

FFWPU Europe and the Middle East: Bold Japanese Governor Allows FFWPU to Worship

Knut Holdhus
July 24, 2025



[Family Federation](#) believers participating in the worship service July 20. 2025, at the outdoor theater in Fugan Canal Kansui Park, Toyama City, Japan



Governor defends public park use by Family Federation for worship service and grants permission despite pressure from hostile activist lawyers' group

Tokyo, 22nd July 2025 - Published as an article in the Japanese newspaper [Sekai Nippo](#). Republished with permission. Translated from Japanese. [Original article](#).

Family Federation Holds Worship at Public Facility in Toyama

Governor Nitta Grants Permission

by the editorial department of [Sekai Nippo](#)

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Hachiro Nitta, governor of Toyama prefecture since 2020

A worship event by the Toyama Family Church of the [Family Federation for World Peace and Unification](#) (formerly the [Unification Church](#)) was held on 20th July at Fugan Canal Kansui Park in Toyama City.

The Toyama prefectural government permitted the group to use the public facility, stating it was an "approval matter under the law". However, the National Network of Lawyers Against Spiritual Sales (Zenkoku Benren) requested that the permission be revoked.

In response, Governor Hachiro Nitta (新田八朗) cited the Local Autonomy Act, stating that "use cannot be denied without a legitimate reason," and granted permission.

Approximately 350 people attended the worship service, which proceeded calmly without incident. Hirokazu Nakajima (中島弘一), Deputy Church Leader of the local [Family Federation](#),

explained the purpose of the event:

"We were surprised by the [dissolution order](#) from the Tokyo District Court, but we wanted local residents to see our regular worship."

He added,

"We are grateful for the prefecture's decision. Regardless of whether people have faith or not, we are fellow human beings living in the same community. We want to continue engaging sincerely with the local community."

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Kishida Causes Blatant Discrimination Locally

• July 22, 2024

• Knut Holdhus



Fumio Kishida's cutting of ties with religious minority makes city councils pass resolutions that cause blatant discrimination



Logo of the Sekai Nippo

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The organization Toyama Prefecture Peace Ambassadors Council is an affiliated group of the Universal Peace Federation (UPF). They have organized several events in Toyama City, with the support of the city and the municipal board of education. These events include the Peace Road, where young people cycle to pray for world peace, and the Toyama Open College, where experts teach history, culture, and education.



Location of the cities mentioned. Illustration: Maximilian Dörrbecker (Chumhwa)/Wikimedia Commons. License: [CC ASA 3.0 Unp](#)

However, the assassination of former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe occurred on July 8, 2022. In Toyama Prefecture and City, the media began to scrutinize the relationships between the [Family Federation for World Peace and Unification](#) (formerly the [Unification Church](#)) and related organizations as well as their connections with local authorities and politicians. UPF and its related groups also became targets.

In June last year, Mamoru Kamono (鴨野 守), founder and representative director of the general incorporated association *Toyama Prefecture Peace Ambassadors Council*, said,

“I have met with the mayor several times and collaborated with local council members through meetings for events such as lectures.”

Kamono expressed his disappointment that during the three months following the incident [\[Editor's note: the assassination of Shinzo Abe\]](#), various events lost their support from Toyama City and the municipal board of education. Three months after the incident, in October 2022, Toyama City and its Board of Education sent notifications to cancel their support for the events, and politicians sent notifications of withdrawal from related organizations and resignation from positions. Kamono said with a somber expression,

“During this period, not once did they listen to our side of the story. It's truly regrettable.”

After the assassination of Abe, the first local assemblies to pass resolutions to sever ties with the [religious organization](#) were *Tondabayashi City Council* in Osaka Prefecture and *Toyama City Council* on 28th September. **While the proposal in Tondabayashi was made by the Communist Party (JCP), the conservative administration led the initiative in Toyama.**

Hirohisa Fujii (藤井 弘久), who was first elected mayor of Toyama City in

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Fujioka Fujii (藤井 博久), who was first elected mayor of Toyama City in 2021, served four terms as a prefectural assembly member with the endorsement of the *Liberal Democratic Party* (LDP). When he ran for mayor as an independent, he received recommendations from the LDP, the *Constitutional Democratic Party* (CDP), and the *Democratic Party for the People* (DPP). During the election, he visited the facilities of the [religious organization](#) and received support from it and related associations.



Hachiro Nitta,
governor of Toyama
prefecture since
2020. Photo: 地方創生
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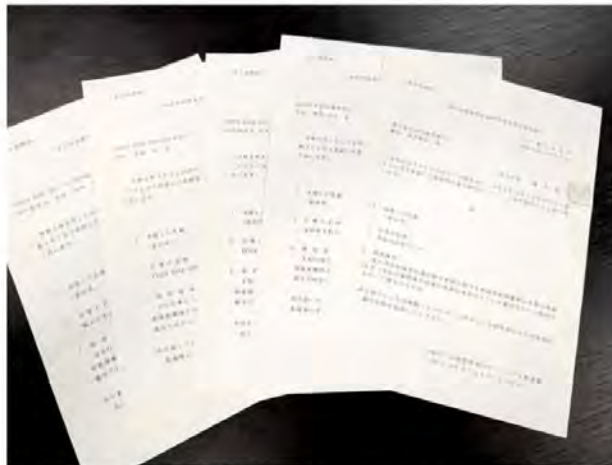
The media's scrutiny continued relentlessly, including targeting Governor Hachiro Nitta (新田八朗), who received election support from the [Family Federation](#) and related groups during the 2020 Toyama Prefecture election of governor.

On 21st July 2022, shortly after the assassination, Fujii acknowledged the relationship at a press conference, saying,

"I want to take a moment to pause and think about it thoroughly."

On 10th August, **Prime Minister Fumio Kishida carried out a cabinet reshuffle with the aim of excluding those who had ties with the [religious organization](#). A week**

later, on 17th August, Fujii declared his resolution to "completely sever ties" with the [Family Federation](#).



"Notification of Cancellation of Toyama City's Support and Name Usage", among other documents received by the Toyama Prefecture Peace Ambassador Council. Photo: [Sekai Nippo](#)

Following this, the **Toyama City Council adopted a resolution** on 28th September. It stated that their decision was **in line with the mayor's stance**,

"Mayor Fujii and the authorities have declared their decision to completely sever ties with the former [Unification Church](#) and its related organizations, recognizing that the former [Unification Church](#) as an extremely problematic organization. In alignment with Mayor Fujii and the authorities, the *Toyama City Council* also declares to have **no future relations whatsoever** with the former [Unification Church](#) and its related organizations."

Toyama is a stronghold of the *Liberal Democratic Party* (LDP), and it is evident that decisions are influenced by the Kishida's administration's top-down directive.

However, the "mayor and the authorities" and the "city council", which are supposed to be fair and neutral local public bodies, **made a significant decision to "sever all ties" without listening to the perspectives of individuals affiliated with the [religious organization](#). And they include a considerable number of the citizens.** Kamono expressed his anger, saying,

"For instance, no one would sever ties with a friend just based on hearing that the friend did something wrong. One would listen to the friend's side of the story before making a judgment."

Deeply hurt by the wording of the resolution, **members of the [Family Federation](#), who could no longer submit applications to the city council, sued Toyama City** for infringement of their right to hand in applications. The *Toyama Prefecture Peace Ambassadors Council*, which had to cancel multiple events, also sued the city.

It's understandably frustrating when events which had been organized in cooperation with Toyama City and its council members,

were **unilaterally** labeled as malicious activities, and the hosting organization being branded as a socially harmful group.

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Featured image above: Mamoru Kamono. Photo (2024): [Sekai Nippo](#)

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