

FFWPU Europe and Middle East: Dissolution of FFWPU Case - Wild Claims, Illegal Actions

Knut Holdhus
October 4, 2024



Patricia Duval, French attorney and expert on international human rights law. She has defended the rights of minorities of religion or belief in domestic and international fora, and before international institutions such as the European Court of Human Rights, the Council of Europe, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, the European Union, and the United Nations. She has also published numerous scholarly articles on freedom of religion or belief

Kishida administration has built its case against religious minority on wild claims and illegal activities by leftwing activist lawyers hostile to the faith



Patricia Duval, French attorney specialised in international human rights law, sent on 22nd September 2024, a 29-page report titled "Japan: A Witch Hunt to Eradicate the [Unification Church](#)" to several UN offices. [Bitter Winter](#), the leading international magazine on religious freedom and human rights published 3 days later, on 25th September, an [executive summary](#) of the report. The day after, the magazine started publishing a 5-part series where Duval gives a more detailed description of the content.

Part 3 of comment on [first article of Bitter Winter's 5-part series](#)

See [part 1](#), [part 2](#)

Patricia Duval shows that the Kishida administration has no criminal cases with which to justify dissolving the [Family Federation](#) (formerly the [Unification Church](#)). They rely mainly on so-called tort cases - alleged civil wrongs that may have caused harm.

In one such civil case cited by the government, three members who became claimants were kidnapped and forcibly detained by their families and put through a faith-breaking process by two Christian pastors. These pastors aimed to convince the claimants that true Christianity differed from the teachings of the [Unification Church](#) (Kobe District Court, decision of 10th

April 2001, case #9). While the Kobe District Court initially dismissed the case, the Osaka High Court reversed the decision on 21st May 2003, awarding damages to the claimants.

In this case, as in most other such cases, the claimants had sought damages for "fraudulent and brainwashing evangelism" by the [Unification Church](#). Through the faith-breaking carried out by the pastors while the claimants were held in captivity, they were coerced to renounce their faith and leave the [church](#).

One of the faith-breakers was pastor Mamoru Takazawa (高澤守). He was cross-examined during the hearings and made several key admissions. When asked if he was aware that the [Unification Church](#) had

criticized his activities as abduction and forcible detention, he confirmed his awareness but justified his actions, claiming that, since the families were involved, it should be considered a form of "protection" rather than illegal behavior (Kobe District Court, Minutes of Court hearing, 26th March 1996, p. 81).



Pastor and faith-breaker: Mamoru Takazawa of the Christian Truth Church of Kobe

Pastor Takazawa also admitted to using physical restraint as part of the faith-breaking process, stating that he had been doing so for around ten years. He explained that this was not an isolated action but part of a broader, unified practice among pastors conducting "rescue activities" throughout Japan (Kobe District Court, Minutes of Court hearing, 21st May 1996, p. 25).



Faith-breaker Takashi Miyamura, responsible for hundreds of deprogrammings based on abduction and forcible detention. In this illustration he is together with so-called apostates, persons already brainwashed (de-converted) by him and colleagues, trying to break the faith of one more member of the [Unification Church](#) in Japan. In huge number of cases apostates were forced to sue the [Unification Church](#)

Furthermore, he acknowledged that such practices were typically illegal but defended his continued involvement by arguing that once someone firmly embraced the [teachings](#) of the [Unification Church](#), it was, in his opinion, impossible for them to leave naturally without external intervention (Kobe District Court, Minutes of Court hearing, 26th March 1996, pp. 81-82).

The purpose of the faith-breaking, as described in court, was to break the firm beliefs held by the followers of the [Unification Church](#). This method became widespread and was endorsed by a network of lawyers who advised families to engage in what they called "protective" measures against members of the [Unification Church](#). Central to their legal strategy was the claim of "undue influence" or "brainwashing evangelism", which formed the foundation of the tort claims against the [church](#).

A major issue with this approach is that the lawyers advising families and promoting faith-breaking participated in activities that appear to violate international human rights law. Nevertheless, they have continued to advocate for these practices, and over the years, they have managed to secure several court rulings in Japan that supported their claims. These rulings, in turn, were used to bolster the Kishida administration's request for a court order to dissolve the [Family Federation](#), as the [Unification Church](#) now is called.

Japanese courts have accepted the theory that alleges "undue influence" from the [Unification Church](#). This has led to judgments ordering the return of donations made by former followers.

This was the case even after the courts had heard testimonies from faith-breakers about the claimants' strong commitment to the beliefs of the [Unification Church](#) when making those donations. Based on such claims of "undue influence", the courts have declared the activities of the [Unification Church](#) "illegal", and these rulings now

form an essential part of the government's case for dissolving the [Family Federation](#).

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Terms From Consumer Law Used To Rob Faith

• September 30, 2024 • Knut Holdhus



Human rights expert reveals shocking story of how lawyers involved in faith-breaking managed to persuade gullible Japanese judges to allow the use of consumer law to rob Family Federation



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Part 2 of comment on [first article of Bitter Winter's 5-part series](#)

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After pointing out [Japan's non-compliance with UNHRC suggestions](#), [Patricia Duval](#) in her above-mentioned 29-page report exposes in great detail the **amazing and shocking grand scheme leftwing lawyers put into action in order to wipe out the Family Federation**, formerly called the [Unification Church](#).

Duval describes how **for more than 30 years, large-scale faith-breaking was**

carried out with Unification Church members as victims, with the **implicit approval of the Japanese authorities**. The sheer **magnitude of the faith-breaking** led to what Duval depicts as "an **avalanche of tort cases**" – alleged civil wrongs that may have caused harm. Such civil cases were initiated by individuals who had once been members, but had been abducted, forcibly detained and become victims of faith-breaking. They were then **coerced by professional faith-breakers and the National Network of Lawyers Against Spiritual Sales to sue the Unification Church**, now called the [Family Federation](#).

The network of lawyers was formed in 1987 and has been aligned with the Socialist and the Communist Party. **Its goal was to fight the Unification Church**, which actively opposed Communism at the time. One of the leftwing network's key objectives was to prevent the passage of the *Anti-Espionage Law*, which was supported by the *International Federation for Victory over Communism* (IFVOC), an organization with the same founder as the [Unification Church](#) – South Korean [Sun Myung Moon](#).

At the Network's inception, attorney Hiroshi Yamaguchi, a prominent member, remarked that "money made from spiritual sales is being used to fund the [Unification Church](#) and the IFVOC's efforts to enact the *Anti-Espionage Law*." The lawyers of the hostile network claimed that funds raised by the [church](#) through so-called "spiritual sales" were being used to fight Communism.



Hiroshi Yamaguchi, activist leftwing lawyer and founder and leading member of National Network of Lawyers Against Spiritual Sales (NNLASS). Photo: Screenshot / [Bitter Winter](#)

"Spiritual sales" is an expression coined by those very same lawyers based on consumer law and refers to sales conducted by some [church](#) members – often through private businesses – of items like seals, statues, vases, and miniature pagodas at prices far exceeding their actual value. **Similar practices can be found in other traditional religions, such as the Catholic Church.**

The network of leftwing lawyers also applied the term "spiritual sales" to donations given to help the work of the [Unification Church](#), arguing that the [church](#) "sold" eternal salvation by exploiting anxiety followers may have had. **The lawyers made such claims specifically about the Unification Church even though concepts like hell and salvation are common in the majority of religions.**

The term "spiritual sales" was deliberately chosen by opponents of new religious movements in order to classify donations to minority religions as consumer law issues, thus allowing donors to claim refunds under the pretext of fraudulent sales.

This approach was also seen in other countries, such as Germany in 1997. Then, a law was proposed which aimed to regulate "commercial services of assistance in overcoming life's difficulties". It was labeled by activists against new religious movements as "Psycho Contract Law". However, the bill was abandoned after **Lutheran and Catholic Church representatives expressed concerns that it would also restrict spiritual counseling services provided by their churches.**

In Japan, the leftwing network of lawyers successfully convinced courts that donations to the [Unification Church](#) were likely made under coercion, claiming the [church](#) created anxiety to deprive donors of their free will. **By applying consumer law principles, the network of hostile lawyers dismissed the religious faith of Unification Church members who collect donations (raise funds), arguing that their beliefs were merely a guise for profit-making.**

All former members who were abducted, forcibly detained and exposed to faith-breaking, were subsequently referred to lawyers from the network fighting the Unification Church, either by their faith-breakers or their families, to file lawsuits against the church for

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“wrongful solicitation of donations and proselytizing”, seeking damages.

Masumi Fukuda, a sociologist and investigative journalist, conducted an in-depth investigation of the entire process of faith-breaking and interviewed a considerable number of members of the former **Unification Church** who had had their faith broken by so-called deprogrammers. Based on her findings, she sent a letter to the authorities, urging them to withdraw their request for a court order to dissolve the **church**, now called the **Family Federation**.



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

Patricia Duval writes,

“She [Fukuda] gave a figure of over **4,300 believers** in Japan who have been abducted by physical violence or deception, locked up for long periods of time in apartments or other places, and **not released until they abandoned their faith.**”

Masumi Fukuda came to the conclusion that the majority of individuals who brought legal proceedings against the **church** alleging harm suffered and seeking compensation, were former members who had been **forced through this inhuman faith-breaking process. On top of that, they were required by the lawyers to prove their genuine intent to leave the church by filing lawsuits.**

Fukuda detailed how faith-breaking was followed by civil lawsuits for damages. She explained:

“In the 17th century persecution of Christians in Japan, to save their life it was not enough for them to tell the authorities they had abandoned Christianity. They were asked to trample a painting of Jesus underfoot to prove they were no longer Christians. Similarly, now it was not enough for deprogrammed believers to state they were no longer members of the **Unification Church. They should prove they had really left the church by claiming they had been ‘victims of spiritual sales,’ and filing lawsuits demanding that the church return the money** they had paid for the items they had purchased, such as marble vases, two-stories pagodas, seals, and other items.”



This print shows Fumi-e (踏み絵 fumi “stepping-on” + e “picture”); step on a picture with the likeness of e.g. the Cross of Jesus or the Virgin Mary. This method was used to discover practicing Christians (Kirishitan) of the Catholic Church and sympathizers, which was banned by the Tokugawa Shogunate at that time. Originally, the method of discovery itself was called efumi (絵踏), but the method itself is often called fumi-e. Photo: Unknown author. Public domain image. Cropped

Fukuda also highlighted how the **lawyers from the network combating the Unification Church were deeply involved in the faith-breaking process.** She noted that all those who ultimately renounced their faith were consistently directed to this network to pursue legal action against the **church.**

She writes that the activist network of lawyers played a significant role

“in this abduction and confinement business because **they were the attorneys in the subsequent lawsuits** filed by former believers against the **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.”

In some cases, the **network’s lawyers were involved from the outset, as they were often the ones who advised families to pursue faith-breaking as a solution.** Fukuda explains,

“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."



Masaki Kito (紀藤正樹), leading activist leftwing lawyer of National Network of Lawyers Against Spiritual Sales (NNLASS). Photo (2022): Screenshot / [Sekai Nippo](#)



Hostile activist against [Family Federation](#): Yoshifu Arita (有田芳生), former House of Councilors member for CDP, the party professional faith-breaker Miyamura was advisor to. Before that, Arita was a communist politician 1990-2007. Photo: [碧庵](#) / Wikimedia Commons. License: [CC ASA 3.0 Unp](#). Cropped



Eito Suzuki (鈴木エイト), born as Kiyofumi Tanaka. Photo: [Mikkabie](#) / Wikimedia Commons. License: [CC ASA 4.0 Int](#). Cropped

The network fighting the [Unification Church](#) – including attorney Masaki Kito and journalists Yoshifu Arita and Eito Suzuki – **continues to defend faith-breaking**, claiming it was carried out to “protect” former members of the church.

See [part 1](#), [part 3](#)

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Featured image above: Japanese lawyers discussing consumer law. Illustration: [Microsoft Designer Image Creator](#), 30th September 2024

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