

FFWPU Europe and Middle East: Anti-Unification Church Politicians Loose Big

Knut Holdhus
February 27, 2026



Yoshifu Arita, born 1952, a long-time communist and activist campaigning against the [Family Federation](#), member of the House of Councillors (Upper House) in the National Diet for the Democratic Party of Japan 2010-2017 and for the Constitutional Democratic Party (CDP) 2017-2022. He was also a member of the House of Representatives (Lower House) from 2024 to 2026. Here giving a speech on the street in front of Hachioji Station in Tokyo October 14, 2024



Behind the Scenes of Japanese politics: Centrist Alliance suffered big loss in parliamentary election after urging left-leaning activist to make hostility against Family Federation an election issue

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Centrist Bloc Used Anti-Takaichi Strategy in Lower House Election, Asked Mr. Arita to Make the "Unification Church" an Election Issue

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

It has recently come to light that the Centrist Reform Alliance [See editor's note 1 below] - formed through a merger of the Constitutional Democratic Party of Japan (CDP) and Komeito [See editor's note 2 below] prior to the House of Representatives election - instructed Lower House member Yoshifu Arita (有田芳生) to make the relationship of Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi (高市早苗) with the [Family Federation for World Peace and Unification](#) (formerly known as the [Unification Church](#)) a campaign issue. Arita disclosed this in his email newsletter dated 20th February.

According to the newsletter, on 19th January Arita met in the office of then-Co-Representative Yoshihiko Noda (野田佳彦) at the House of Representatives Members' Office Building. Noda reportedly told him that he had discussed with then-Co-Representative Tetsuo Saito (斉藤鉄夫) how to fight the election and asked Arita, "Although it is not written in our policy platform, we would like you to campaign nationwide to make the [Unification Church](#) issue a focal point."

Arita is a former journalist known for his criticism of the Unification Church. This suggests that from the time Noda and Saito reached their party formation agreement on 15th January, the Centrist bloc had envisioned launching a negative campaign against Takaichi through Arita and others.

In his newsletter, Arita wrote:

"Regarding the criticism of the [Unification Church](#), which was a mission from Mr. Noda, on 2nd February young Komeito members filmed a video explanation at the Constitutional Democratic Party headquarters of the top-secret document 'TM Special Report.' A digest of that video is still available on my X account."

有田芳生

@aritayoshifu

Jan 20

野田佳彦代表と面談した。
公明党の森田秋夫代表と数日前に総選挙をどう闘うかを話し合ったという。選挙戦では、「政治と金」問題だけでなく、基本政策に入っていないが「統一教会」問題を全国で積極的に批判し、多角化していくことで一致したそう。統一教会の内部文書「TM特別報告」は、韓国の捜査機関がリークしたのではなく、組織内部から出たものだ。教団は犯人探しに躍起だ。全文に出さる政治家リストを急いで作ることにした。

有田芳生

@aritayoshifu

Jan 20

I met with Representative Yoshihiko Noda.
He said that a few days earlier he had discussed with Komeito leader Tetsuo Saito how to fight the upcoming general election. During the campaign, they agreed that in addition to the "politics and money" issue, they would actively criticize the "Unification Church" issue nationwide and make it a central point of contention – even though it is not included in their basic policy platform.

Partial translation of a message by Yoshifu Arita on X 20th January 2026. At the top, screenshot of the original Japanese.



Yoshihiko Noda, Prime Minister of Japan 2011-2012, a member of the Lower House in the National Diet for the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) 2000-2016, as an independent, and for the Constitutional Democratic Party (CDP) 2021-2026



Tetsuo Saito, Japanese politician and chief representative of Komeito 2024-2026

Arita also posted about making the "[Unification Church](#) issue" a campaign focus on X.

The "TM Special Report" refers to documents that became a topic in South Korean media at the end of last year. Of several thousand pages compiled by aides to Hak Ja Han (한학자), President of the Family Federation, summarizing reports from affiliated religious groups in various countries, 3,200 pages were leaked. The Japanese branch of the church issued a press release regarding the report's contents, stating that "it has been pointed out that there is a high possibility that intentional

omissions, alterations, and additions are included," listing multiple factual errors and assessing the report as "lacking credibility."

Linked to China's Cognitive Warfare?

Meanwhile, according to reports by the online edition of the Nikkei and the Yomiuri Shimbun, China mass-produced numerous fake X accounts during the Lower House election and flooded the platform with posts criticizing Takaichi, attempting to influence public opinion. Analysts say that a major theme of these posts was to link Takaichi to the "Unification Church" through the TM Special Report.

In the Lower House election, in addition to the Centrist bloc, Reiwa Shinsengumi [See editor's note 3 below] and the Japanese Communist Party also made the "Unification Church" an election issue, and some media outlets such as Weekly Bunshun ran related campaigns. In what appeared to be an effort to "add fuel to the fire," the Chinese side allegedly deployed large numbers of fake X accounts to conduct cognitive warfare, aiming for a synergistic effect.

[Editor's note 1: The CDP and Komeito merged just before the parliamentary election in February 2026 to form the Centrist Reform Alliance (CRA) for the Lower House race. This merged party suffered a major defeat: It won only 49 seats in total. The party's previous combined strength (before the election) was around 167 seats, meaning it lost a very large number of seats. Of the 49 seats won by the CRA: 28 were held by former Komeito members, and 21 by former CDP members.]

[Editor's note 2: The large Buddhist lay organization Soka Gakkai founded the Komeito party in 1964 (now known as New Komeito or simply Komeito) in order to actualize ideals and principles of Nichiren Buddhism in governance. The party's purpose was to translate Buddhist-based humanistic values into public policy. While legally separate from Soka Gakkai, Komeito has long been backed by members of Soka Gakkai and focuses on peace-oriented diplomacy (e.g., supporting Japan's pacifist constitution); social welfare policies (benefiting education, healthcare, and the elderly); grassroots democracy (reflecting the voice of ordinary citizens)

From 1999 to 2025, Komeito was a coalition partner with the governing Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), influencing policies while maintaining a centrist stance.

Despite its contributions, Soka Gakkai's political role has been controversial, with critics accusing it of blurring the lines between religion and politics. Some also argue that Komeito's alliance with the conservative LDP compromises its original pacifist ideals.

Soka Gakkai envisions an ideal world through personal empowerment, education, and political engagement. While its approach is rooted in Buddhist ethics, its political involvement remains a complex and debated issue.]

[Editor's note 3: Reiwa Shinsengumi (れいわ新選組) is a left-wing populist political party in Japan, founded in 2019 by actor-turned-politician Taro Yamamoto. Reiwa Shinsengumi is a minor party in terms of seats but has gained visibility through a strong social media presence and high-profile campaign tactics.]

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Global Clergy Visit Detained Mother Han

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Drawing attention to religious freedom in South Korea, global religious leaders visit Seoul amid Mother Han’s ongoing detention

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Met President Hak Ja Han in Detention and Announce Petition for Religious Freedom

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February 20, 2026



The logo of the [Segye Ilbo](#)

Segye Ilbo, the South Korean daily, [reported on 26th February](#) on a visit by more than 70 Christian



Religious affairs reporter Jeong Seong-su ([정성수](#)). Photo (2025): [Segye Ilbo](#)

clergy and religious leaders from around the world. According to the [article](#) by Jeong Seong-su, they traveled to Seoul to participate in the “2026 World Clergy National Prayer Rally”. The gathering was organized by the *World Clergy Leadership Conference* (WCLC) along with partner groups. While the event focused on prayer and religious cooperation, it also became closely linked to a highly visible issue in Korea: the detention of [Hak Ja Han](#) – also called [Mother Han](#) – the widow of the late Rev. [Sun Myung Moon](#) and a prominent religious leader in her own right.

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Among the visiting delegation was Bishop Luonne Rouse from the *United Methodist Church* in New York, who, together with other international clergy, visited the *Seoul Detention Center* on 26th February to meet [Mother Han](#). According to the report, she had been in custody for 157 days at the time of their visit. [Mother Han](#) is widely known as the leader and co-founder of the [Family Federation for World Peace and Unification](#), a global religious movement from South Korea.



Bishop Luonne Rouse speaking at a large prayer meeting in Gapyeong, South Korea 27th February 2026. Screenshot from live transmission by FFWPU



Archbishop Johannes Ndanga speaking at a large prayer meeting in Gapyeong, South Korea 27th February 2026. Screenshot from live transmission by FFWPU

One of the most outspoken visitors was Archbishop Johannes Ndanga, an Apostolic Christian from Zimbabwe and President of the *African Christian Council International* (ACCI). Reflecting on the visit, Ndanga drew a symbolic comparison between Korea today and biblical history.

He recalled that when [Rev. Moon founded](#) what is now called the [Family Federation](#) in 1954, he declared that one day “the whole world will come to see Korea.” Ndanga suggested that this prediction is now being realized, as religious figures

from many nations are traveling to Korea. He compared the situation to Christians visiting Israel to retrace the life of Jesus. In his view, the present circumstances – specifically the detention of a [religious leader](#) whom he considers innocent – echo the persecution of Jesus in ancient times.

Ndanga described feeling emotionally burdened during the visit to the detention center where [Mother Han](#) is being held. However, he said that [Mother Han](#) herself appeared calm and resolute, speaking to the visiting leaders and expressing determination to continue fulfilling what she sees as [God's](#) will. He expressed confidence that, in time, both Korea and the broader international community would come to understand the larger meaning of these events.

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World religious leaders hold up a petition they each signed on 25th February 2026. Photo: Korean Council of Religious Leaders

Following the visit, Bishop Rouse and other members of the delegation announced a joint petition. The document calls for what they describe as humanitarian consideration and the protection of fundamental freedoms. The petition outlines three main points: first, that the health rights of [Mother Han](#) – an elderly woman in her 80s – should be safeguarded; second, that universal religious freedom must be defended; and third, that reconciliation and social harmony should be prioritized as values essential for national unity.

Bishop Rouse emphasized that the petition should not be interpreted as a political endorsement of any specific religious organization. Instead, he framed it as an appeal grounded in general principles of justice, freedom of conscience, and human rights. The organizers stated that they intend to submit the petition formally to Korean judicial authorities and to share it with international human rights organizations in order to raise global awareness and support.

In addition to the detention-center visit, the clergy participated in other events during their stay in Korea. On 25th February, they attended a special lecture in Seoul organized by the *Korean Council of Religions* under the theme “The Chosen Korean People and Their Mission”. The program explored Korea’s historical and spiritual role from the perspective of participating religious groups.

The delegation’s schedule also includes a visit to Imjingak, a site near the *Demilitarized Zone* that symbolizes the division of the Korean Peninsula. At the *Unification Observatory* there, they plan to hold a special prayer service for peace and reunification between North and South Korea. The group is scheduled to depart Korea on 28th February, concluding a visit that combined religious ceremony, political sensitivity, and a public appeal for religious freedom.

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Text: Knut Holdhus, editor

Featured image above: Participants in the World Clergy Prayer Meeting are taking a commemorative photo on 25th February in Seoul. Photo: Korean Council of Religious Leaders

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