

FFWPU Europe and the Middle East: Japanese Court Ignores *Awkward* Facts in FFWPU Dissolution Case

Knut Holdhus
September 21, 2025



Joint building of the Tokyo High Court, Tokyo District Court, and Tokyo Summary Court in Chiyoda Ward, Tokyo, Japan



[Sekai Nippo](#)

Concerns over judicial credibility: Tokyo District Court completely ignored facts inconvenient to the ministry requesting the dissolution order against the Family Federation

Tokyo, 17th September 2025 - Published as an article in the Japanese newspaper [Sekai Nippo](#). Republished with permission. Translated from Japanese. [Original article](#).

[Series] Order to Dissolve the Family Federation: Examining the District Court's Decision (Part 3)

The Tokyo District Court Hid Inconvenient Facts

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

See [part 1: Dissolution Case: Inflated Damages, Forced Logic](#)

See part 2: [MEXT's Legal Spin and "Dissolution at All Costs"](#)



The decision of the Tokyo District Court (hereafter, "the court") in the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology's (MEXT) petition for a dissolution order against the [Family Federation for World Peace and Unification](#) (FFWPU, formerly the [Unification Church](#)) focuses heavily on filling a major gap: the lack of examination into the "continuity" of unlawful acts after the [religious organization](#)'s 2009 compliance declaration [See editor's note below]. First of all, the District Court either completely ignored facts (claims or evidence) inconvenient for the Ministry of Education (MEXT), which could later cause controversy, or replaced them with different arguments without providing any explanation.

A representative example of the former is the written statements from former members newly added by MEXT. When the Ministry of Education (MEXT) filed for the dissolution order, it widely publicized the

261 written statements from former members as newly added evidence. However, in response, the [religious organization](#) claimed that these included multiple fabricated pieces of evidence, deliberately and systematically recording false information. Some former members testified that statements contained claims they themselves had never made. In fact, during hearings held at the district court last December, suspicions of fabrication concerning two statements submitted by MEXT came to light. As a result, in its decision, the court had no choice but to disregard these statements without offering any reasons.

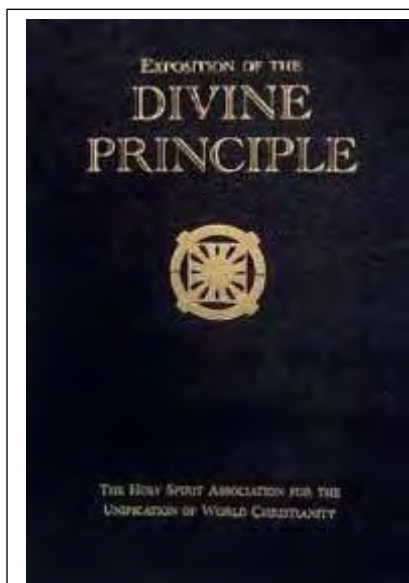


A representative example of the latter is MEXT's identification of three continuing unlawful acts ("violations of law") by [Family Federation](#) members, with "undisclosed solicitation" listed first. This referred to members allegedly "approaching individuals while concealing their religious affiliation and indoctrinating them with ideas such as original sin."

However, in its compliance declaration [See editor's note below], the [religious organization](#) had clearly instructed that when using the [Unification Principles](#) as teaching material in member-run video centers and similar facilities, "members must clearly state this from the very beginning of solicitation." Since violations could only be proven with concrete evidence, this should have been an indispensable factor in examining the continuity of unlawful acts.

The District Court's so-called "problematic circumstances of this case", which it uses as the criteria for determining whether

unlawful acts by the [religious organization](#) and its members have been established, also consist of three items. Items two and three largely follow what the Ministry of Education (MEXT) identified as "fate talk" (exploiting personal misfortunes as spiritual leverage) and "forcing the payment of unreasonably large sums of money".



The official English version of the [Unification Principles](#)

But the first item was changed to describe solicitations targeting individuals who, even before joining, "suffered from difficult personal circumstances such as complicated family environments, misfortunes, or diminished decision-making capacity due to old age." In this rephrasing, there was no mention of "undisclosed solicitation".

Content-wise, this first item merely overlaps with the second ("fate talk"), and there seems no particular reason to classify it separately. If anything, one could infer that by reducing MEXT's three alleged unlawful acts to just two, the conspicuous removal of "undisclosed solicitation" becomes less obvious. Yet, if there truly was no continuity in "undisclosed solicitation", that fact should have been clearly stated.

On this basis, the court proceeded to divide its examination of alleged unlawful acts into two periods: before and after the compliance declaration [See editor's note below], thereby addressing the very issue of continuity that MEXT had ignored.

In its review of the pre-declaration period, the court first addressed MEXT's inclusion, without verification, of (1) plaintiffs who had reached settlements in lawsuits (94 cases, 419 people, total settlement payments approx. 5.6912 billion yen - ca. 38.6 million US dollars) and (2) individuals who reported out-of-court settlements (971 people, approx. 12.5268 billion yen - ca. 84.9 million US dollars). The decision stated: "As a reasonable inference, [...] it can be recognized that unlawful acts in donation solicitations by members occurred to a number of people roughly equal to the total of (1) and (2)" (Decision, p. 76).

According to the [religious organization](#), however, many of these cases involved settlements recommended by the courts themselves. If the courts later retroactively assert that "unlawful acts by members existed at that time," it would undermine the credibility of Japan's judiciary.

See [part 1: Dissolution Case: Inflated Damages, Forced Logic](#)

See part 2: [MEXT's Legal Spin and "Dissolution at All Costs"](#)

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

Related to legal spin and dissolution: [Lawfare: State Uses Legal System in War on Faith](#)

Also related to legal spin and dissolution: [UN Report: Japan's Lawfare Against Faith Minority](#)

And also related to legal spin and dissolution: [Protesting No Transparency in Closed-Door Trial](#)

More, related to legal spin and dissolution: [Dangerous Flaws in Dissolution Order Decried](#)

Also related to legal spin and dissolution: ["Lawyers Lying and Shaming Japan" for 50 Years](#)

And also related to legal spin and dissolution: [Japan Following the Way of China](#)

And also related to legal spin and dissolution: [Japan's Dissolution Case Echoes China's Playbook](#)

More, related to legal spin and dissolution: [Media/Legal Expert: Communism Behind Persecution](#)

And more, related to legal spin and dissolution: [Militant Lawyers Dictate Government Policy](#)

More, related to legal spin and dissolution: [Collusion to Rob Minority of Its Rights](#)

And more, related to legal spin and dissolution: [State and Media Creating "Today's Non-Citizens"](#)

Still more, related to legal spin and dissolution: [Japan Copying China: State Seizure of Churches](#)

And still more, related to legal spin and dissolution: [12 Religious Freedom NGOs Denouncing Japan](#)

More, related to legal spin and dissolution: [4300 Abductions and Forcible Detentions](#)

And more, related to legal spin and dissolution: [Japan: Families Fear for Graves of Loved Ones](#)

Yet more, related to legal spin and dissolution: [Lawyers Manipulating, Coercing, Lying](#)

Also related to legal spin and dissolution: [Kishida Follows Anti-Family Federation Minister](#)

Also related to legal spin and dissolution: [Militant Lawyers Dictate Government Policy](#)

Still more, related to legal spin and dissolution: [Malicious One-Sided Government Source Selection](#)

Yet more, related to legal spin and dissolution: [Kishida's Self-Defeating Populist Decisions](#)

And still more, related to legal spin and dissolution: [Japan Urged to Make U-Turn](#)

And yet more, related to legal spin and dissolution: [Dangerous Precedent to Crush Religions](#)

And even more, related to legal spin and dissolution: [Tendentious Reporting by New York Times](#)

Still more, related to legal spin and dissolution: [Japan Criticized for Glaring Rights Violations](#)

Even more, related to legal spin and dissolution: [Japan Following the Way of China](#)

Yet more, related to legal spin and dissolution: [Japanese Communists' Final War](#)

Still more, related to legal spin and dissolution: [Political and Social Activism behind Oppression](#)

MEXT’s Legal Spin And “Dissolution At All Costs”

• September 15, 2025
• Knut Holdhus



Legal spin: Education Ministry stretched law to justify Family Federation dissolution, building their case on past violations alone



Logo of the Sekai Nippo

Tokyo, 15th September 2025 – Published as an article in the Japanese newspaper *Sekai Nippo*. Republished with permission. Translated from Japanese. *Original article.*

[Series] Order to Dissolve the Family Federation: Examining the District Court’s Decision (Part 2)

Citing Own Legal Interpretation, Education Ministry Disreards Reforms

Share:


f

▶

✉


✕

More Posts




Mother Han's Arrest And Purge Of Faith In SKorea

September 23, 2025




Critics Warn Of "Authoritarian Drift" In SKorea

September 23, 2025




Court Ignored Awkward Facts In Dissolution Case

September 21, 2025




SKorea: "When The Powerful Suppress The Innocent"

September 20, 2025




Ugly: Arrest Warrant Sought For Hak Ja Han (82)

September 19, 2025



Denying Allegations: Hak Ja Han (82) In Inquiry

September 18, 2025



Co-Founder, 82, Questioned 9 Hours By Prosecutors

September 17, 2025

Search...

Q

Categories

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

See [part 1: Dissolution Case: Inflated Damages, Forced Logic](#)

See [part 3: Court Ignored Awkward Facts in Dissolution Case](#)

See also [Demonization by Media of Faith Minority Decried](#)

The second major issue with the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT)'s request to dissolve the [Family Federation for World Peace and Unification](#) (FFWPU, formerly the [Unification Church](#)) lies in its peculiar interpretation of the dissolution requirements.

MEXT interpreted Article 81, Paragraph 1, Item 1 of the *Religious Corporations Act* – which states that dissolution can be ordered if a group has “committed acts in violation of laws and regulations that are clearly recognized as seriously harming public welfare” – as not requiring any *current* violation. Presumably because the clause ends in the past tense “committed,” the ministry went so far as to assert:

“It is sufficient to establish the existence of past legal violations, and whether subsequent improvements have been made or whether there is a risk of recurrence should not be questioned.”



Front page of 2018 English version of *Religious Corporations Act* of Japan.

This position is explicitly recorded in the *Tokyo District Court's* [decision](#) under “Summary of the Petitioner’s Claims.” However, it was absent from the document MEXT released to the press on 12th October 2023, titled “*On the Request for a Dissolution Order for the Religious Corporation Family Federation for World Peace and Unification*.” It seems unlikely that the court would misstate such a basic point of fact, so this wording must indeed reflect MEXT’s actual argument.

If so, MEXT’s stance is that the [Family Federation](#) meets the dissolution criteria simply by virtue of legal violations committed decades ago, mainly reflected in past civil court judgments. By relying on the past-tense wording “committed acts” in the statute, the ministry effectively declared from the outset that it would ignore any improvements after the group’s 2009 “Compliance Declaration”. [\[See editor’s note below\]](#) **This reveals a “dissolution at all costs” approach – a strained and forced argument.**

Did journalists who relayed MEXT’s announcement to the media understand this position? And was the *Religious Corporations Council* aware of it when it unanimously endorsed the request for dissolution as “appropriate” (per the [statement of then-Education Minister Masahito Moriyama](#) (盛山正仁 – see featured image above) on the same day)?

Professor Tsutomu Nishioka (西岡力) of the *Institute of Morality’s Moral Science Research Center* [wrote in the December 2023](#) issue of *Seiron* magazine that many religious committee members found it unbelievable that no dissent was raised, and that they even “felt fear”. A thorough review seems necessary.



In any case,



Professor **Tsutomu Nishioka**. Photo: U.S. Department of State / Wikimedia Commons. [Public domain](#) image. Cropped.

Changed the interpretation of the law: Former Prime Minister **Fumio Kishida**, here, on 14th August 2024. Photo: [首相官邸 \(PMO\) / Wikimedia Commons](#). License: [CC Attr 4.0 Int](#). Cropped

MEXT’s request for dissolution contained a serious omission. When former Prime Minister Fumio Kishida (岸田文雄) [revised the interpretation of the law](#) to include “torts under civil law” as grounds for dissolution, he

emphasized prerequisites such as the *organizational nature, maliciousness, and continuity* of the acts. Yet there was no examination of “continuity” in particular, especially after the 2009 Compliance Declaration. [\[See editor’s note below\]](#)

Send us a message

First Name *Last Name

...

Email *

Email Address

Your Message *

Submit

According to the court decision, MEXT argued in the alternative:

“Even if it were necessary to assess the situation after the Compliance Declaration [...] the measures have not proven effective, there has been no essential reform of the organization’s nature, and the conclusion would not be affected.”

But the ministry provided no concrete verification of this claim.

Instead, it submitted evidence such as 261 written statements from former believers. However, excluding the eight second-generation former believers who drafted their own statements, only 19 of the 253 first-generation former believers joined the [Family Federation](#) after the Compliance Declaration. [\[See editor’s note below\]](#) About 90% had joined more than 15 years earlier, and some had left decades ago.

Of those 19, **18 statements were not self-written but drafted by MEXT staff after interviews**, with the names later added by the supposed declarants (according to the [website](#) of the [Family Federation](#) in Japan).

Furthermore, some former members named as declarants even [filed criminal complaints](#) against ministry staff, claiming that their statements included things they had never said. This ultimately undermines public trust in a national institution.



See [part 1: Dissolution Case: Inflated Damages, Forced Logic](#)

See [part 3: Court Ignored Awkward Facts in Dissolution Case](#)

See also [Demonization by Media of Faith Minority Decried](#)

Featured image above: Japan’s Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology Masahito Moriama speaks after signing an historic agreement between the United States and Japan to advance sustainable human exploration of the Moon, 9th April 2024, at the NASA Headquarters Mary W. Jackson Building in Washington. Photo: NASA Headquarters / NASA/Bill Ingalls / Wikimedia Commons. [Public domain](#) image. Cropped

[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.]

Related to legal spin and dissolution: [Lawfare: State Uses Legal System in War on Faith](#)

Also related to legal spin and dissolution: [UN Report: Japan’s Lawfare Against Faith Minority](#)

And also related to legal spin and dissolution: [Protesting No](#)

More, related to legal spin and dissolution: [Dangerous Flaws in Dissolution Order Decried](#)

Also related to legal spin and dissolution: ["Lawyers Lying and Shaming Japan" for 50 Years](#)

And also related to legal spin and dissolution: [Japan Following the Way of China](#)

And also related to legal spin and dissolution: [Japan's Dissolution Case Echoes China's Playbook](#)

More, related to legal spin and dissolution: [Media/Legal Expert: Communism Behind Persecution](#)

And more, related to legal spin and dissolution: [Militant Lawyers Dictate Government Policy](#)

More, related to legal spin and dissolution: [Collusion to Rob Minority of Its Rights](#)

And more, related to legal spin and dissolution: [State and Media Creating "Today's Non-Citizens"](#)

Still more, related to legal spin and dissolution: [Japan Copying China: State Seizure of Churches](#)

And still more, related to legal spin and dissolution: [12 Religious Freedom NGOs Denouncing Japan](#)

More, related to legal spin and dissolution: [4300 Abductions and Forcible Detentions](#)

And more, related to legal spin and dissolution: [Japan: Families Fear for Graves of Loved Ones](#)

Yet more, related to legal spin and dissolution: [Lawyers Manipulating, Coercing, Lying](#)

Also related to legal spin and dissolution: [Kishida Follows Anti-Family Federation Minister](#)

Also related to legal spin and dissolution: [Militant Lawyers Dictate Government Policy](#)

Still more, related to legal spin and dissolution: [Malicious One-Sided Government Source Selection](#)

Yet more, related to legal spin and dissolution: [Kishida's Self-Defeating Populist Decisions](#)

And still more, related to legal spin and dissolution: [Japan Urged to Make U-Turn](#)

And yet more, related to legal spin and dissolution: [Dangerous Precedent to Crush Religions](#)

And even more, related to legal spin and dissolution: [Tendentious Reporting by New York Times](#)

Still more, related to legal spin and dissolution: [Japan Criticized for Glaring Rights Violations](#)

Even more, related to legal spin and dissolution: [Japan Following the Way of China](#)

Yet more, related to legal spin and dissolution: [Japanese Communists' Final War](#)

Still more, related to legal spin and dissolution: [Political and Social Activism behind Oppression](#)

First Name

Last Name

Your Email Address

Subscribe

Follow us



☐

By clicking the button below you agree to our

privacy policy and to receive our newsletter.

