

FFWPU Europe and the Middle East: Deliberate Lies Caused Abe Assassination, Not The Unification Church

Knut Holdhus
September 25, 2023

Religious leader claims deliberate lies led to Abe assassination



1st part of article originally published 22nd Sep. 2023 by salty-japan.net. Republished with permission. Translated from Japanese. [Original article](#). [2nd part](#)

After the assassination of former Prime Minister Abe due to misinformation, an unreasonable dissolution request will be made.

by Haruhisa Nakagawa, Tokyo Christian Theological Institute Executive Secretary, President of Japan Christian Theological Institute, SALTY Editorial Committee Member. SALTY is the Japanese Christian opinion website salty-japan.net



Hans Küng - 1928-2021

Introduction

The Japanese government is said to be submitting to the court as early as October a request for the dissolution of the [Unification Church](#) as a religious corporation.

I have been observing this organization from an anti-perspective for 25 years, and I have written several related articles about this organization. However, what constantly strikes me in the midst of this, is the gap between public perception and the actual situation.

Initially, individuals like Yoshifu Arita, Eito Suzuki, and Professor Kimiaki Nishida who are close friends of lawyer Masaki Kito [leading activist lawyer], appeared on television and discussed this issue. To me, it seemed like one of different groups was merely expressing its own opinions, and I expected that discussions from different angles would eventually emerge. However, it appears that there hasn't been any sign of brakes being applied, and the conversation swiftly moved in one direction before anyone could stop it.

I could understand the intention of the National Network of Lawyers against Spiritual Sales (NNLASS) to influence public opinion and push the government to file a dissolution request. However, usually there should be discussions involving both sides and opposing views with room for direction adjustments and corrections. However, the information circulating publicly seems to excessively emphasize one particular perspective. To me it appears as if the opinion of one group dominates the entire discourse.

To borrow the words of theologian Hans Küng from the Second Vatican Council, "Half a truth is also half a lie."

Especially in matters of religion, we must not allow it to result in the same kind of sensationalism as scandals involving celebrities or politicians that stir up public opinion. We should act more carefully. This issue, in particular, has escalated since the assassination of former Prime Minister Abe, but until that time,

a significant amount of misinformation had already accumulated. Therefore, it should be viewed as a deeper-seated issue than what is currently being considered.

Misinformation and its source led to the death of former Prime Minister Abe.



Shinzo Abe in 2017

There had been a narrative suggesting that former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe had a "deep relation" with the [Unification Church](#), which led an individual, who believed in it, to take extreme actions and ultimately resulted in the assassination of Prime Minister Abe.

In my opinion, the term "relation" itself is broad and may include various types of relation such as "neighborly relationships", "friendship", "acquaintance", and even "conflict", "hostility", and "a relationship with others".

Therefore, I deliberately wrote three articles with the strong title "Mr. Abe had no relation with the [Unification Church](#)." Now, one year has passed since that tragic shooting incident, and I believe everyone can see that what I was saying was correct.

So, it is important to look at who was speaking the truth and who was spreading falsehoods about this issue and

consider changing our sources of information. False information and unreliable sources have led to irreversible consequences. The tragedy that has already occurred cannot be undone, but we can change false information and information sources. If we don't even do that, then that is "below standard human morality".

1. Video message by former Prime Minister Abe sent to UPF (Universal Peace Federation)

There were individuals who have propagated the idea that former Prime Minister Abe had deep involvement with [Unification Church](#)-related organizations based on the fact that he sent a video message to UPF gatherings. However, it's important to note that UPF stands for Universal Peace Federation, an international NGO with consultative status at the United Nations Economic and Social Council.

Prominent figures from around the world, including former President Trump and other leaders of major countries, have sent messages to UPF events. Figures like Vice President Pence and Secretary Pompeo of the U.S. Republican Party have even attended UPF events in South Korea. In this context, we must recognize that this was considered acceptable on a global scale. Thinking of the situation, we may say that Abe's sending a video indicates comparably nothing special relation. In other words, the attempt to sensationalize and present Abe's video message as a special relationship has been exaggerated and should be corrected.



Eito Suzuki, born as Kiyofumi Tanaka

2. Full text of the video message sent to UPF

When you look at the full text of the video message, it neither praises the [Unification Church](#) nor venerates Mrs. [Hak Ja Han](#). Only a part of the polite expression directed towards UPF, "I pay my respects to President [Hak Ja Han](#) and everyone who has worked tirelessly for the peaceful reunification of the Korean peninsula," was isolated and became widely known. In fact, I have never seen a Japanese person who doesn't include polite words when giving greetings. It's perfectly normal to use polite expressions, and it is a mistake to claim that "Abe had a relationship with the [Unification Church](#)" based solely on this video message.

3. The story that former Prime Minister Abe received 50 million yen as payment from UPF

Eito Suzuki has claimed that former Prime Minister Abe received 50 million yen as appearance fee from UPF, but there is no evidence to support this claim whatsoever. Despite mentioning "inside information", no substantiation for the appearance fee has emerged. UPF has also denied this

allegation.

Nevertheless, false information continues to be disseminated by individuals influenced by Eito Suzuki's statements, and this misinformation is still being believed by some.

4. Testimony by Eito Suzuki regarding former Prime Minister Abe's invitation of chairman Tokuno from the Unification Church to the Prime Minister's residence

Eito Suzuki, who claims to have inside information from the religious group, said, "In early June 2016, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe invited Mr. Eiji Tokuno, the President of the [Unification Church / Family Federation](#) for World Peace and Unification, along with the wife of the Chairman [Yong-cheon Song](#), to the Prime Minister's Residence"



Eiji Tokuno in April 2023

However, the Prime Minister's daily schedule is meticulously recorded. When examining the Prime Minister's schedule for early June 2016, it appears highly unlikely on any day except the 3rd and the 8th of June, and even if Mr. Tokuno was invited to the Prime Minister's Residence on either of those days, the meeting would have lasted only 20 minutes. It would be difficult to imagine that a close and deep relationship could develop in just 20 minutes. Furthermore, Mr. Tokuno himself has stated that he was not invited to the Prime Minister's Residence.

Amidst the proliferation of such rumors, former Prime Minister Abe met his tragic end. However, the erroneous information and its sources have remained unchanged and uncorrected, frequently causing a sensation whenever these rumors are associated with the [Unification Church](#). In reality, there should be a stern call for, "Enough!"

However, there doesn't seem to be any such consideration concerning the [Unification Church](#) issue, and it appears to be continuing just like before. Of course, as someone who upholds an orthodox Christian doctrine, I have been observing the [Unification Church](#) from an anti-position. However, the current situation is drastically different from what I know, and it has left me astonished.

There have been situations in the past where the public outcry led the government to take action, and this is not something new. However, this time, it involves a "religious" issue. In the cases of the Recruit scandal [insider trading and corruption scandal] and the Moritomo Gakuen [Japanese private school operator] issue, when time passed, and the public forgot, the only thing that remained was the media frenzy when the lid was finally lifted.

However, this time, it is not permitted. In terms of the gravity of the matter, this should be completely different from the past matters where the government was involved and influenced by the sensation caused by media. The level of significance is distinct between the government initiating the dissolution of a religious corporation, and a private organization requesting a dissolution. This is the first religious persecution in the post-war history, and it could also severely undermine the system under the constitution.

To be continued in a [part 2](#) and 3 soon.

"Deliberate Lies Caused Abe Assassination" - text: Haruhisa Nakagawa

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Pure Activism In Japanese Media

September 4, 2023 • Knut Holdhus



Japanese media promoting pure activism for dissolution of the Unification Church

The Asahi Shimbun

Asahi Shimbun, a major left-leaning newspaper in Japan – followed by Japan Times, Japan Today, Yomiuri Shimbun and others – quoting unnamed sources, published 3rd September 2023 articles about the possibility of Japan seeking a court order to disband the [Unification Church](#). Leftwing Asahi wrote

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that such an order will be sought, other papers that it may or could be sought. Kyodo News pointed out that it remains uncertain.

Some media in the Western world have also picked up the story.



Fumio Kishida, Japanese Prime Minister, in 2020. Photo: 首相官邸 / Wikimedia Commons. License: CC Attr 4.0 Int. Cropped

There is not much new information in the reports. The dissolution option is commonly known from before. In fact, it is easy to conclude that the Asahi article may well have been published as pure activism in order to put pressure on the Japanese government to do something. The leftist Asahi has been campaigning for decades against a [Unification Church](#) known to have advocated a crystal-clear criticism of the ideological fallacies of totalitarian and genocidal communism.

Judging by the many vicious

attacks on the [Unification Church](#) by communists in Japan, or communist-initiated projects like *National Network of Lawyers Against Spiritual Sales*, the [Unification Church](#), now called the [Family Federation](#), may indeed be the one religion that the communists fear the most.



The Soka Gakkai International flag. Photo: QueerMichael / Wikimedia Commons. License: CC ASA 4.0 Int

They have not launched similar attacks on the *Soka Gakkai* new Buddhist movement behind the Komeito, the governing *Liberal Democratic Party's* coalition partner, even though the *Soka Gakkai* is much larger than the [Family Federation](#) and is much more heavily involved in Japanese politics.

The Japanese media quote unnamed sources close to the government in their pure activism articles. One obvious candidate behind the pure activism, disclosing the information, may well be Masaki Kito, fanatic and uncompromising activist from *National Network of Lawyers Against Spiritual Sales*, founded by communists.

In spite of his more than dubious background and having led numerous attacks on the [Unification Church](#) for years, he was appointed as an "expert" on the [Unification Church](#) to a committee to review "spiritual sales" under the *Consumer Affairs Agency of Japan*. This makes the entire examination of the [Unification Church](#) by the Japanese authorities biased.



Masaki Kito, anti-religious activist. Photo: Bitter Winter

It is easy to understand why Masaki Kito, and others, may be pushing for a dissolution to be ordered possibly already in October. They want it well before the court case against Tetsuya Yamagami begins at the beginning of next year. The proceedings there are likely to vindicate the [Family Federation](#), which to a large extent has been blamed for the assassination of Shinzo Abe 8th July last year. The case may also reveal that anti-cult activists influenced and even helped Yamagami to carry out his act of terror.

Dr. Michael Balcomb, President of the [Family Federation of Europe and the Middle East](#), issued 4th September a



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statement on the articles,

"We are aware that the courts in Japan are contemplating a dissolution order, and anticipate that they will conclude that religious freedom is too important a human right to be arbitrarily or capriciously removed.



Dr. Michael Balcomb.
Photo: FFWPU

We expect that the criminal case against Tetsuya Yamagani will reveal that the **Family Federation** is innocent of any connection to that tragic crime. We encourage the Japanese Government to allow that legal process to conclude, and not allow themselves to be pressed by the media into hasty actions in blatant disregard of the human rights of our community and, almost inevitably, those of others.

Experiences in other countries, and indeed in Europe itself, show that such attacks on religious freedom of one minority do not stop there, and may well spread to actions such as hate speech and violence against other religious groups, especially minorities."

14th June 2023, a letter was sent to the Japanese government, written by four academics and human rights activists, all leading experts on freedom of religion or belief (FoRB). They urged the Japanese authorities to **halt the ongoing witch hunt against**, and respect the rights of, the **Unification Church / Family Federation for World Peace and Unification (FFWPU)**, a minority religion that has been constantly attacked by anti-cult activist lawyers.

In the letter, published 3rd July by **Bitter Winter**, the online magazine for religious liberty and human rights, the four experts – Willy Fautré, Ján Figel, Massimo Introvigne, and Aaron Rhodes – "call for an end to what increasingly appears as a witch hunt".

*Featured image above: Pressure on Keiko Nagaoka from anti-cultists. She is government minister for education, culture, sports, science and technology (MEXT). Photo (May 2023): U.S. Department of State. **Public domain** image. Cropped*

"Pure Activism in Japanese Media" – text: Knut Holdhus

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Heavily Biased Japanese Reporting

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Heavily biased article by Kyodo News in Japan Times and Japan Today

The first anniversary of the assassination of former Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe 8th July 2022 received extensive media coverage. Much of it focused on Abe's accomplishments as the longest serving premier, 2006-2007 and 2012-2020.

Kyodo, Japan's leading news agency,

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had however quite a different focus. It becomes apparent already in the headline: "One year on, Abe assassination leaves controversial issues unresolved".



And the main "controversial issue" the news agency zooms in on, is Abe's and lawmakers' "ties" to the [Unification Church](#). And as Kyodo's bias dictates, the links are "dubious".

the japan times

The Japan Times was one of the papers that published the heavily biased Kyodo report. In an article 16th April this year, written by

columnist Gearoid Reidy, the very same newspaper questioned the existence of those "ties", writing,

"For months, Japan's front pages and TV shows were dominated by links between the ruling Liberal Democratic Party and the [Unification Church](#)."

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.

The Japan Times then pointed 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."

The bias of the Kyodo piece is made obvious also by the word "cult" being used about the [Unification Church](#). Well-known Italian sociologist of religion Massimo Introvigne, by many considered the world's leading expert on new religious movements, has this to say,



Dr. Massimo Introvigne.
Screenshot

"A large majority of scholars of religions agree that there are no cults. 'Cult' is just a label used to discriminate against groups that powerful lobbies, for whatever reasons, do not like." (Quoted from the article [The Abe Assassination. The Word 'Cult' Is A Tool for Discrimination](#), published by [Bitter Winter](#), a magazine on religious liberty and human rights, 2nd Sept. 2022.)

The source of the heavily biased reporting becomes rather obvious when Kyodo mentions "lawyers", and one of them seemingly being opposed to "believers 'willingly' offering 'massive donations' to them [the [Unification Church](#)]."

The lawyers Kyodo is basing much of its content on, are of course [National Network of Lawyers Against Spiritual Sales](#), a network formed specifically by leftwing activist lawyers to destroy the [Unification Church](#).

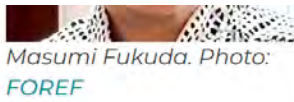


Japanese award-winning investigative reporter Masumi Fukuda clearly reveals the origin of the activist lawyers' network,

"Almost all of the lawyers in the Network were affiliated with the former Socialist Party and the Communist Party, who strongly opposed

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Masumi Fukuda. Photo: FOREF

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.'" ([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)

Kyodo echoes many false allegations from the network of activist leftwing lawyers. Standard network expressions repeated by Kyodo in its article, are "victims of controversial religious groups", "maliciously soliciting donations", "people pressured into purchasing", "depriving the organization of its status as a religious corporation", and "the [Unification Church](#) has violated laws and damaged public welfare".

Kyodo simply presents those activist lawyers out to destroy the [Unification Church](#), as "lawyers". Not a word is said about their origin, their extreme political views, their goal to have the [Unification Church](#), now called the [Family Federation](#), dissolved. Hiding such key facts puts Kyodo News in a really bad light. This is definitely not objective reporting, and looks suspiciously like heavily biased campaigning journalism to paint the [Unification Church](#) black.

Fukuda also writes,

"The Network would not hesitate to use all means to destroy the former [Unification Church](#). They are willing to tell all sort of stories, including lies, to achieve what they believe is a righteous purpose. They often throw the words 'anti-social' and 'cult' at the former [Unification Church](#), but considering their involvement in the abduction and confinement of believers, one may wonder whether they are not more deserving of these labels themselves." (['Sayuri Ogawa': When 'Apostates' Slander the Unification Church. 5. Why the Story Is Not Believable](#), [Bitter Winter](#) 6th March 2023)



The heavily biased Kyodo article claims that the [Unification Church](#) puts pressure on members to make large donations. This is one of the standard allegations from the network of activist lawyers. Above-mentioned Dr. Massimo Introvigne criticizes such a claim, saying,

"In its general principles, the [Unification Church's](#) theology of donations is surprisingly similar to its Catholic and Protestant counterparts. [...]"

Ultimately, the problem is theological and philosophical. For a believer, donations may be deep spiritual experiences. For an atheist, or somebody who believes that groups such as the [Unification Church](#) are not "real" religions, no caution would be good enough, and no donation would ever be recognized as the fruit of a free and reasonable choice." ([The Abe Assassination. Donations to the Unification Church: Separating Facts from Fiction](#), [Bitter Winter](#) 3rd Sept. 2022)

"Heavily Biased Japanese Reporting" – text: Knut Holdhus

Featured image above: Shidome Media Tower, located in Shiodome, Minato, Tokyo, Japan. Floors 1–24 are the headquarters of Kyodo News, Japan's largest news agency.

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