

FFWPU Europe and the Middle East: Citizens Protest Japan's Unification Church Dissolution Plan

Knut Holdhus
June 23, 2024



On June 16, 2024, the 'Kumamoto Citizens' Association for the Protection of Basic Human Rights and Freedom of Religion' held a protest march in the arcade district of Kumamoto City against the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology's request for a dissolution order for the [Family Federation for World Peace and Unification](#)



[Sekai Nippo](#)

Members and supporters in Japan holding conference and demo locally protesting dissolution order request by Kishida administration

Tokyo, 18th June 2024 - Published as an article in the Japanese newspaper [Sekai Nippo](#). Republished with permission. Translated from Japanese. [Original article](#)

Family Federation believers protest against the dissolution order request - Kumamoto by the editorial department of the [Sekai Nippo](#)

On 16th June, members and supporters of the [Family Federation for World Peace and Unification](#) (Family Federation) held the 'Kumamoto Conference to Protect Freedom of Religion' at a hotel in Kumamoto City. They protested against the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology's request for a dissolution order against the [Family Federation](#). Afterward, about 500 participants marched in a demonstration through the downtown area of the city.



Masumi Fukuda speaking in Kumamoto 16th June 2024

Journalist Masumi Fukuda (福田ますみ), who gave a speech at the conference, stressed, 'To protect the [Family Federation](#)'s freedom of religion, it is crucial to raise our voices specifically and hold demonstrations in a way that the general public can understand.'

Islamic critic Humayun A. Mughal (フマユン・A・ムガル) warned, 'In Islam, faith in [God](#) is taught, and religion or churches are necessary when one's heart is overwhelmed. If they are destroyed, the number of suicides might increase.'

Tonomi Isao (主海偉佐雄), chairman of the 'Kumamoto Prefectural Citizens' Association for the Protection of Basic Human Rights and Freedom of Religion', which organized the rally, said in his opening remarks, 'Nothing is more important to us than our faith. We want to make a strong

appeal for that in the demonstration that will take place after this meeting.'

After the conference, participants marched through the arcade district of Kumamoto City, chanting slogans such as 'We are firmly opposed to the dissolution order.' The media and the Diet have intensified their criticism of large donations following police information that Tetsuya Yamagami, who shot former

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, did so because of the mother's large donations to the [Family Federation](#). This has led to a request for a court order to dissolve the [religious corporation](#).



Masumi Fukuda speaking in Kumamoto 16th June 2024. Photo: Screenshot from video recording.

If dissolved, all employees of the [organization](#) would lose their jobs, all assets would be seized, and believers would lose their places of worship, resulting in significant restrictions on their faith.

Text: The editorial department of the [Sekai Nippo](#)

Masumi Fukuda (福田ますみ) is a Japanese non-fiction author and award-winning journalist, well known for her investigative journalism. She has written several in-depth reports about the persecution of the [Family Federation](#) in Japan and has exposed how a [leftwing network of lawyers](#) uses any means to have the [Family Federation](#) dissolved. Her articles have been published mainly in Japan, but several are republished by [Bitter Winter](#), the international online magazine on religious freedom and human rights.

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State And Media Creating “Today’s Non-Citizens”

January 8, 2024 • Knut Holdhus

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Japanese journalist exposes how government, media and public opinion effectively have made members into “non-citizens”

Tokyo, 5th January 2024 – Published as an article in the Japanese newspaper Sekai Nippo. Republished with permission. Translated from Japanese. [Original article](#)

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Non-Citizens”

Part 6 of an interview with Masaki Kubota (窪田 順生), author of “Infiltrating the Former Unification Church”

by Seisaku Morita (森田 清策)

[Part 1](#), [part 2](#), [part 3](#), [part 4](#), [part 5](#), [part 7](#)

– The government, media, and public opinion are creating a synergistic effect (相乗効果) [producing a combined effect greater than the sum of their separate effects], resulting in a “control of thought and religion” (思想・宗教統制) we are not aware of.



Logo of the Sekai Nippo

I sense the beginning of fascism. First, they take away freedom of religion, then they take away freedom of speech. They don’t suddenly impose a strict control, but gradually tighten it. After publishing the book, I realized that some people will be silenced if they are slammed by those around them. Then, the state will control them more and more. If the state decides, “Anything in this direction is good,” then anything other than what the state has decided becomes “anti-social”. I think this is the first step towards such a society.

If Prime

Minister Fumio Kishida says that from now on he will have no relations with socially problematic organisations, those taking a stance against the Liberal Democrats can continue to point out the social problems of other religious organisations, such as the Soka Gakkai [創価学会 – the new Buddhist movement on which the political party Komeito is based, the governing Liberal Democratic Party’s coalition partner]. They can say, “Why do you declare you have cut ties with the former Unification Church (Family Federation for World Peace and Unification), but not with other religious groups?” It would not be a situation where they could form a coalition. It can be said that Prime Minister Kishida without thinking has destroyed the identity of the Liberal Democratic Party.

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

Moreover, if we tamper with freedom of thought and religion, *сиротин Аринуилс тхэргэтир нэрэгдэл өгөхө тусарч хил аригүгжээр ураг* dissolution order because it was the Prime Minister’s order, and the remaining part of their careers would be in jeopardy should they not obey.

What they did was to accumulate the stories of “victims” by going back in time. On the other hand, they did not listen to the stories of active believers. Normally, if there is a problem, one must first listen to the believers of the group that is thought to have a problem.

Instead of doing that, if they only listen to the stories of former believers who quit 20 years ago, and pile up all of that, saying “there is so much damage,” Soka Gakkai [創価学会 – the new Buddhist movement on which the political party Komeito is based, the governing Liberal Democratic Party’s coalition partner] will also be in danger. The story is so far-fetched that it should be pointed out by the media. But on the contrary, they are pleased that “support” is overwhelming in public opinion polls. It’s a terrifying situation where even extrajudicial matters are approved as long as everyone agrees.

– In your book, the situation of the believers surrounded on

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all sides (四面楚歌), is described as “today’s non-citizens” (令和の非国民).



From Japanese history: Flag used by the Righteous Army during the February 26, 1936 coup attempt. The four characters reading “Revere the Emperor, Destroy the Traitors” (尊皇討奸) are placed in the corners of a standard Japanese flag. Photo: Cckerberos / Wikimedia Commons. [Public domain image](#)

Believers might feel bad, but the term “today’s non-citizens” which I used, means they have become the same as renegades during wartime.

Those who were said to be non-citizens then, were not beaten up because of laws such as a “Non-Citizens Exclusion Act” (非国民排斥法). At that time, the media frequently

wrote articles about the war at a time when the fate of the Japanese people was at stake. As the stories of the soldiers were published in newspapers and broadcast on radio, the word “non-citizen” was spread, and ordinary people lynched those who opposed the war.

Indeed, now, believers from the former [Unification Church](#) are not lynched these days. However, they can't rent a hall, and they are told not to come to summer festivals, and they are treated like non-citizens. This is deeply related to the media reports and Prime Minister Kishida's declaration of cutting all ties.

– Even media people are afraid to meet today’s non-citizens.

After I interviewed Masayoshi Kajikuri (梶栗正義), chairman of *International Federation for Victory over Communism* (国際勝共連合), I suggested to my media acquaintances, “I’m going to introduce you, so why don’t you interview him and listen to his story?” However, they refused out of fear what he would do. They even said no to just meeting him and listen to his story.



Masayoshi Kajikuri (梶栗正義). Photo: IFVOC

The image that has been created is scarier than the reality. Many people think they can’t communicate with members. By publishing a book, I wanted to shatter that image. Followers might be talkative and have different values from you in some areas, but they are people with whom you can have a dialogue.

Continued in [part 7](#).

[Part 1](#), [part 2](#), [part 3](#), [part 4](#), [part 5](#), [part 7](#)

Featured image above: Masaki Kubota, Japanese author and journalist. Photo / graphics: Sekai Nippo.

More about “non-citizens”: [A One-Sided, Prejudiced, Unfair Japanese Media](#)

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Masaki Kubota (窪田順生) is a non-fiction writer who has contributed to weekly and monthly magazines. He has also worked first as a producer, then as an advisor for TV-documentaries. He is journalist for a weekly magazine and a newspaper, and editor of a monthly magazine. In addition, he works as a media consultant, having conducted over 200 public relations consultations and media training sessions (training on how to handle interviews).

His books include

- "Spin Doctor – Techniques of Information Manipulation Used by Professionals Who 'Hush up Bad Information'" (Kodansha Alpha Bunko – 2009), which deals with Japan's political and corporate public relations strategies, and
- "14 Stairs – Reportage on the Niigata Girl's 9 Years and 2 Months Confinement Case" (Shogakukan – 2006), which won the 12th Shogakukan Non-fiction Award for Excellence.
- His new book, "Infiltrating the Former Unification Church – the Complete Story of the Request for a Dissolution Order and the Deepest Secrets of the 'No Good Coverage'", is currently on sale.



The front cover of 'Infiltrating the Former Unification Church' (潜入旧統一教会「解散命令請求」取材NG最深部の全貌 – Tankobon Softcover, Nov. 2023), by Masaki Kubota (窪田順生).

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