

## FFWPU Europe and Middle East: Japanese Politician's Flawed Reasoning for Backing Torts

Knut Holdhus  
May 31, 2026



*Hiroshi Kurose: Born in 1951 in Hiroshima Prefecture. Completed a master's program in legal philosophy at the Graduate School of Law, Waseda University, in 1975. He graduated from Tokyo Theological University in 1978, completed advanced studies at Seinan Gakuin University's Faculty of Theology in 1979, and graduated from the Zurich Baptist Seminary in 1984. He currently serves as pastor of Tokyo West Baptist Church. His major publications include *A New Development of Christianity* (Good Time Publishing)*



**Religious leader points out faulty reasoning of politician with "anti-cult" viewpoints who served as government advisor urging it to redefine the rules and include civil law violations**

Tokyo, 30th May 2026 - Published as an article in the Japanese newspaper [Sekai Nippo](#). Republished with permission. Translated from Japanese. [Original article](#).

Part 1a of opinion contribution by Hiroshi Kurose, Pastor of Tokyo West Baptist Church

"It Is Rash to Conclude That 'Laws and Regulations' Includes the Civil Code"

Response to Shiori Yamao in the June Issue of Monthly Hanada

by Hiroshi Kurose, Pastor of Tokyo West Baptist Church

On 4th March 2026, the Tokyo High Court [upheld the dissolution order](#) against the [Family Federation for World Peace and Unification](#) (formerly the [Unification Church](#)). It had previously been [issued by the district court](#). [Liquidators](#) are currently seizing and liquidating the [organization's assets and property](#).

See also [Warning of Dangerous Precedent: "Like Inquisition"](#)

Concerning this matter, I felt considerable discomfort with remarks made by attorney and former House of Representatives member Shiori Yamao (山尾志桜里) and literary critic Eitaro Ogawa (小川榮太郎), chairman of the Japan Institute for Peace Studies, in their dialogue published in the June 2026 issue of Monthly Hanada, titled: "Great Clash Debate Series 4: Dissolution of the Former Unification Church - What Was Actually Judged?"

Accordingly, I would like to summarize my objections to Yamao's arguments (along with several other points).



*Eitaro Ogawa, here on 19th Oct. 2025*



*The front cover page of the June 2026 issue of Monthly Hanada*

### First Issue: Does "Laws and Regulations" Include the Civil Code?

The first issue concerns Yamao's statement on page 44 of the magazine:

"The provision for dissolution orders in the Religious Corporations Act was established in 1951. At the time of enactment, the government understood the term 'laws and regulations' as a broad concept encompassing laws and ordinances. ... If it were intended to be limited to criminal law violations, the

statute would have explicitly stated so. Since it deliberately uses the term 'laws and regulations,' the natural reading is that it includes all laws and ordinances - not only criminal law but also civil law."



*Vehemently opposed to the [Family Federation](#): Shiori Yamao, née Kanno, here in 2025. She is a former member of the Japanese House of Representatives, for the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) 2014-2016, the Democratic Party (DP) 2016-2017, Constitutional Democratic Party (CDP) 2017-2020, and the Democratic Party for the People (DPP) 2020-2021. She became well-known for her fierce opposition to former prime minister Shinzo Abe*

The question is whether, prior to the dissolution order against the [Family Federation](#), it was generally understood that the interpretation of "laws and regulations" included the Civil Code.

Yamao argues that because the Religious Corporations Act uses the expression "laws and regulations", which includes civil law, it is only natural that violations of civil law can serve as grounds for a dissolution order.

This explanation is misleading.

The Religious Corporations Act was enacted about seventy years ago. Naturally, the term "laws and regulations" used at that time included the Civil Code, but it was also an extremely broad term encompassing cabinet orders and local ordinances.

Yet Yamao has not even attempted to investigate why, throughout the subsequent history of the law, the interpretation that civil-law violations could serve as grounds for dissolution orders was never adopted.

The Religious Corporations Act was created primarily to grant legal personality to religious organizations. Accordingly, dissolution orders (Article 81) were not among its principal objectives, as is evident from the fact that they appear in Chapter 9, "Supplementary Provisions."

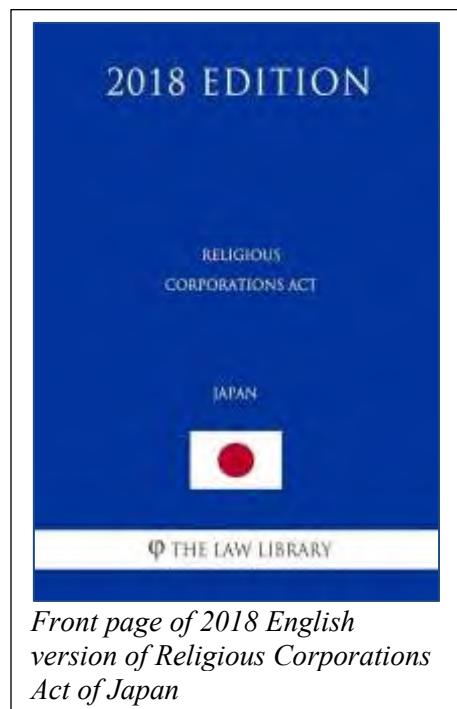
Why, then, were dissolution orders included?

Primarily because there existed religious corporations that had ceased activities. The provision was intended to enable the dissolution of such inactive entities lacking real substance. That is likely why the lawmakers chose the extremely broad term "laws and regulations" as a basis for dissolution.

However, because this provision was not meant to be casually applied to active religious corporations, strict limiting conditions such as "significantly" and "clearly" were attached as safeguards against excessive use of dissolution orders.

The first dissolution order against a religious corporation based on violations of laws and regulations was the 1996 dissolution order against Aum Shinrikyo [See editor's note below].

That case was fundamentally different from the type of dissolution originally contemplated by the Religious Corporations Act. One might question whether legislation such as the Religious Corporations Act was truly adequate for dealing with such a situation, but perhaps no alternative existed.



Application of the Subversive Activities Prevention Act was also considered. Ultimately, however, dissolution proceeded under the Religious Corporations Act, and the Supreme Court ruled that doing so did not violate freedom of religion.

Even afterward, no dissolution orders were issued for civil-law violations.

Given the statutory language concerning "violations of laws and regulations", one might have expected numerous dissolution orders, yet in reality there were none. Why was that?

Likewise, why have many legal interpreters maintained that civil-law torts do not qualify as grounds for dissolution orders?

Ignoring those interpretations and focusing solely on the words "laws and regulations" in order to argue that civil law should be included only in the case of the former [Unification Church](#) seems excessively simplistic.

See also [Warning of Dangerous Precedent: "Like Inquisition"](#)

---

To be continued. Part 1b coming soon.

**[Editor's note:** Aum Shinrikyo, a Buddhist new religious movement founded in 1984 by Shoko Asahara, preaching apocalyptic prophecies. It was dissolved in 1996 due to its leaders' criminal acts, including the Tokyo subway sarin gas attack in 1995 and the Matsumoto sarin incident in 1994.]

Related to flawed reasoning of politician: Lawfare: State Uses Legal System in War on Faith

More, related to flawed reasoning of politician: Scholar Questions Secrecy in Dissolution Case

And more, related to flawed reasoning of politician: Shocked Author: "Japan Ignores Basics of Justice"

Still more, related to flawed reasoning of politician: Legal Inconsistencies A Blow to Democracy

Even more, related to flawed reasoning of politician: Japan: Court Accused of Using Speculation

Also related to flawed reasoning of politician: MEXT's Legal Spin and "Dissolution at All Costs"

Also related to flawed reasoning of politician: UN Report: Japan's Lawfare Against Faith Minority

And also related to flawed reasoning of politician: Protesting No Transparency in Closed-Door Trial

More, related to flawed reasoning of politician: Dangerous Flaws in Dissolution Order Decried

Also related to flawed reasoning of politician: "Lawyers Lying and Shaming Japan" for 50 Years

And also related to flawed reasoning of politician: Japan Following the Way of China

And also related to flawed reasoning of politician: Japan's Dissolution Case Echoes China's Playbook

More, related to flawed reasoning of politician: Media/Legal Expert: Communism Behind Persecution

And more, related to flawed reasoning of politician: Militant Lawyers Dictate Government Policy

More, related to flawed reasoning of politician: Collusion to Rob Minority of Its Rights

And more, related to flawed reasoning of politician: State and Media Creating "Today's Non-Citizens"

Still more, related to flawed reasoning of politician: Japan Copying China: State Seizure of Churches

And still more, related to flawed reasoning of politician: 12 Religious Freedom NGOs Denouncing Japan

More, related to flawed reasoning of politician: 4300 Abductions and Forcible Detentions

And more, related to flawed reasoning of politician: Japan: Families Fear for Graves of Loved Ones

Yet more, related to flawed reasoning of politician: Lawyers Manipulating, Coercing, Lying

Also related to flawed reasoning of politician: Kishida Follows Anti-Family Federation Minister

Also related to flawed reasoning of politician: Militant Lawyers Dictate Government Policy

Still more, related to flawed reasoning of politician: Malicious One-Sided Government Source Selection

And still more, related to flawed reasoning of politician: Japan Urged to Make U-Turn

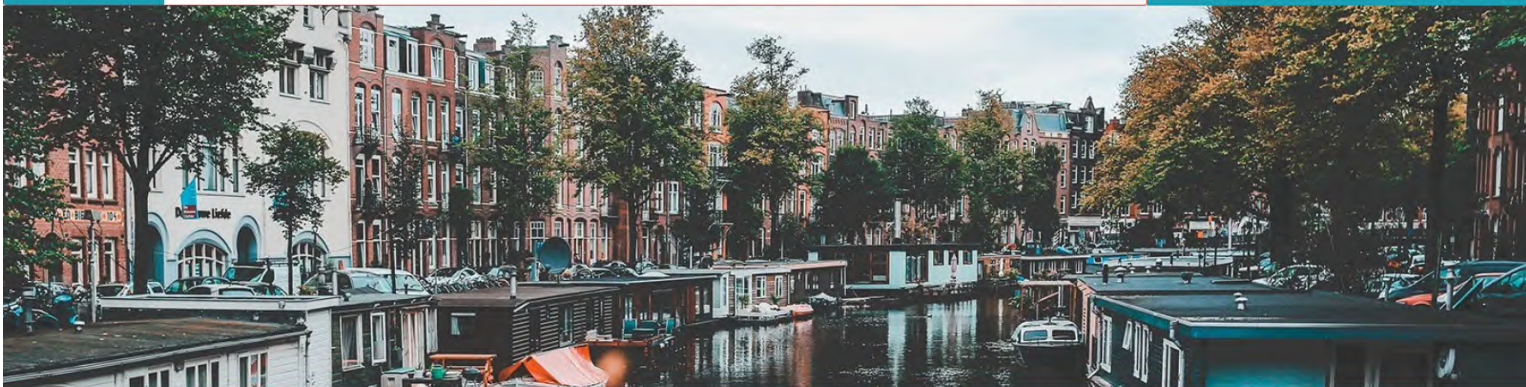
And yet more, related to flawed reasoning of politician: Dangerous Precedent to Crush Religions

Even more, related to flawed reasoning of politician backing torts: Japan Following the Way of China

Yet more, related to flawed reasoning of politician backing torts: Japanese Communists' Final War

Still more, related to flawed reasoning of politician backing torts: Political and Social Activism behind Oppression

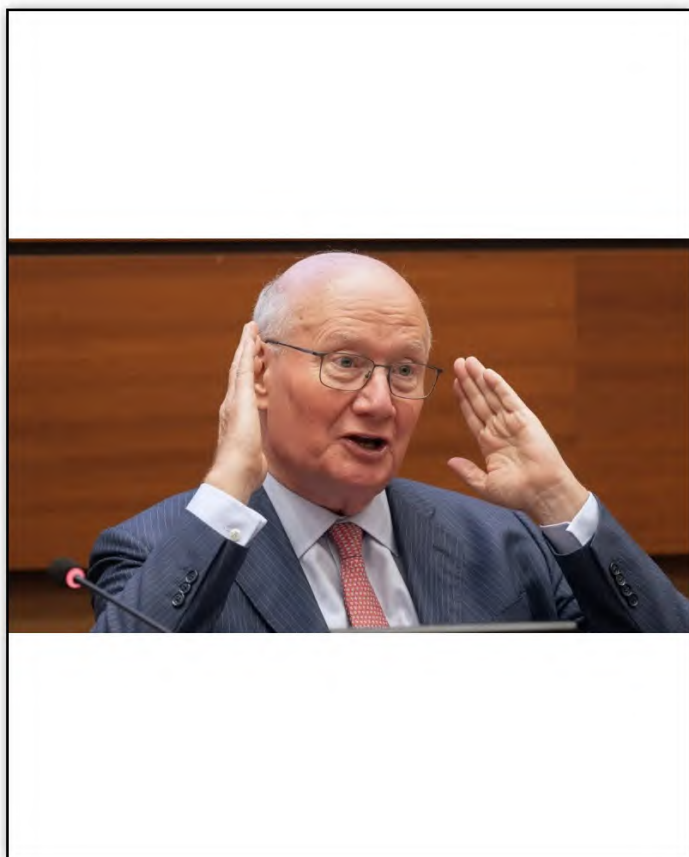
Still more, related to flawed reasoning of politician backing torts: Dissolution Case: Rule of Law on Trial 4th March



# Settlements Used As Evidence Of Wrongdoing

May 27, 2026 • The News Desk

Share:



When settlements become evidence: A troubling legal shift in Japan and dangerous precedent for any religious community

Published in *Bitter Winter*

## More Posts



Flawed Reasoning Of A Politician Backing Torts

May 31, 2026



Architect Of Seongnam Ilhwa's Amazing Success

May 30, 2026



Court Extension Of Mother Han's Medical Release

May 29, 2026



Believers' Last Hope For Fair Trial Crushed

May 28, 2026



Was The Appointment Of Hostile Judge Deliberate?

May 26, 2026



Civil Lawsuits As Weapons Against Religion

May 25, 2026



Modern

on 28<sup>th</sup> March 2026, an [article](#) by sociologist of religion Massimo Introvigne examines the legal reasoning behind the [Tokyo High Court's endorsement](#) of the dissolution of the [Family Federation for World Peace and Unification](#). The [article](#) pays particular attention to accusations surrounding “spiritual sales” and substantial donations, exploring the courts' contention that such practices reflected psychological manipulation of believers.

See [part 1 of the opinion piece: Civil Lawsuits as Weapons Against Religion](#)

See also [Flawed Reasoning of a Politician Backing Torts](#)

The [article](#) criticizes both the Supreme Court and the High Court for failing to explain convincingly why decades of established legal interpretation had suddenly been abandoned. Dr. Introvigne suggests that the reinterpretation of Japan's *Religious Corporation Act* appears specifically designed to target the [Family Federation](#). He further warns that such a precedent could affect many other religious communities in Japan, including organizations never accused of criminal activity but potentially vulnerable to civil lawsuits.



Reverend Shindō Mizuta (水田真道), chief priest of Kongo-ji Temple since 2014. Photo (2025): Sekai Nippo

Reverend Shindō Mizuta (水田真道), chief priest of Kongo-ji Temple, a Buddhist leader reportedly warned that the new interpretation threatens all religions and temples. The concern is that if civil claims become sufficient for dissolution, any unpopular religious movement might eventually face similar legal risks.

Another important issue discussed in the [article](#) concerns the High Court's treatment of settlements. Alongside civil judgments, the

court relied heavily on cases resolved through negotiated agreements. Dr. Introvigne argues that this approach is fundamentally flawed because settlements are not admissions of guilt. In legal practice, parties frequently settle disputes simply to avoid lengthy, expensive, or unpredictable litigation.

The [article](#) stresses that equating settlements with proof of wrongdoing undermines basic legal principles. It may also discourage religious organizations and other institutions from settling disputes in the future, since any compromise could later be interpreted as evidence of guilt in separate proceedings.

The High Court also addressed the [Family Federation's](#) argument that many plaintiffs in these cases were former members who had undergone deprogramming. The [religious organization](#) maintained that “anti-cult” lawyers and hostile Christian activists had encouraged parents to abduct and confine believers in attempts to force them to renounce their faith. According to the [Family Federation](#), some



Logo of *Bitter Winter*, the world's leading online magazine on religious liberty and human rights.



Society: Deep Moral And Spiritual Crisis

May 24, 2026

Search...



Categories

Send us a message

First Name \* Last Name

Email \*

Email Address

Your Message \*

Submit

to the [Family Federation](#), some of these former members later became plaintiffs in lawsuits and settlements after developing deep hostility toward the [organization](#).



*Dr. Hirohisa Koide, victim of kidnapping, forced detention, and attempted faith-breaking. Was pressured to sue the [Unification Church](#) after his coercive faith-breaking ordeal. Photo: [FFWPU](#)*

Dr. Introvigne notes that there are documented cases in which former believers allegedly faced pressure to sue the [faith organization](#) after coercive faith-breaking [[See editor's note 1 below](#)] experiences. Entire books and studies, he explains, have examined the relationship between faith-breaking (deprogramming), apostates [[See editor's note 2 below](#)], and “anti-cult” litigation.

The High Court rejected the [Family Federation](#)’s objections, arguing that if the plaintiffs’ claims truly lacked credibility, the [religious organization](#) would not have agreed to settlements. For the court, the very existence of settlements suggested that some wrongdoing must have occurred.

The [article](#) sharply criticizes this reasoning. Dr. Introvigne contends that settlements cannot reasonably be interpreted as confessions of guilt, especially in an environment where the [Federation](#) believed it faced widespread public hostility and judicial prejudice. In such circumstances, he argues, the [organization](#) may have considered settlement the only practical option regardless of whether allegations were accurate.

Ultimately, the [article](#) presents the High Court decision as evidence of a troubling shift in Japanese legal standards concerning religion. The [Family Federation](#) was dissolved despite the absence of criminal convictions against the [religious corporation](#) itself. Longstanding interpretations of the law were set aside, and civil judgments together with settlements were treated as sufficient proof of misconduct.

For Dr. Introvigne, this development raises broader questions extending far beyond one persecuted [religious movement](#). The case touches on the limits of state power, the protection of minority religions, and the danger that unpopular faiths may become vulnerable to political pressure and shifting public opinion. Whether one agrees or disagrees with the [Family Federation](#)’s theology or past practices, the [article](#) argues that the precedent established by the *Tokyo High Court* deserves careful scrutiny from anyone concerned with religious liberty and due process.

The debate therefore is not simply about donations or “spiritual sales” – a term coined by hostile activist lawyers. It concerns the standards by which democratic societies determine when a religious organization has crossed the line from protected religious activity into legally punishable misconduct. In the view presented by Dr. Introvigne, the [Tokyo High Court's decision](#) risks lowering that threshold in ways that may eventually affect many religious communities beyond the [Family Federation](#) itself.

See [part 1](#) of the opinion piece: [Civil Lawsuits as Weapons Against Religion](#)

See also [Flawed Reasoning of a Politician Backing Torts](#)

**Text:** *Knut Holdhus, editor*

**Featured image** above: *Dr. Massimo Introvigne, an Italian scholar specializing in the sociology of religion. He founded and serves as managing director of the Center for Studies on New Religions, an international network of academics focused on the study of new religious movements. He has authored around 70 books and over 100 scholarly articles in this field. Here, speaking in Geneva, Switzerland 16th June 2025. Screenshot from video by UPF. Image resolution improved by Grok x41*

**[Editor's note 1: Coercive faith-breaking**

("deprogramming") in Japan refers to the practice of coercively attempting to separate individuals from their religious affiliations or beliefs, typically through intervention by family members, professional faith-breakers (deprogrammers) or organizations hostile to new religious movements (NRMs). This phenomenon often targets members of such movements, e.g. relatively large faiths like the [Family Federation](#) or Jehovah's Witnesses, but also smaller groups like Happy Science (Kōfuku no Kagaku) and other newer religious movements.



**Also subject to faith-breaking attempts:** *Members of Soka Gakkai. Here students belonging to the faith in 2001. Photo: Wikimedia Commons. License: [CC ASA 3.0 Unp](#). Cropped*

However, also Soka Gakkai, a Buddhist-based lay organization with more than 8 million Japanese members, and affiliated with Nichiren Buddhism, has occasionally been subject to faith-breaking attempts.

The practice gained attention in the latter half of the 20th century, particularly in the 1980s and 1990s. Parents or concerned family members often hired faith-breakers who taught them how to abduct and forcibly detain believers. Almost all such cases involved confining the individual believer and cutting him or her off from the religious community. During the confinement, the believer was subjected to intense questioning or indoctrination designed to break his or her faith. The aim was to "rescue" the person from what the family often had been tricked by faith-breakers or lawyers to regard as harmful influence from the religious organization.

Critics of forced de-conversion argue that it violates fundamental human rights, including freedom of thought, religion, and association. Reports of psychological trauma and accusations of unlawful detention have sparked debates over its ethical and legal implications. In response, some religious groups, particularly NRMs, have lobbied for greater protections against such practices.

Japanese courts have been inconsistent in addressing cases of coercive faith-breaking. While some verdicts have condemned the practice as illegal detention, others have been more lenient, citing family concerns about "mental health" or alleged "exploitation" as mitigating factors.]

**[Editor's note 2: Apostates** here refer not just to someone who have left the religion, but who are now being used to **undermine** the group. Apostates in Japan are often being used by hostile and cynical lawyers for malicious reasons to cause harm to the faith they were forced out of, when they had their faith broken coercively by so-called faith-breakers (deprogrammers), working in league with activist lawyers.]

**Related to settlements used as evidence:** [Lawfare: State Uses Legal System in War on Faith](#)

*More, related to settlements used as evidence:* [Scholar Questions Secrecy in Dissolution Case](#)

*And more, related to settlements used as evidence:* [Shocked Author: "Japan Ignores Basics of Justice"](#)

*Still more, related to settlements used as evidence:* [Legal Inconsistencies A Blow to Democracy](#)

[Inconsistencies A Blow to Democracy](#)

Even more, related to settlements used as evidence: [Japan: Court Accused of Using Speculation](#)

Also related to settlements used as evidence: [MEXT's Legal Spin and "Dissolution at All Costs"](#)

Also related to settlements used as evidence: [UN Report: Japan's Lawfare Against Faith Minority](#)

And also related to settlements used as evidence: [Protesting No Transparency in Closed-Door Trial](#)

More, related to settlements used as evidence: [Dangerous Flaws in Dissolution Order Decried](#)

Also related to settlements used as evidence: ["Lawyers Lying and Shaming Japan" for 50 Years](#)

And also related to settlements used as evidence: [Japan Following the Way of China](#)

And also related to settlements used as evidence: [Japan's Dissolution Case Echoes China's Playbook](#)

More, related to settlements used as evidence: [Media/Legal Expert: Communism Behind Persecution](#)

And more, related to settlements used as evidence: [Militant Lawyers Dictate Government Policy](#)

More, related to settlements used as evidence: [Collusion to Rob Minority of Its Rights](#)

And more, related to settlements used as evidence: [State and Media Creating "Today's Non-Citizens"](#)

Still more, related to settlements used as evidence: [Japan Copying China: State Seizure of Churches](#)

And still more, related to settlements used as evidence: [12 Religious Freedom NGOs Denouncing Japan](#)

More, related to settlements used as evidence: [4300 Abductions and Forcible Detentions](#)

And more, related to settlements used as evidence: [Japan: Families Fear for Graves of Loved Ones](#)

Yet more, related to settlements used as evidence: [Lawyers Manipulating, Coercing, Lying](#)

Also related to settlements used as evidence: [Kishida Follows Anti-Family Federation Minister](#)

Also related to settlements used as evidence: [Militant Lawyers Dictate Government Policy](#)

Still more, related to settlements used as evidence: [Malicious One-Sided Government Source Selection](#)

And still more, related to settlements used as evidence: [Japan Urged to Make U-Turn](#)

And yet more, related to settlements used as evidence: [Dangerous Precedent to Crush Religions](#)

Even more, related to settlements used as evidence: [Japan Following the Way of China](#)

Yet more, related to settlements used as evidence: [Japanese Communists' Final War](#)

Still more, related to settlements used as evidence: [Political and Social Activism behind Oppression](#)

Still more, related to settlements used as evidence: [Dissolution Case: Rule of Law on Trial 4th March](#)



GET STARTED

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

SUBSCRIBE TO OUR NEWSLETTER

First Name  Last Name

Your Email Address

I consent to have this website store my submitted information so they can respond to my inquiry

Follow us

