

FFWPU Europe and the Middle East: Politics Fueled Japan's Attack on Family Federation

Knut Holdhus
October 24, 2025



Japanese Senator Satoshi Hamada speaking on his X channel on October 25, 2025



Dr. Massimo Introvigne, here speaking at the UN Office at Geneva on June 15. 2025

The political genesis of Japan's attack on religious minority can be traced to extreme leftwing group with clear links to Communist and pro-China factions

Dr. Massimo Introvigne penned an article published in [Bitter Winter](#), the leading online magazine for human rights and religious freedom, on 21st October 2025, titled "[Attorney Masaki Kito's NHK Party Accusations Reignite Debate Over Japan's Anti-Family Federation Campaign](#)".

The Italian scholar basically argues that Japan's campaign against the [Family Federation](#) cannot be divorced from its political origins. Hostile activist attorney Masaki Kito's recent revival of accusations is simply a continuation of an old ideological battle. The controversy, therefore, offers a test case for how democratic societies balance religious liberty, historical truth, and political partisanship - and whether Japan can confront its own history of

politically driven "anti-cult" crusades.

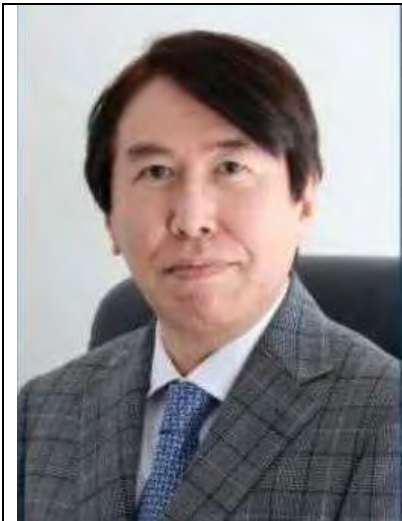
Introvigne reports how Japan in recent weeks has seen a renewed flash-point in the debate surrounding the campaign against the [religious movement](#) formerly known as the [Unification Church](#) - since 2015, called the [Family Federation for World Peace and Unification](#).

Attorney Masaki Kito (紀藤正樹) - known for his activism against new religious movements - publicly accused the small political party called the NHK Party of having close organizational ties with the [Family Federation](#), and in turn implicated the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) in continuing such connections.

Kito's point is that the LDP may claim to have severed its links with the [Family Federation](#) in the aftermath of the 2022 assassination of former Prime Minister Shinzō Abe (安倍晋三), yet its alliance with the NHK Party betrays that promise.

On the other side, the NHK Party and former Diet member Satoshi Hamada (浜田聡) - who has publicly criticized anti-religious-liberty measures directed at the [Family Federation](#) - responded forcefully on

social media, denying Kito's claim and defending their independence. Kito in turn charged Hamada with being "so easily deceived by the [Family Federation](#)'s organisational propaganda," and recalled that, back in the 1980s, some 300 lawyers purportedly from across Japan joined what he called "a bipartisan effort" to defend "victims" of what Kito termed "spiritual sales" by the [Family Federation](#).



Persuaded the government: Masaki Kito, one of the hostile lawyers of National Network of Lawyers Against Spiritual Sales and Nationwide Unification Church Damage Countermeasures Legal Team. He worked in league with faith-breakers forcing believers into lawsuits and exploiting them to fit narrative: One of the architects of new law and advisor to the Japanese authorities



Former House of Councillors member for the NHK Party Satoshi Hamada. here speaking on January 26, 2025



Masumi Fukuda, here Jan. 20, 2024

Yet Dr. Introvigne highlights a challenge to this commonly accepted narrative. Drawing on [investigative work](#) by journalist Masumi Fukuda (福田ますみ), the [article](#) argues that the campaign against the [Family Federation](#) was not simply a neutral consumer-protection initiative supported across the political spectrum. Rather, it is shown to have had strong political roots in left-wing and pro-China networks. According to Fukuda's findings, the original "National Network of Lawyers Against Spiritual Sales" emerged not as a bipartisan victims' group but from within the Socialist Party's Social, Cultural and Legal Center - which had historical links to Communist and pro-China factions.

Indeed, the [Church](#)'s support via its own affiliate, the International Federation for Victory Over Communism (IFVOC), for electoral conservative forces and for anti-espionage legislation had

drawn the ire of these left-wing networks.

According to the [Bitter Winter article](#), internal documents uncovered by Fukuda include a 1987 piece in the Center's newsletter in which attorney Hiroshi Yamaguchi (山口広) asserted that money raised through "spiritual sales" by the [Unification Church](#) funded IFVOC's push for a national anti-spy law.



Hiroshi Yamaguchi, activist leftwing lawyer and founder and leading member of National Network of Lawyers Against Spiritual Sales (NNLASS)

Two weeks later, Yamaguchi, alongside attorneys Kazuo Ito (伊藤和夫) and Yasushi Higashizawa (東澤靖), held a press conference launching the "Lawyers' Network for Relief of Damages Caused by Spiritual Sales" (a precursor to the later National Network).

Notably, some of these attorneys were affiliated with explicitly left-wing organisations. Although Yamaguchi told mainstream media that the network simply wanted to "help victims", in a Socialist-Party newspaper he admitted the goal was to persuade the Ministry of Education (MEXT) to revoke the [Family Federation](#)'s religious-corporation status.

Masumi Fukuda's research concludes that the campaign's framing as consumer protection was a veneer: the deeper strategic objective was to dismantle the [Family Federation](#) because of its anti-Communist stance and its [capacity to mobilize electorally](#) for conservative causes. The lawyers' network also [benefitted from lawsuits](#) initiated by de-programmed former members - some of whom had been subject to forced de-conversion tactics - a factor that further tied the network of lawyers to [politically-driven litigation](#).

Against this backdrop, Kito's recent claims - though framed as exposing unethical alliances - are interpreted by Introvigne as perpetuating a sanitized and simplified version of history. By portraying the

campaign against the [Family Federation](#) as well-meaning and apolitical, they obscure the ideological and Cold-War-era conflicts that underpinned it. In attacking the NHK Party and Hamada, Kito is seen to be using typical "anti-cult" rhetoric to mask a continuation of left-wing ideological contestation rather than addressing the broader question of religious freedom, political bias and historical transparency in Japan.

In short, the [article](#) argues, the current controversy not only casts doubt on the credibility of Kito's allegations, but reopens the need for a more honest, historically informed discussion about how strategies against new religious movements in Japan have been influenced by political motives.

Text: Knut Holdhus, editor

Related to Japan's attack on Family Federation: [Japan Following the Way of China](#)

Also related to Japan's attack on Family Federation: [Warning of Threat from CCP Fearing Korean Unity](#)

And also related to Japan's attack on Family Federation: [Japan's Dissolution Case Echoes China's Playbook](#)

Also related to Japan's attack on Family Federation: [Communists of China Exploiting Assassination](#)

And also related to Japan's attack on Family Federation: ["Lawyers Lying and Shaming Japan" for 50 Years](#)

More, related to Japan's attack on Family Federation: [Lawfare: State Uses Legal System in War on Faith](#)

Also related to Japan's attack on Family Federation: [Media/Legal Expert: Communism Behind Persecution](#)

And more, related to Japan's attack on Family Federation: [Militant Lawyers Dictate Government Policy](#)

And more, related to Japan's attack on Family Federation: [Media Helping Terrorist Reach His Goal](#)

Related to Japan's attack on Family Federation: [Kishida Administration Giving in to Terrorism](#)

And more, related to Japan's attack on Family Federation: [12 Religious Freedom NGOs Denouncing Japan](#)

Yet more, related to Japan's attack on Family Federation: [Japanese Communists' Final War](#)

Still more, related to Japan's attack on Family Federation: [Political and Social Activism behind Oppression](#)

Yet more, related to Japan's attack on Family Federation: [State and Media Creating "Today's Non-Citizens"](#)

Still more, related to Japan's attack on Family Federation: [Japan Criticized for Glaring Rights Violations](#)

And yet more, related to Japan's attack on Family Federation: [Opposition Inciting Regime to Excessive Steps](#)

And still more, related to Japan's attack on Family Federation: [Journalist Reveals Ugly Leftwing Conspiracy](#)

And even more, related to Japan's attack on Family Federation: [Gingrich: Kishida Joining Communist Campaign](#)

Yet more, related to Japan's attack on Family Federation: [The 3 Enemies of Religious Liberty](#)

Still more, related to Japan's attack on Family Federation: [Lawyer Exposes Dirty Leftwing Plot](#)

And yet more, related to Japan's attack on Family Federation: [Inhuman Government-Supported Mass Deprogramming](#)

And still more, related to Japan's attack on Family Federation: [Bias: No Right to Respond for Religious Minority](#)

And even more, related to Japan's attack on Family Federation: [Collusion to Rob Minority of Its Rights](#)

And still more, related to Japan's attack on Family Federation: [New Admission by Top Japanese Communist](#)

And yet more, related to Japan's attack on Family Federation: [Two European Scholars Warning Japan](#)

See also
[Politics](#)
[Fueled](#)
[Japan's](#)
[Attack on](#)
[Federation](#)

On 15th October, the *Mainichi Shimbun* [one of Japan's leading newspapers] announced in its newsletter that it would begin a feature series on the trial of the assassination of former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe (安倍晋三). In doing so, it described the incident as having “social justification” (社会的意義) [See editor's note below]. After this wording sparked outrage online, particularly on X (formerly Twitter), the paper issued an apology on 17th October, calling the phrase “an inappropriate expression”.

In the July 2022 assassination of Abe, suspect Tetsuya Yamagami (山上徹也) has been indicted on charges including murder and violation of the firearms and swords law. The pretrial procedures are ongoing, and the first hearing is scheduled for 28th October at the *Nara District Court*. The verdict is expected in January 2026.

In its newsletter, *Mainichi* announced that it would launch a serialized feature titled “The Bullet” (凶弾) in late October. It explained:



The logo of the *Mainichi Shimbun*. *Public domain image*

“The incident drew attention to issues such as the illegal donation solicitations by the former [Unification Church](#) and the suffering of ‘second-generation believers’ whose parents’ faith caused them hardship. This ultimately led to a [dissolution order](#) against the [organization](#). We will take another look at the *social justification* for the incident.”

Following this announcement, fierce criticism poured in from politicians, commentators, and ordinary users, with comments such as “Are you justifying murder?” and “You’re promoting terrorism.” As of 3 p.m. on the 17th, total engagement – likes, shares, and comments – had exceeded 210,000.



Islamic studies scholar Akari Iiyama (飯山陽), here campaigning in Tokyo in April 2024. Photo: *Sekai Nippo*

On October 15, Islamic studies scholar Akari Iiyama (飯山陽), who is running for the Tokyo 15th district by-election with the *Japan Conservative Party*, posted on X:

“It seems the *Mainichi Shimbun* is launching a series later this month claiming there was ‘social justification’ for Abe’s assassination.”

Her post quickly went viral. By 17th October, X had listed the

topic under its “Today’s News” section, titled

“**Mainichi Shimbun Faces Backlash Over Abe Assassination Series: Accusations of Terrorism Endorsement Flood In.**”

It summarized:

“The incident involved Tetsuya Yamagami, who, motivated by resentment toward the [Unification Church](#), shot and killed Abe with a homemade gun. The planned series has sparked debate over media ethics and reporting attitudes.”

As of 6 p.m. that day, there were more than 27,000 posts on the topic.

Literary critic Eitaro Ogawa (小川栄太郎) commented, “I’m too enraged for words.”

Writer and journalist Takamasa Kadota (門田隆将) said, “I feel that this company has completely lost its reason to exist.”

Other harsh comments included: “A



Send us a message

First Name * Last Name



Email *

Email Address

Your Message *

Submit

terrorism-glorifying newspaper," "Society would be better off without *Mainichi Shimbun*," and "It was simply a crime – nothing more, nothing less."

On 17th October, *Mainichi Shimbun* issued an apology:

"In the introduction to the feature series 'The Bullet' mentioned in our newsletter sent on the 15th, we used the phrase 'the social justification of the incident.' This was an inappropriate expression. We apologize. We will correct and resend it."



Eitaro Ogawa, here during a [symposium in Nagoya](#) 19th October 2025. Screenshot from video by Association of Second-Generation Members for Protecting the Human Rights of Believers

In the revised introduction, the wording was changed to:

"We will take another look at the impact the incident had on society."

According to *Kōjien* (a major Japanese dictionary),

"igi" (意義, significance) is defined as "the value or importance something holds in relation to other things."

The *Practical Japanese Expression Dictionary* explains it as

"something that is rational and worth doing" or "something that has inherent value."

See also [Politics Fueled Japan's Attack on Federation](#)

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](#)

[Editor's note: The Japanese expression "社会的意義"(shakaiteki igi) literally means "social significance". 意義 (igi) = meaning, significance, value, or importance. But contextually, it often implies something closer to "something that has value or justifiable importance in society." It tends to carry a **positive or purposeful nuance** – not just a neutral observation.

In Japanese public discourse, when people say: 「この事件には社会的意義がある」 ("This incident has social significance"), it often implies "This event was *meaningful* for society," or "This act had a *justifiable purpose or impact* in a social sense."

It can sound like approval or moral validation, even if that wasn't intended.

So when **Mainichi Shimbun** used it to describe the **assassination of former PM Abe**, readers interpreted it as "The assassination had social value or justification." That felt deeply inappropriate, given the act was a murder.]

Related to Abe killing called justified: [Abe Murder 3-Year Trial Delay: Calls for Truth](#)

Also related to Abe killing called justified: [Lone-Wolf Theory Disputed in Abe Assassination](#)

Also related to Abe killing called justified: ["Organized Terrorism, Not Lone Wolf, Killed Abe"](#)

Also related to Abe killing called justified: [Media Helping Terrorist Reach His Goal](#)

Also related to Abe killing called justified: [Kishida Administration Giving in to Terrorism](#)

And also related to Abe killing called justified: [Kishida Has Opened Can of Worms](#)

More, related to Abe killing called justified: [Aiding Terrorist, Media Bashes Minority Religion](#)

And more, related to Abe killing called justified: [Bizarre Atlantic Report Condoning Terror](#)

Still more, related to Abe killing called justified: [Japan Times: Warning of Terror](#)

Yet more, related to Abe killing called justified: [Did constant hate-mongering cause terror?](#)

Even more, related to Abe killing called justified: [Inhuman Government-Supported Mass Deprogramming](#)

More, related to Abe killing called justified: [Collusion to Rob Minority of Its Rights](#)

And more, related to Abe killing called justified: [State and Media Creating "Today's Non-Citizens"](#)

Still more, related to Abe killing called justified: [Japan Criticized for Glaring Rights Violations](#)

Even more, related to Abe killing called justified: [Japan Following the Way of China](#)

And still more, related to Abe killing called justified: [12 Religious Freedom NGOs Denouncing Japan](#)

And even more, related to Abe killing called justified: [Conference on Religious Freedom Violations](#)

Still more, related to Abe killing called justified: [Japan: Threat to Religious Freedom](#)

Even more, related to Abe killing called justified: [Call to End Witch Hunt](#)

More, related to Abe killing called justified: [Government's Foul Play Pointed Out](#)

More, related to Abe killing called justified: [Japan: 4300 Abductions and Forcible Detentions](#)

And more, related to Abe killing called justified: [Illegalities of Activist Lawyers Exposed](#)

Yet more, related to Abe killing called justified: [Lawyers Manipulating, Coercing, Lying](#)

Still more, related to Abe killing called justified: [Biased Information from Leftwing Lawyers](#)

Even more, related to Abe killing called justified: [Dangerous Precedent to Crush Religions](#)

Even more, related to Abe killing called justified: [Kyodo News: 100s of Rights Violations Claimed](#)

Even more, related to Abe killing called justified: [Fabricated Torts Part of Wily Strategy in Japan](#)

« Previous SKorean Court's Sharp Criticis... Politics Fueled Japan's Attack ... Next »