

FFWPU Europe and the Middle East: Japanese activist leftwing lawyers persecute Unificationists

Knut Holdhus
June 28, 2023



Activist lawyers manipulating clients, evidence, legal system



From July 2023 issue of Hanada. Photo: [Bitter Winter](#)

Japanese award-winning author Masumi Fukuda, known for her investigative journalism, exposes in the July 2023 issue of the magazine Monthly Hanada, an extreme network of leftwing lawyers manipulating the legal system in Japan, the media and the public opinion. For decades, activist lawyers in the network have been using tactics like coercing former members to join their lawsuits against the [Unification Church](#), fabricating evidence, and extorting money from a perfectly legitimate religious movement, that is constantly being persecuted and slandered by those lawyers.

The network was in fact established in order to destroy the [Unification Church](#), now called the [Family Federation](#). What the Japanese journalist is unmasking, essentially boils down to the activist lawyers, many of them communists, using trumped-up charges against a new religious movement, while the "crime" it has committed, is to be against communism.

[Bitter Winter](#), an online magazine on religious freedom and human rights, published Fukuda's findings in a series of four articles in English. The first one appeared 23rd June, the fourth and last 27th June.



From front page of July 2023 issue of Hanada

The first article describes the legal battle between the [Unification Church](#) in Japan and a group of anti-cult lawyers who want to dissolve the [church](#). Fukuda argues that the [church](#) is not a "cult", but a legitimate religious organization, that has been persecuted and slandered by the lawyers and the media. The article also exposes the hidden motives and connections of the lawyers, who have been profiting from lawsuits against the [church](#) and collaborating with former members and other anti-cult groups. The investigative journalist claims that the request to dissolve the [church](#) is unreasonable and unjust, and that it violates the freedom of religion and human rights of the [church](#) members.

Fukuda points out that although the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) has been petitioned many times by the activist lawyers' network to dissolve the [Unification Church](#) / [Family Federation](#), the ministry has no case to do so. The investigative reporter states,

"Although the MEXT has now exercised its right to ask questions for five times, it has not 'collected enough evidence'. In fact, it has not found a single piece of evidence. This is the best proof that the religious organization is innocent." ([The Plot to Destroy the Unification Church in Japan. 1. Why the Church Should Not Be Dissolved](#), written by Masumi Fukuda, published in Bitter Winter 23rd June 2023.)



The second article [Bitter Winter](#) published, details the devious tactics of the anti-cult lawyers, who have been suing the [Unification Church](#) in Japan for decades. It is revealed how the lawyers have been manipulating the legal system, the media, and the public opinion to create highly image-tarnishing lawsuits against the [church](#). The article also exposes how the lawyers have been coercing former members to join their lawsuits, fabricating evidence, and extorting money from the church. Fukuda claims that the lawyers have been violating the law, the ethics, and the human rights of the church members.



Key member of activist lawyers' network - Hiroshi Watanabe. Photo: Screenshot / [Bitter Winter](#)



Activist lawyers caused great damage and suffering to [Unification Church](#) members. Here Toru Goto after 12 years of forcible detention. Photo: [FFWPU](#)

In the third article, Masumi Fukuda makes shocking revelations about the fraudulent lawsuits that the anti-cult lawyers have filed against the [Unification Church](#) in Japan. The article shows how the lawyers have used false or exaggerated claims to accuse the [church](#) of brainwashing, kidnapping, confinement, and other crimes. Fukuda shows how the courts have been biased and unfair towards the church, and how some judges have ignored or dismissed the evidence presented by the church. The third Bitter Winter article claims that the lawsuits have been unjust and unlawful, and that they have caused great damage and suffering to the church members.

In the final article in the series, brings to light the real "anti-social" group, the anti-cult lawyers who try to destroy the [Unification Church](#) / [Family Federation](#) in Japan. This article exposes the systematic lies and disreputable tactics of the lawyers who have been spreading false information and propaganda about the [church](#). We get insights into the hidden agenda and interests of the lawyers, who have been collaborating with anti-cult groups, former members, and media outlets to discredit and harass the [church](#). The writer claims that the lawyers are the ones who are violating the social norms and values, and that they should be held accountable for their actions.

Here is an example of the fabricated evidence that Fukuda mentions,

"The plaintiff also submitted as evidence several notebooks and passbooks in which she had noted each time she made a donation or other contribution. However, when the defendants analyzed these notes, they found that some of them had not been written at the time of the donations, but later, in order to fabricate favorable evidence for the trial."

(From [The Plot to Destroy the Unification Church in Japan. 4. The Real "Anti-Social" Group, the Anti-Cult Lawyers](#), written by Masumi Fukuda, published in Bitter Winter 27th June 2023.

Fukuda writes,

"For almost all religions, including the former [Unification Church](#), donations, endowments, and charitable gifts are expressions of piety and are offered willingly to [God](#). For example, not a few overseas Christians donated vast tracts of land or even their entire wealth before the end of their lives and died penniless. Will their relatives sue the religious corporations for depriving them of the inheritance they expected to inherit?

It is not unusual for other religious corporations to receive donations of hundreds of millions of yen. It is

problematic to unilaterally criticize only large donations made for the altruistic reason of 'promoting world peace' or 'the good of humanity'.



Head of the activist lawyers network - Hiroshi Yamaguchi. Photo: Screenshot / [Bitter Winter](#)

Unfortunately, however, even if the donors are convinced at the time of the donation that they are donating freely, as time goes by, their faith may wane. Their relatives may rush to the National Network of Lawyers Against Spiritual Sales to recover the donation.

The donors may be persuaded by lawyers from the Communist Party of Japan or the former Socialist Party that they have been 'deceived', and a lawsuit against the religious organization for the return of the donation may follow. In fact, there are many cases in which relatives consulted with the Network on how to force the donors-believers to sue." ([The Plot to Destroy the Unification Church in Japan. 3. Fraudulent Lawsuits](#), written by Masumi Fukuda, published in Bitter Winter 26th June 2023.)

Read more about lawyers manipulating in [Illegalities of Activist Lawyers Exposed](#)

Read even more about lawyers manipulating in [Japan Times: Warning Of Terror](#)

Also [Bitter Winter](#) has more articles on Japanese leftwing activist lawyers manipulating the country's legal system.

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The Plot to Destroy the Unification Church in Japan. 4. The Real “Anti-Social” Group, the Anti-Cult Lawyers

06/27/2023 MASUMI FUKUDA

A+ | A-

The systematic lies and disreputable tactics of the lawyers who try to destroy the Unification Church/Family Federation in Japan.

by Masumi Fukuda

Article 4 of 4. Read [article 1](#), [article 2](#), and [article 3](#).



The building hosting the Tokyo District Court. *Credits.*

On March 1, 2022, the Tokyo District Court dismissed the plaintiff's claim for damages in a lawsuit filed by S, a former believer of the Family Federation, against the church and some of its members. She claimed that she was told about an ancestral karma, a karma pushing her towards sexual relations, a karma to kill and wound. She became worried that illnesses, accidents, and other misfortunes might occur if she did not donate money to exorcise her karma, and she was thus forced to donate 21 million yen. However, it was discovered that when S was still a devotee, she had sent a letter to the believer who was mentoring her expressing her joy and gratitude for her faith.

The plaintiff also submitted as evidence several notebooks and passbooks in which she had noted each time she made a donation or other contribution. However, when the defendants analyzed these notes, they found that some of them had not been written at the time of the donations, but later, in order to fabricate favorable evidence for the trial.

Another major deciding factor in the church's victory of that case was a written document S had signed at a notary

public's office indicating that she had voluntarily made a donation when she was a believer.

However, to deny the validity of this written document, S made a series of false claims at the trial. For example, she claimed that she was pressured by the church's believers to write the statement, citing the fact that her husband's cancer surgery was successful, and he recovered. However, it was revealed that, in fact, both the discovery of her husband's cancer and the surgery took place after S had signed the statement.

As in the previously mentioned case decided by the Tokyo District Court on August 21, 2002, where the defendant falsely claimed that she was pressured to make a donation because her uncle had worked for the Japanese police in Korea, the same technique of falsely confusing the timeline was used here as well. In both cases, it is reasonable to assume that the lawyers, not the plaintiffs who were unfamiliar with the rules of the trial process, took the lead in preparing false statements. It is worth noting that in both cases, the attorneys for the plaintiffs were leading lawyers of the National Network of Lawyers Against Spiritual Sales, such as Hiroshi Yamaguchi and Hiroshi Watanabe.



Masaki Kito, another key attorney of the National Network, preaching against the Unification Church/Family Federation in a TV program. Screenshot.

The lawyers from the Network are also suspected of fabricating evidence by combining images from two different videos and falsely submitting them as if they were from a single recording. In an extremely vicious case, a plaintiff, represented by a Network lawyer, sued for the return of 600 million yen in donations but was found to have spent nearly 400 million yen of that money for other uses, and lied systematically at trial. Therefore, we must question the ethics of these lawyers. The claims of the Network can no longer be trusted at all.

As we can see from lawyer Masaki Kito's numerous statements, the National Network of Lawyers Against Spiritual Sales has also repeatedly made baseless, slanderous, and false allegations against the Family Federation. Here is a typical example.

On September 16, 2022, a Tokyo meeting of the Network was held in Ichigaya, Tokyo. Attorney Hiroshi Watanabe, who has been mentioned earlier, gave the keynote speech. At that time, he distributed a list to the participants. He said it was an internal document of the church.



Attorney Hiroshi Watanabe. Screenshot.

Under the title "Feedback on Emergency Counter Measures for Persons in Situation of High Danger, August 18," there was a color table with the following explanation: "We will provide feedback on the implementation of 'emergency measures' for believers who were found to be in a situation of high danger in the risk assessment survey." The table showed the number of people classified as AA or AAA, in each of the 12 districts, and the total number of people was 911. Although the meaning of the numbers was not immediately clear, lawyer Hiroshi Watanabe proudly explained: "I think this document was probably produced by the Unification Church in 2012... The Unification Church lists donors who

donated more than 100 million yen, such as the mother of the suspect Yamagami, as 'highly dangerous.' And it states that there are 911 such people throughout Japan. They are divided into AA and AAA. AAA probably means those who donate a billion yen or more. If the church would not take counter measures about them, they would be dangerous. They state that they must take measures."

He continued: "These 911 people were recruited by believers who hid their true identities. The believers did not tell that they were from a religious organization or the Unification Church, and those people were lured in. They were then threatened, deceived, and had all their property taken away, leaving their families in a collapsed state. If these people sued, the church would be in serious trouble. So, they thought they needed to take measures to prevent this. I think the material shows the anti-social nature of the Unification Church."

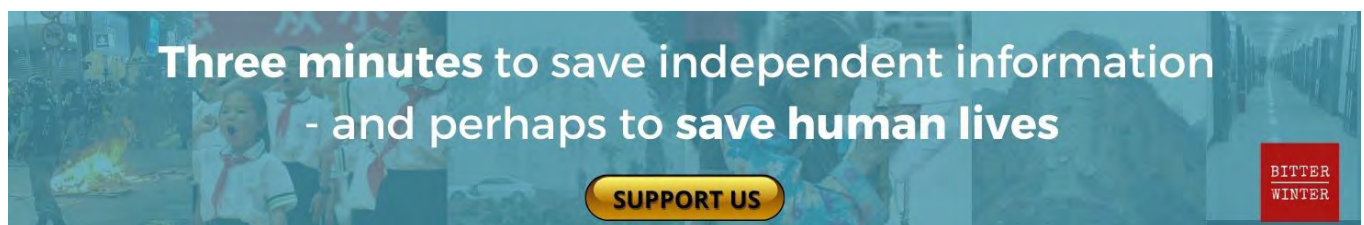
I would like to thank him for his detailed explanation, but in fact, this document is not a list of top donors. AAA refers to believers who were at an extremely high risk of being abducted, confined, and deprogrammed, not to those who donated more than 1 billion yen.

I do not know whether lawyer Watanabe misunderstood and explained it in this way by mistake, or deliberately fabricated a false story. However, it is an episode that shows the maliciousness of the Network, which uses any material for its propaganda to discredit the Family Federation.

This press conference was spread by the media. Therefore, the Family Federation was again accused of being greedy and trying to squeeze money out of its top donors.

In 2012, the number of abduction, confinement, and deprogramming cases had decreased considerably, but the danger still remained serious enough that such a list had to be made and measures taken.

Since the National Network of Lawyers Against Spiritual Sales was deeply involved in the criminal abduction and confinement of believers, I urge them to sincerely face the truth of what this list means. However, considering their true colors, this is highly unlikely and probably impossible. The question remains: who is more "anti-social," the Family Federation or the National Network of Lawyers Against Spiritual Sales?



TAGGED WITH: [ANTI-CULT](#), [JAPAN](#), [UNIFICATION CHURCH](#)



Masumi Fukuda

Masumi Fukuda was born in Yokohama in 1956. She graduated from the Department of Sociology of Rikkyo University. After working for a specialty magazine and a magazine production company, she became a freelance journalist. She has reported and written about crime, Russia, and other topics. Her books include "Stalin: A Portrait of His Family" (Bungei Shunju), "Russia, an Assassination State: In Search of a Missing Journalist" (Shinchosha), "The True Nature of Political Correctness" (Hojosha), and others. In 2007, she won the 6th Shincho Documentary Award for "Fabrication: The Truth About the 'Murder Teacher' in Fukuoka" (Shinchosha).

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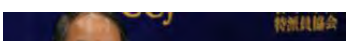
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While certain features of criticism against "cults" are international, others are typical of the Sinosphere and are present in both cases.



[The Plot to Destroy the Unification Church in Japan. 2. The Devious Tactics of the Anti-](#)



Cult Lawyers

The unethical strategies of the National Network of Lawyers Against Spiritual Sales created abusive lawsuits to harass and destroy the Unification Church.



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Illegalities Of Activist Lawyers Exposed

April 1, 2023 • Knut Holdhus

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Network of leftwing activist lawyers behind smear-campaign

Japanese award-winning journalist Masumi Fukuda is well known for her investigative journalism. And it looks like she may well have unearthed another scandal, involving leftwing activist lawyers.



In a series of articles in the monthly magazine Hanada, she has gone against

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the country's mainstream media and become the first journalist to ask serious questions about who and what are behind the ongoing smear-campaign against the **Family Federation**, formerly the **Unification Church**.

As internationally known author and scholar of sociology of religion Massimo Introvigne pointed out already in August 2022,

"After the crime, media took at face value the statements of anti-**Unification-Church** lawyers. Nobody cared to investigate them and their past." (The Abe Assassination. Lawyers "Against Spiritual Sales"—or Against Religious Liberty?, article by Dr. Introvigne in Bitter Winter, a magazine on religious liberty and human rights, 29th Aug. 2022)

The crime he is referring to here, is of course the assassination of former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe. A leftwing group of activist lawyers succeeded in selling their story to the media that it was the **Unification Church** that was the actual perpetrator.

Journalist Masumi Fukuda appears to be first to dig up the shady background and motives of that group of lawyers. In the January 2023 issue of Hanada, she writes,

"After reflecting about the controversies, I decided to first investigate whether the National Network of Lawyers Against Spiritual Sales is really an organization that is purely concerned with consumer issues, and to trace back the reasons for its establishment. The July 12 press conference by the Network, as well as the statements by Attorney Masaki Kito, showed that they hold an unusual hatred toward the former **Unification Church**. I felt there was something beyond mere consumer issues." (The Truth About the National Network of Lawyers Against Spiritual Sales, article by Masumi Fukuda in the monthly magazine Hanada, republished in English in Bitter Winter 30th March 2023)

Fukuda clearly reveals the origin of the activist lawyers' network,

"Almost all of the lawyers in the Network were affiliated with the former Socialist Party and the Communist Party, who strongly opposed the enactment of the Anti-Espionage Law, were connected with extremist groups and North Korea, and were ideologically leftists and self-styled atheists. In contrast, the former **Unification Church** is an anti-communist and conservative organization that opposes atheism. It is clear that this was an ideological battle between the two camps. Attorney Hiroshi Yamaguchi also clearly stated, 'We want to make a big public announcement [about 'spiritual sales'] because it will be good for containing right-wing activities, especially for preventing the passing of the Anti-Espionage Law.'" (Hanada)



The investigative journalist also points out that the network of lawyers for decades was heavily involved in the abduction and confinement of members of the **Unification Church**,

"There were lawyers who became rich through these cases, as did deprogrammers and Christian pastors involved in the abductions, who received substantial amounts of money from the relatives of the believers they deprogrammed. When the lawyers were consulted by the believers' parents, they first introduced them to the deprogrammers. If and when deprogramming was successful, the lawyers took over from the deprogrammers as 'handlers' of the former believers, made them plaintiffs, and filed lawsuits. The anti-**Unification-Church** group, including Attorney Kito and journalists Yoshifu Arita, and Eito Suzuki, still defends deprogramming to this very day, and claims it was performed to 'protect' the former members of the **Unification Church**." (Hanada)

Fukuda writes that a huge number of members of the **Unification Church** were kidnapped, confined and deprogrammed. They were not only forced to denounce their belief, but had to prove that they had left the church by

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claiming they had been "victims of spiritual sales". The network of lawyers made them file lawsuits against the [Unification Church](#) demanding to get back the money they once had donated.

The Japanese journalist concludes her article by saying,

"I wrote about the details of the abduction and confinement process in the December 2022 issue of 'Monthly Hanada', but when I asked Attorney Kito for an interview about deprogramming, he was completely unwilling to respond. The Network has often called the former [Unification Church](#) an 'anti-social organization' and a 'cult', but I believe that these labels may be more appropriately used for an organization deeply involved in deprogramming and in illegal practices of abduction and confinement." (Hanada)



Text: Knut Holdhus

Featured image above: The front page of the January 2023 issue of the Japanese magazine Monthly Hanada.

Read [full article](#) of Fukuda in Bitter Winter

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Japan Times: Warning Of Terror

April 21, 2023 • Knut Holdhus



Warning of terror due to positive media coverage of terrorist

Masahiko Shimada (島田 雅彦), award-winning author and professor at Faculty of Intercultural Studies at Hosei University in Tokyo, has been taken to task and received a warning of terror for saying publicly he was glad the assassination of former prime minister Shinzo Abe was successful.

Making such a comment in itself, would certainly be enough to cause a huge outcry. But things were



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made worse for the professor. The large newspaper Yukan Fuji points out 20th April that the day after his obvious support for terrorism, a home-made explosive device was thrown toward current prime minister Fumio Kishida during a by-election campaign in the city of Wakayama.

Professor Shimada made his outrageous comment while debating the issue of the [Unification Church](#), the Abe assassination, and the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) on the internet program "Air Revolution" broadcasted live on 14th April. The comment is seen by many as an endorsement of terrorism and murder. It might in fact even trigger new terrorist attacks.

the japan times The Japan Times comes with a warning of terror. In a commentary headlined "Don't Allow the Attack on Kishida to Become a Trend" 16th April by columnist Gearoid Reidy, the paper comments on the second terrorist attack on a senior LDP politician in less than a year. The risk that such attacks may happen again is clearly there.

The paper warns against the positive media coverage the assassin Tetsuya Yamagami received. His grudges against the [Unification Church](#) and Abe are described as "bitter delusions",

"Instead of recognizing this as bitter delusion and focusing on the concerning security lapses surrounding Abe's killing, media reports instead gave Yamagami bizarrely sympathetic coverage and even took up his cause against the church. For months, Japan's front pages and TV shows were dominated by links between the ruling Liberal Democratic Party and the [Unification Church](#)."



Public domain image

There was virtually no mention of the connections to other religious movements, even though the LDP's government coalition partner Komeito have open links to the new Buddhist group Soka Gakkai and was founded by its members.

Japan Times points out that media reports on the connection between the [Unification Church](#) and the Liberal Democratic Party

"frequently used the language of 'ties' between the LDP and the [church](#), which often meant little more than holding meetings or shaking hands.

A relentless barrage of stories focused on how senior politicians, including Abe, met with the church representatives, but failed to provide the context that politicians everywhere routinely associate with interest groups, particularly those with money."

Japan Times reports how the assassination of Abe "was exploited for political gain."

Masumi Fukuda, well known for her investigative journalism, described exactly how that happened. In a series of articles earlier this year in the Japanese monthly magazine Hanada, this award-winning journalist exposed how a leftwing group of activist lawyers succeeded in selling their story to the media that it was the [Unification Church](#) that was the actual perpetrator. Read [the story!](#)



Massimo Introvigne, leading scholar of sociology of religion, comments on the influence that same leftwing group of activist lawyers may have had on Abe's assassin,

"What triggered Yamagami's killing frenzy in 2022, and not before? We know for a fact that Yamagami followed the hate campaigns against the [Unification](#)

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Hate campaigns against the Unification Church prevailing in Japan. He interacted on social media with fellow enemies of the Church.

The day before killing Abe, Yamagami wrote a letter to Kazuhiro Yonemoto. Although Yonemoto deserves credit for having opposed in the past the practice of kidnapping members of the Unification Church for the purposes of deprogramming or 'de-converting' them, he remains an opponent of the Church. Yamagami interacted with the anti-Unification-Church milieu, and was exposed to the hate speech against the Church, which may easily have turned his weak head." (*Calling A Stag a Horse: Fake News on the Abe Assassination*, an article by Massimo Introvigne in the online magazine Bitter Winter 23rd Aug. 2022)



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Julian Ryall of South China Morning Post compares 18th April the similarities of the attacks on Abe and Kishida,

"Dozens of onlookers were crowding close to both Kishida and Abe. On both occasions, the attackers approached from behind and were able to get within a few metres of their targets."

The question is of course whether Ryuji Kimura, the 24-year-old behind the home-made pipe bomb, was influenced by the Hosei University professor's extreme statement. Kathleen Benozza, staff writer of the Japan Times, writes 18th April that Kimura filed a lawsuit in 2022, claiming that he was unfairly barred from becoming a candidate for a Upper House election. The paper points out that in a brief submitted with the lawsuit,

"Kimura also referred to Abe's ties to the Unification Church, linking this with his lawsuit, claiming that politicians and political parties with an organized structure to garner votes would have an advantage in elections, while his own candidacy was being curbed, the Yomiuri daily reported."

According to a short biography on Masahiko Shimada, published by The Modern Novel, a website featuring an extensive survey of literary fiction since around 1900, his novels are often written "from a left-wing point of view". Also, his shocking statement that he was glad Abe was killed, is a strong indication that the professor may well belong to the extreme left of the political spectrum. Promoting murder and terrorism are known hallmarks of their extremism.

Text: Knut Holdhus

Featured image above: Masahiko Shimada, award-winning author and professor at Faculty of Intercultural Studies at Hosei University in Tokyo. Photo: Joi Ito / Wikimedia Commons. License: Creative Commons Attribution 2.0 Generic. Cropped.

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