](#), [6th article](#),

- More Posts
-  **Media Making Terrorist Yamagami Into Hero**  
September 9, 2024
  -  **Legal Battle Continues To Regain Stolen Funds**  
September 8, 2024
  -  **Japan: Special Appeal Filed To Supreme Court**  
September 7, 2024
  -  **Broadcast Standards In Japan Grossly Violated**  
September 4, 2024
  -  **Media And Government Allowed Terror To Succeed**  
September 3, 2024
  -  **Key Questions Ignored By Media Chasing Ratings**  
September 2, 2024
  -  **Interreligious Unity For Korean Reunification**  
September 1, 2024

Search  

Categories

[7th article](#), [8th article](#), [9th article](#), [10th article](#), [11th article](#), [12th article](#), [13th article](#), [14th article](#), [15th article](#), [16th article](#), [17th article](#), [18th article](#), [19th article](#), [20th article](#), [21st article](#), [22nd article](#), [23rd article](#), [24th article](#), [25th article](#), [27th article](#)

On 15<sup>th</sup> April 2023, an explosive device was thrown near Prime Minister Fumio Kishida as he was giving a campaign speech for a House of Representatives by-election. This led to an unexpected debate regarding **reporting about terrorism**.

As previously reported, international political scientist Yuichi Hosoya (細谷雄一) pointed out on Twitter (now X) that the “general understanding in terrorism research” is that **“the very attitude of trying to understand the background of terrorist crimes aids and abets terrorists in achieving their goals.”** However, this understanding is not common in Japan.

After the incident, Goshi Hosono (細野豪志), a member of the *House of Representatives* from the *Liberal Democratic Party*, stated,

“Once someone commits terrorism, I don't give any consideration to their claims or background. From such things we can deduce no general way to deal with terror.”

As the content of the perpetrator's tweets and other details began to be reported, Hosono argued,

“The media has begun a race to report on the man who attacked Prime Minister Kishida and his motives for the terror. I see **no value in this reporting other than that they ‘sell’.**”



Goshi Hosono. Photo: 内閣官房内閣広報室 / Wikimedia Commons. License: [CC Attr 4.0 Int.](#) Cropped

## 東京新聞

Logo of Tokyo Shimbun. Author: Chunichi Shimbun Co., Ltd. [Public domain image](#)

Similar opinions also spread online. In response, the *Tokyo Shimbun's* special report section published an article titled “What's the Logic Behind ‘Don't Report the Perpetrator's Motive?’” (posted online on 22<sup>nd</sup> April), where

journalist Satoru Aoki (青木理) countered, saying,

“When politicians, regardless of party affiliation, start telling the media ‘not to report on this’, the very foundation of democracy collapses.”

## The Asahi Shimbun

*Asahi Shimbun Digital* also addressed the issue in an article titled “*The Debate on Restricting Reporting in Terror Incidents and the ‘View of the Ignorant Public’*” (published on 16<sup>th</sup> May), where former Hosei University professor Gen Inuzuka (犬塚元) argued, “Such discussions are based on a ‘view of the ignorant public’ and could lead to the collapse of liberal democracy.” Many other rebuttals were posted online.

Of course, in reporting on terrorist crimes, the motives and background are key themes. However, **if this reporting is not handled with the utmost care, it could end up aiding the perpetrator's objectives**. What is being called into question is how the media handled reporting on the bomb terrorist attack targeting a sitting prime minister, which could lead to the serious situation of inspiring copycat crimes. It is the media's responsibility to verify the reporting related to the assassin of former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe (安倍晋三).

 On 18<sup>th</sup> July 2022, during the broadcast of Yomiuri TV's



program “Information Live Miyane-ya”, they **not only displayed the full text of a letter sent by suspect Tetsuya Yamagami** (山上徹也) – now a defendant – to journalist Kazuhiro Yonemoto (米本和弘) just before the crime, but also had a female announcer **read it aloud without omitting a single word**.

The letter contained **self-defense statements** such as,

“Since my mother joined [the [Unification Church](#)], my teenage years passed amid the waste of more than a billion yen, the collapse of my family, and bankruptcy. These experiences have distorted my entire life [...]”

It also included clear expressions of his grudge against the family of the founder of the [Unification Church](#) and Yamagami's clear intention to commit murder.

Send us a message

First Name \*  Last Name

Email \*

Your Message \*

Submit

Seiji Miyane (宮根誠司), the host of the show, followed up on this letter, saying, "Of course, there are believers who suffer, but there are also many second-generation believers who endure great pain." The discussion progressed on the assumption that many followers of the [religious organization](#) and second-generation believers suffer, and that this leads to the breakdown of their families.

In the process, three times Miyane showed excerpts from postings believed to be Yamagami's on Yonemoto's blog (from December 2020), and also four times excerpts from Yamagami's tweets and other postings (from May 2021, October 2019, August 2020, and June 2022). Each time the text was projected on the screen and read out by a female announcer.



*Tetsuya Yamagami, the man who killed Shinzo Abe, the former prime minister of Japan. Photo: Andrew2592009 / Wikimedia Commons. License: CC ASA 4.0 Int. Cropped*

This is a classic method of manipulation that simultaneously stimulates both the visual and the auditory senses. **Reporting the perpetrator's claims so thoroughly on public airwaves just ten days after former Prime Minister Abe was shot and killed, cannot be considered proper journalism.** The motives and background behind Yamagami's act of terror were reported over and over again. This is reminiscent of some forms of indoctrination.

Despite this, to date there has been no proper investigation, reflection, or disciplinary action related to the coverage.

See [1st article](#), [2nd article](#), [3rd article](#), [4th article](#), [5th article](#), [6th article](#), [7th article](#), [8th article](#), [9th article](#), [10th article](#), [11th article](#), [12th article](#), [13th article](#), [14th article](#), [15th article](#), [16th article](#), [17th article](#), [18th article](#), [19th article](#), [20th article](#), [21st article](#), [22nd article](#), [23rd article](#), [24th article](#), [25th article](#), [27th article](#)

**Featured image** above: Reporting of sensational news. Illustration: Microsoft Designer Image Creator, 6th September 2024.

**Related to generating sympathy for terrorists:** [Media Helping Terrorist Reach His Goal](#)

Related to generating sympathy for terrorists: [Kishida Administration Giving in to Terrorism](#)

Related to generating sympathy for terrorists: [Kishida Has Opened Can of Worms](#)

Related to generating sympathy for terrorists: [Bizarre Atlantic Report Condoning Terror](#)

Related to generating sympathy for terrorists: [Japan Times: Warning of Terror](#)

Related to generating sympathy for terrorists: [Did constant hate-mongering cause terror?](#)

**Related to generating sympathy for terrorists:** [Inhuman Government-Supported Mass Deprogramming](#)

More, related to generating sympathy for terrorists: [Collusion to Rob Minority of Its Rights](#)

And more, related to generating sympathy for terrorists: [State and Media Creating "Today's Non-Citizens"](#)

Still more, **related to generating sympathy for terrorists:** [Japan Criticized for Glaring Rights Violations](#)

Even more, related to generating sympathy for terrorists: [Japan Following the Way of China](#)

And still more, related to generating sympathy for terrorists: [12 Religious Freedom NGOs Denouncing Japan](#)

And even more, related to generating sympathy for terrorists: [Conference on Religious Freedom Violations](#)

Still more, related to generating sympathy for terrorists: [Japan: Threat to Religious Freedom](#)

Even more, related to generating sympathy for terrorists: [Call to End Witch Hunt](#)

More, related to generating sympathy for terrorists: [Government's Foul Play Pointed Out](#)

More, related to generating sympathy for terrorists: [Japan: 4300 Abductions and Forcible Detentions](#)

And more, related to generating sympathy for terrorists: [Illegalities of Activist Lawyers Exposed](#)

Yet more, related to generating sympathy for terrorists: [Lawyers Manipulating, Coercing, Lying](#)

Still more, related to generating sympathy for terrorists: [Biased Information from Leftwing Lawyers](#)

Even more, related to generating sympathy for terrorists: [Dangerous Precedent to Crush Religions](#)

Even more, related to generating sympathy for terrorists: [Kyodo News: 100s of Rights Violations Claimed](#)

Even more, related to generating sympathy for terrorists: [Fabricated Torts Part of Wily Strategy in Japan](#)

« Previous  
Broadcast Standards In Japan ... Japan: Special Appeal Filed To ... Next »



#### GET STARTED

[Home](#) [Privacy Policy](#)

#### SUBSCRIBE TO OUR NEWSLETTER

First Name

Last Name

Your Email Address

Subscribe

I agree that my personal data will be used for marketing purposes and I understand that I can unsubscribe at any time.

Follow us

