

FFWPU Europe and the Middle East: Disinformation Dispelled At Press Conference

Knut Holdhus
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Tomihiko Tanaka at press conference in Tokyo 7th Nov. 2023

Disinformation dispelled as new proposal is made and positive contributions emphasized

Tomihiko Tanaka, the President of the [Family Federation](#) of Japan, spoke at a press conference 7th Nov. 2023 at the [federation's](#) national headquarters in Shibuya, Tokyo. Representatives of most of the Japanese media world were present and heard his comments on the situation since the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) submitted a request for a dissolution order against the [Family Federation](#) at Tokyo District Court.

Tanaka pointed out,

"As an organization, we cannot accept the recent measures taken by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology to request the dissolution of our

[organization](#) from the perspective of freedom of religion and the rule of law. Therefore, we will continue to firmly assert our legal position. At the same time, we will proudly promote reform of our [religious organisation](#) based on the 2009 Compliance Declaration."

Positive contributions

President Tanaka emphasized the positive contributions of the [Family Federation](#) to the Japanese society,

"We are a religious corporation that celebrates its 64th anniversary this year. There are about 100,000 active believers throughout Japan. They are ordinary Japanese citizens who pray sincerely in the morning and evening, go to church on Sundays to worship, study the Bible and the [Unification Principles](#), our doctrine, work as members of society on weekdays, and socialize with their neighbors.



The family is important for the [Family Federation](#)

Through their studies at the [Family Federation](#), many believers understand the importance of valuing 'living for others' while helping each other towards creating 'happy families' and a 'peaceful society', and they live their lives to the fullest while understanding the fact that they are working hard together.

We will continue to engage in activities that contribute to Japan's public and national interests while striving to comply with laws and regulations as Japanese citizens, so as not to cause any misunderstandings among the people. We would like to ask for your warm consideration and understanding regarding the 'freedom of religion' of our [Family Federation](#)

members and believers."

Complaints against members

Tanaka touched on the issue of complaints against members,

"It is possible that some of our believers in the past may have taken actions that went too far from social norms. However, we believe that they did not act out of self-interest, but rather out of a desire to help others in their own way.

We promise to do our best to thoroughly implement the Compliance Declaration and guidance based on

church reform, comply with laws such as the new law enacted this year, and ensure that we will never again receive evaluations such as 'deviating from social appropriateness'.

Although it is unfortunate that we have received requests for refunds and consultations regarding donations up to now, we have resolved each case sincerely. We will continue to respond carefully to various such consultation contents in the future.

Furthermore, we will thoroughly guide our members that donations should respect the autonomy and initiative of each individual and family, so as not to burden the families of our believers."

Effect of media disinformation

Tanaka also commented on the effect of a wave of media disinformation where the [Family Federation](#) is somewhat held responsible for the assassination of Shinzo Abe in July 2022,



From the press conference in Tokyo 7th Nov. 2023

"Since the incident involving former Prime Minister Abe last year, there have been many inquiries from former believers and some current believers who are anxious because of the media, asking if they can get their past donations back. We have responded to each and every one of these people with sincerity at our organization or each believers' group. [...]

Since the incident, we have responded to a total of 664 refund requests in the past year and four months, with a total refund amount of approximately 4.4 billion yen. The months of September and October immediately following the incident had the highest number of refund requests.

When we make a refund, we discuss it while considering individual circumstances and refund based on mutual agreement. We respond while taking into account the situation at the time of the donation, how it compared to the economic situation at the time, and the current family situation.



Masaki Kito, one of the hostile lawyers of Nationwide Unification Church Victims' Countermeasures Legal Team

We will continue to respond carefully and appropriately to any future refund requests. However, donations are a very precious thing that was offered to [God](#) by our believers as a sign of gratitude and cooperation with [God's](#) will. We also have a responsibility to manage these precious donations appropriately, so we cannot simply return anything that has been requested for return. We hope you understand this."

Specific case brought by hostile lawyers

In his speech, President Tanaka also mentioned a specific case brought against the [Unification Church](#), now called the [Family Federation](#), by a hostile team of lawyers,

"I would like to talk a little about the request for a refund of approximately 3.9 billion yen made by 124 people in the form of 'group negotiations' by the Nationwide Unification Church Victims' Countermeasures Legal Team (全国統一教会被害対策弁護団). At press conferences and other events, they have

claimed that our organization's response has been dishonest. But we have already responded five times since May this year to the 99 persons for whom we have already completed an investigation into this matter. We continue to check the remaining individuals.

The total amount of money claimed by the 99 people we have responded to, is approximately 2.3 billion yen. Of that, about 800 million yen is legally valid and has been confirmed as received by our organization. Many of the other claims include some that have passed the exclusion period, some that cannot be confirmed by records, some that have already been settled, and some that have been claimed by someone else than the person himself.

Negotiations are currently stalled because they continue to insist on group negotiations for all of these claims and ignore our organization's responses. As we explained earlier, we have already responded to 664 requests. For each case, whether done personally or through a lawyer as an agent, we will continue to cooperate as organization or local congregation to respond to each and every one of them."

Freezing assets

Tanaka went on to comment the recent attempt by elements within the Japanese government to pass legislation that would immediately freeze the assets of the [Family Federation](#) of Japan and appoint a trustee to manage them. He said,

"Next, I will talk about overseas remittances. In discussions on the establishment of the law for the preservation of the assets of our organization, the overseas transfer of our organization's assets is often mentioned as one of the concerns.



Regarding this, at a press conference held by Hideyuki Teshigawara and our legal adviser in September of last year, we stated that we, as part of church reform, would significantly reduce support for overseas remittances. We have also stopped overseas support and missionary support. We do not plan to transfer our organization's funds overseas before the court ruling on the dissolution order is finalized.

In fact, we have been instructed that overseas remittances are not possible except for those with reliable documents such as invoices from the transaction bank. Therefore, there is no need to worry about transferring our organization's assets overseas before the trial of the dissolution order begins."

New proposal

President Tanaka also made a new proposal to the government of Japan,

"As I have stated above, we are not worried about responding to requests for the return of donations or the overseas transfer, and we do not believe that the Property Preservation Measures Act which is being discussed in the current Diet is necessary at all.

However, for those who are still concerned, we would like to propose a 'special deposit' from our organization. We are confident that our legal claims will be recognized in court, which has already begun proceedings on the dissolution order request. However, until a conclusion is reached in court, we have decided to prepare a deposit and deposit it with the government. The amount is expected to be between 6 billion and a maximum of 10 billion yen. After taking into account the annual budget adjustment, we were able to come up with a plan.

In the current situation where neither the victims nor the amount of damage has been identified, there is no system for depositing money under the current law. However, we are willing to prepare a deposit if the government can provide a system as a limited special measure.

Recently, the Nationwide Unification Church Victims' Countermeasures Legal Team pointed out that the potential amount of 'damage' is estimated to be around 120 billion yen. According to the results of a survey conducted by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, the cumulative amount of 'damage' over the past 43 years is one-sixth of that amount. Moreover, most of it has already been resolved by settlement or agreement, and there is no basis for the 120 billion yen. Therefore, we believe that our organization can respond sufficiently on its own in the future."

Wild allegations

Towards the end of his speech, President Tomihiro Tanaka dispelled certain wild allegations,

"I would like to make one more comment in response to the criticism that the [Family Federation](#) is anti-Japanese. Since last year, we have received criticism that 'the [Family Federation](#) has an anti-Japanese

ideology.' However, I would like to reiterate that this is not true at all. The core of the [Unification Church](#)'s teachings is to love heaven, love people, and love the country. With the family as the basic unit, it aims to realize a peaceful world through love for Japan.

愛天.愛人.愛國

*Love Heaven, love people, love country in
Chinese characters*

In fact, as one of its activities, we have been fighting on the front lines to protect Japan from the threat of international communism that denies the dignity of [God](#) and human beings. We have cooperated with the International Federation for Victory over Communism (IFVOC), a friendly organization, and have been

actively engaged in volunteer activities in various regions with the desire to love the region.

The criticism of being 'anti-Japanese' that has been directed at the [Family Federation](#) by taking out of context our close ties with Korea and some of the founder's statements is nothing more than a groundless misunderstanding, and many of our followers are most puzzled by it."

President Tanaka ended his speech by mentioning several reforms that the [Family Federation](#) has implemented since 2009.

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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

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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 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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