

FFWPU Europe and the Middle East: Questions In Japan's Parliament About Unification Church Dissolution Case

Knut Holdhus
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Satoshi Hamada speaking in the Japanese Diet (Parliament) 13th May 2024

Member of House of Councillors asking questions in parliament about Family Federation being unfairly singled out for dissolution



Satoshi Hamada (standing at bottom) asking questions to the parliamentary Administrative Oversight Committee in the Japanese Diet 13th May 2024

On 13th May 2024, Satoshi Hamada (浜田 聡 - member of the House of Councillors, the Upper House in the National Diet of Japan since 2019) asked several questions to the parliamentary Administrative Oversight Committee concerning the current case at Tokyo District Court about the Kishida administration's request for a court order to dissolve the [Family Federation](#) of Japan.

Hamada's questions are seen as an attempt to point out important perspectives that are missing from the authorities' and the media's one-sided, biased handling of the case. The apparent bias is seen by many as seriously endangering the court's impartiality in its crucial decision-making process.

Satoshi Hamada said,

"I am Satoshi Hamada from the NHK Party [also called the anti-NHK party - NHK being the national broadcasting association]. First, I would like to ask you about the issue of the [Family Federation](#), also known as the [Unification Church](#).

As for the issue of the former [Unification Church](#), my perception of the problem is probably different from the tone of the mainstream media in general, and I disagree with the direction that the former [Unification Church](#) should be dissolved.

At present, a request for a dissolution order has already been filed with the court, so I hope that the court will make a thorough adjudication.

However, as for the important perspectives that are not covered by the mainstream media, but are necessary for the court's consideration, I intend to address them in this parliament. Therefore, I kindly ask the members of the judiciary to pay close attention to my questions and written inquiries submitted to the committee and to consider them as materials for your judgment [判断材料 - refers to information or evidence used for making judgments].

Now, my first question:

If a dissolution order has been requested for the [Family Federation](#), shouldn't other religious organizations, involved in serious misconduct, also face dissolution requests?

I have prepared a document submitted by lawyer Tatsuki Nakayama (中山達樹) of Nakayama International Law Office to the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT). This document was submitted on January 4, 2023.

Based on the content of this request, I will ask my question.

The three corporations mentioned here - Kigenkai [紀元会 - a small Shinto group. In 2007 a group of members killed another member.], Kukai Mikkyō Daikinryūin [空海密教大金龍院 - esoteric Buddhist group. in 2012, a group of members beat another member to death.], and Shinji Shūmeikai [神慈秀明会 - Shinto organization followed by various scandals.] - have all been involved in incidents related to group violence and deaths.

The petition states that dissolution orders should also be issued to these three corporations, and I believe that this is a reasonable opinion.

Therefore, my question is: Are there any plans to submit dissolution order requests for these three corporations? If not, please explain the reasons."



Attorney Tatsuki Nakayama Jan. 2024



Akiko Honda (LDP), Vice-Minister of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT). Here on 26th Oct. 2023

Akiko Honda, Parliamentary Vice-Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, replied,

"I will respond to Commissioner Hamada's question. The request for a dissolution order against the former [Unification Church](#) was deemed appropriate because the case, in which widespread harm was caused by the unlawful solicitation of donations by members of the said organization, falls under the grounds for a dissolution order as stipulated in Article 81, Paragraph 1 of the Religious Corporations Act. The cases related to the religious organizations you mentioned are entirely different from those of the former [Unification Church](#). Therefore, requesting a dissolution order for the former [Unification Church](#) does not necessarily imply that the same should apply to the three organizations you pointed out, and there are no plans to do so."

To be continued. Part 2 coming soon.

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Lawmaker Brings Up Harm Done To Minority Faith

March 15, 2024 • Knut Holdhus

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Tokyo, 13th March 2024 – Published as an article in the Japanese newspaper *Sekai Nippo*. Republished with permission. Translated from Japanese. [Original article](#)

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A request to disclose the minutes of the Council of Religious Corporations was made by Senator Satoshi Hamada during a meeting of the General Affairs Committee of the House of Councillors.



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

In response to a question in a meeting of the *General Affairs Committee of the House of Councillors* on 12th March, Councillor Satoshi Hamada (浜田聡) expressed concerns regarding the non-disclosure of the minutes of the *Council of Religious Corporations*, which led to the decision of the *Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT)* to request the dissolution of the *Family Federation for World Peace and Unification* (formerly the *Unification Church*) at the *Tokyo District Court*. He stated that this non-disclosure is problematic from the perspective of religious freedom and demanded the disclosure of the minutes.

In response to this, Mariko Kobayashi (小林万里子), *Deputy Director General of the Agency for Cultural Affairs*, replied that "it was unanimously decided not to release the minutes of the meeting" until the court's decision was finalized.

Furthermore, Hamada pointed out that there have been cases where believers of the former *Unification Church* were abducted and confined by their families and "exit counselors", and forcibly coerced to renounce their faith. He noted that according to the church's announcement, the number of victims has exceeded 4,300.

Referring to the case of Toru Goto (後藤徹), who was locked up for 12 years and 5 months and subjected to coercion to leave the church, Satoshi Hamada mentioned that the family and the "exit counselor" [faith-breaker] Takashi Miyamura (宮村峻) were defeated in a civil lawsuit filed by Toru Goto, and the ruling was upheld by the *Supreme Court*. He emphasized that the government's ought to recognize that kind of harm caused to members of the religious organisation.



Toru Goto, member of the *Family Federation in Japan*, who got his life destroyed by criminal persecutors who held him captive for more than 12 years in order to break his faith. Photo (2022): Graeme Carmichael



Akiko Honda (LDP), Vice-Minister of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT). Here on 26th Oct. 2023. Photo: 首相官邸ホームページ / Wikimedia Commons. License: CC Attr 4.0 Int. Cropped

In response, *Parliamentary Vice-Minister Akiko Honda* (本田顕子) of the *Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT)* said that she would "refrain from answering" because of the ongoing dissolution case and the fact that it was an individual case.

Hamada argued, "Considering the possibility that religious freedom may be unjustly threatened by politicians distancing themselves en masse, politicians should now listen to the voices of the followers of the *Family Federation* and take action."

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In addition, he questioned whether it was inappropriate for members of the Diet to attend gatherings of an [organization](#) that the *Liberal Democratic Party* had declared it had severed ties with. In response, Akiko Honda, the *Parliamentary Vice-Minister* for the Ministry, stated, “We are not in a position to comment on the activities of individual members of the Diet or their participation in meetings with specific organizations.”

Featured image above: Satoshi Hamada in Dec. 2023. Photo: Tamiron / Wikimedia Commons. [Public domain](#) image. Cropped

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