

Peter Zoehrer on FFWPU Europe and the Middle East, 10 Years of Recognized Contributions to Society

Knut Holdhus
July 8, 2025



From the celebration in Vienna 4th July 2025 of the 10th anniversary of Unification Church becoming a state-registered religious community

"Your activities and initiatives have contributed to enriching the spiritual and social fabric of Austria." Unification Church in Austria marks 10 years of official recognition of its contribution to society

Press Release

Unification Church in Austria: 10 Years as a State-Registered Religious Community

Ceremonial Anniversary Celebration with Religious Representatives and Fellow Travelers in Vienna

Press release issued by the [Unification Church](#) of Austria 7th July 2025 concerning an event celebrating the 10th anniversary of becoming a state-registered religious community. See original [press release in German](#).

See also: [Struggle to Gain State Recognition for Faith](#)



Peter Zoehrer, President of [Unification Church](#) in Austria, speaking 4th July 2025



Prof. Dr. Martin Fischer from the Office for Religious Affairs at the meeting 4th July 2025



Elisabeth Cook, Vice President of the [Unification Church](#) of Austria

Vienna (OTS) -

On July 4, 2025, the [Unification Church](#) (German: [Vereinigungskirche](#)) in Austria celebrated the tenth anniversary of its official recognition as a registered religious community with a festive event at the event center Seidengasse 28/4 in Vienna.

"Today we celebrate ten years of state recognition of the [Unification Church](#) in Austria. A milestone that fills us with deep gratitude, but also with the obligation to reflect and to look ahead with clarity,"

said Peter Zöhler (Zoehrer), President of the [Unification Church \(Vereinigungskirche\)](#) in Austria, in his welcoming address.

The [Unification Church](#) was officially recognized as a religious community by the Office for Religious Affairs (German: Kultusamt) in the Federal Chancellery (German: Bundeskanzleramt) in June 2015.

In his keynote speech, Prof. Dr. Martin Fischer from the Office for Religious Affairs (German: Kultusamt) emphasized:

"In the past ten years, you have shown that you are a community committed to intercultural and interreligious cooperation and ethical awareness. Your activities and initiatives have contributed to enriching the spiritual and social fabric of Austria."

Elisabeth Cook, Vice President of the [Unification Church \(Vereinigungskirche\)](#), explained in her presentation the foundations and activities of the [Family Federation](#) (German: Familienföderation), which shares the ideals and goals of the [Unification Church](#). She concluded with a quote from [Father Moon](#):

"Only when we realize the [ideal](#) of the family, through which we can unite with [God](#), will the [Kingdom of Heaven](#) on Earth come into being."

Numerous guests from various religious communities, academia, and civil society paid tribute to the contributions of the [Unification Church](#) to social dialogue, [family values](#), and peaceful coexistence.

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Missing Answers 3 Years After Abe Assassination

- July 8, 2025
- Knut Holdhus



Three years since murder of former Prime Minister Abe, there are many missing answers as society is effectively playing into the hands of terrorist who sought to influence the public

Tokyo, 8th July 2025 – Published as an article in the Japanese newspaper *Sekai Nippo*. Republished with permission. Translated from Japanese. *Original article.*

[Editorial]

Three Years Since Abe's Assassination: Where Are the Politicians Who Will



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by the editorial department of Sekai Nippo

It has been three years since former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe (安倍晋三) was struck down by an assassin's bullet and met an untimely, tragic death. As domestic and international affairs grow increasingly chaotic, the magnitude of his loss is becoming ever more apparent. This moment calls for renewed reflection on the significance of the incident, as well as a remembrance of Abe's political legacy and ideals.

The LDP's core conservative base is drifting away



Former Prime Minister Shinzō Abe meeting with then President-elect Donald Trump at Trump Tower, 17th November 2016. Photo: 首相官邸ホームページ / Wikimedia Commons. License: CC Attr 4.0 Int

Abe's greatest legacy was the creation of a new international political framework led by Japan to defend freedom – embodied in the "Free and Open Indo-Pacific" initiative and the Quad (Japan-U.S.-Australia-India strategic dialogue). Today, countries around the world, including Japan, are struggling to cope with U.S. President Trump's aggressive tariff policies. Abe, who earned Trump's trust more than any other world leader, is clearly a global loss. Politicians must learn from Abe's diplomacy and negotiate with Trump with the same sense of scale.

Advocating for a "departure from the postwar regime", Abe promoted key conservative initiatives such as laws paving the way for constitutional revision and security legislation. While he also implemented many centrist policies, they were grounded in a firm national vision. Even when compromise was necessary, he remained anchored by a solid core. This consistency supported the longest and most stable administration in Japan's constitutional history.

With Abe's assassination, Japan lost a politician who had both a firm ideological backbone and the capacity to pragmatically handle reality. The *Liberal Democratic Party's* conservatism has since been hollowed out, and the party is beginning to lose support from its once rock-solid conservative base. Meanwhile, parties like the *Sanseito* and the *Japan Conservative Party* – who appeal to dissatisfied conservatives – have gained seats in the Diet, but their proliferation gives the impression of fragmented mini-parties.

Conservative sentiment is on the rise, and many voices are calling for someone to carry on Abe's ideals. The real issue is that no politician has emerged as a unifying figure to fulfill that role.

A democratic society undermined

Initially, when former Prime Minister Abe was shot while campaigning for the Upper House election, politicians and the media harshly condemned it as "a grave challenge to democracy". However, when it emerged that the suspect, Tetsuya Yamagami (山上徹也), was motivated by resentment toward the *Unification Church* (now known as the *Family Federation for World Peace and Unification*), which his mother had joined, media coverage shifted to a more sympathetic tone. The focus turned to the *religious organization* itself, and the relationships between LDP politicians and the *organization* came under fire.



Tetsuya Yamagami, the suspect for the assassination of Shinzo Abe, the former prime minister of Japan. Photo: Andrew2592009 / Wikimedia Commons. License: CC ASA 4.0 Int. Cropped

In response, the government filed a request for the dissolution of the *religious organization*, which is now under judicial review. But in

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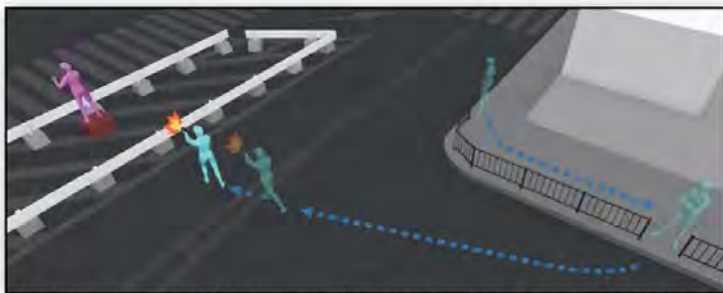
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doing so, society is effectively playing into the hands of a terrorist who sought to influence the public and settle a personal grudge by assassinating a high-profile political figure. This is not merely a challenge to democracy – it amounts to a hijacking of democratic society.

The truth behind the incident must be investigated

The police pursued the case as a lone-wolf act by Yamagami. The first trial is scheduled for 28th October, and it is expected that the facts of the case will not be contested, with the focus instead on sentencing based on the defendant's background and circumstances.



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

However, since the beginning, many have questioned whether this was really a solo act. There are serious, reasonable doubts that cannot be dismissed as "conspiracy theories" – such as the significant discrepancies between the medical opinion of Dr. Hidetada Fukushima (福島英賢) of Nara Medical University Hospital, who treated Abe, and the official autopsy report by the Nara Prefectural Police; or the fact that the fatal bullet has never been recovered.

Given the profound societal impact of the incident, we must re-investigate the connections behind it and uncover the full truth.

Featured image above: On 8th July 2023, a flower offering stand was set up at Osaka Gokoku Shrine for the first anniversary memorial (isshuuki) of former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe. Organizer: The Itagaki Taisuke Memorial Association (a general incorporated association). Photo: Photo memories 1868 / Wikimedia Commons. License: CC Attr 4.0 Int

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