

FFWPU Europe and the Middle East: If We Don't Speak Up, Japan's Bullying Of Us Will Continue

Knut Holdhus
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Speakers discussing the future vision of the [Family Federation](#) Oct. 13, 2024, Urawa Ward, Saitama City, Japan



[Sekai Nippo](#)

2nd-generation member tells conference on freedom of religion that bullying of religious minority in Japan is very likely to continue if they don't raise their voices

Tokyo, 14th October 2024 - Published as an article in the Japanese newspaper [Sekai Nippo](#). Republished with permission. Translated from Japanese. [Original article](#).

"Points of connection with society"

One year since the request for a court order to dissolve the Family Federation

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

On 13th October 2024, a symposium with the theme of freedom of religion and basic human rights was held in Saitama City. It marked that one year has passed since the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) filed a request with the Tokyo District Court to issue an order to dissolve the [Family Federation for World Peace and Unification](#) (formerly known as the [Unification Church](#)). Participants at the symposium asserted that freedom of religion and basic human rights should be protected. At the same time, they acknowledged the need for reflection where necessary and emphasized the importance of sending positive messages to society.



Masaki Kubota

Teruaki Tsuji (辻照明), representing "Saitama Citizens' Group for the Protection of Freedom of Religion and Basic Human Rights", criticized the ministry's decision, stating that it suppresses freedom of thought and belief.

Following this, there was a report that second-generation believers had been excluded from an international event hosted by an organization affiliated with Saitama prefecture, because the governor of Saitama, Motohiro Ono (大野元裕), had declared a severance of ties with the [Family Federation](#).

Non-fiction writer Masaki Kubota (窪田順生), who continues to cover the [Family Federation](#), stated that protecting freedom of religion requires three key elements: (1) documenting facts of repression, (2) engaging in dialogue with people of differing values, and (3) maintaining a positive attitude and not forgetting humor.

Tatsuki Nakayama (中山達樹), an international lawyer advising the [Family Federation](#) on compliance, advised that the [Family Federation](#) is perceived similarly to Aum Shinrikyo by the public. In order to be understood it is crucial to have points of connection with society.



Motohiro Ono, Japanese politician from Democratic Party for the People (DPP), governor of Saitama Prefecture since 2019



44Nozomi Kojima

Nozomi Kojima (小島希晶), representing the "Second-Generation Association to Protect the Human Rights of Believers", revealed that due to the dissolution order, the image of religion as a whole has worsened. When interacting with members of other religions, they feel the need to first offer an apology. She also shared that several religious figures had advised them to "be more confident", and had also said,

"If you don't raise your voice, you will continue to be bullied."

After the symposium, participants marched around the area where the Saitama Prefectural Offices are located, chanting slogans such as "Protect freedom of religion and basic human rights" and "We firmly oppose the dissolution order."

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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.



Media Helping Terrorist Reach His Goal

• February 19, 2024 • Knut Holdhus

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Japanese media helping terrorist Yamagami accomplish his objectives

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Investigating the Request for an Order to Dissolve the Family Federation – Politics and Media out of Control

Part 3: Biased Media: "Information Disaster" Fueled by Terrorist

by the Editorial Department of Sekai Nippo

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

In the media coverage of the incident when former Prime Minister Abe was shot on 8th July 2022, there was extremely little criticism of the terrorist act itself committed by defendant Tetsuya Yamagami (山上徹也).



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On the contrary, the media outlets that had opposed Shinzo Abe's politics during his tenure as prime minister, rather focused on the **Family Federation for World Peace and Unification** (formerly the Unification Church). Those news channels were rather more critical of the **religious organisation**, **emphasizing Yamagami's feelings of being a victim** due to his mother's large donations to the **religious organisation**. The defendant claimed those feelings were his motive for committing the crime.

The press conferences of *National Network of Lawyers Against Spiritual Sales*, which is in dispute with the **religious organisation**, have been widely reported. At the same time, the **claims of the religious organisation and individual believers have hardly ever been mentioned**. Amidst this, there was a **widespread one-sided discourse** demanding sanctions against the **Family Federation**. Naturally, this had a negative impact on the Kishida cabinet's approval rating in public opinion polls.

On 19th October 2022, Fumio Kishida without much effort and **without Cabinet approval**, made a change in the interpretation of the *Religious Corporations Act*. The move was criticized as "**changing one's mind like the wind**", yet both the ruling and opposition parties joined the Prime Minister in his **disregard for procedure**. At that time, the Japanese media stood by and watched as the **authorities readily violated the basic human right of "freedom of religion" guaranteed by the constitution**. This exposed a double standard that is in stark contrast to the openly opposing attitude of the media shown during the 2015 security legislation.



Jacinda Ardern, the Prime Minister of New Zealand 2017-2023. Photo: New Zealand Government, Office of the Governor-General / Wikimedia Commons. License: [CC ASA 4.0 Int.](#) Cropped

Especially since the terror attacks on the United States 11th September 2001, terrorism has been regarded as one of the greatest threats to the security of modern society. Former New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern, said of a terrorist [who was seeking notoriety], "We [...] will give him nothing, not even his name." However, the lessons learnt from that have not been heeded [in Japan]. By allowing the *Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology* to request a dissolution order – in other words, effectively giving the **religious organisation** a "death sentence" – the Japanese **media inadvertently has helped the terrorist accomplish his goals**.

At a public symposium held on 20th January 2024, author



Fumihiko Kato 20th Jan. 2024. Photo: Screenshot from video recording by UPF-Japan.

Fumihiko Kato (加藤文宏) analyzed big data using AI and announced that the huge amount of news coverage critical of the **religious organisation** was ultimately directed at the Kishida administration. In order to deflect this criticism, Fumio Kishida clearly demonstrated his stance by aiming to cut ties with the **Family Federation** and related organizations from then on, and by issuing a dissolution order against the **religious corporation** in an effort to avoid blame and regain support for his cabinet.

Under these circumstances, the **religious organisation** and ordinary believers have become targets of people's hatred. The above-mentioned Kato has **condemned the media's behavior**, which rather than checking the power, has allowed it to run amok. He calls this an "information disaster". At a press conference, the **religious organisation** revealed a number of **discriminatory incidents**, including members being fired at their workplace, cancellation of job offers, teachers criticizing the **religious organisation** during class, suicides, suicide attempts, and graffiti marking the facility as belonging to a "cult". Despite the Kishida Cabinet requesting a dissolution order, its support rate has decreased. Also, the opposition parties pursuing the matter, have been unable to escape from low approval ratings.

Some say that the one-sided media coverage bashing the **religious organisation** has led to a rift between executives and young reporters within major media outlets. 2nd-generation members of the **religious organisation** have held panel discussions with journalists and experts in open forums. In addition, meetings have been held steadily to denounce 4,300 members of the **religious organisation** being abducted and locked up in an attempt to forcibly break their faith. The **articles written by reporters who covered those events have not seen the light of day**.

However, it was reported that *Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology* Masakazu Morioka (森山正弘)



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technology Masahito Moriyama (森山正広), who filed a request for a dissolution order with Tokyo District Court, had exchanged an "endorsement-affirming form" with a Unification Church-related organization in Hyogo Prefecture ahead of the 2021 House of Representatives election. Believers had actively made phone calls to support his election.



Masahito Moriyama, Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT). Photo (2023): 首相官邸ホームページ. License: CC Attr 4.0 Int. Cropped

As a result, **the very minister who received support from that organization ended up requesting a dissolution order.** That led to voices of discontent from employees and believers of related organizations being covered by various media outlets. In the future, it should be further examined whether his action violates the freedom of religion guaranteed by the constitution. In addition, his action raises issues regarding governance.

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

Featured image above: Positional relationship between former prime minister Shinzo Abe and the shooter Tetsuya Yamagami on his assassination. Sourced from Nikkei.com. Photo: Asanagi / Wikimedia Commons. License: CC CC0 1.0 UPDD

"Media Helping Terrorist Reach His Goal" – text: Religion and politics covering team of the Editorial Department of Sekai Nippo.

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