

FFWPU Europe and Middle East: Japanese Government: Get the Family Fed At All Costs

Knut Holdhus
March 9, 2026



Masumi Fukuda, investigative journalist and award-winning Japanese author



Investigative journalist claims that authorities submitting fabricated evidence and court basing verdict on assumptions, not evidence, indicate that dissolution of large religious organization was politically orchestrated and had to be take place no matter what

Tokyo, 5th March 2026 - Published as an article in the Japanese newspaper [Sekai Nippo](#). Republished with permission. Translated from Japanese. [Original article](#).

"Unjust State-Driven Trial - Protect the Human Rights of Believers"

Opinion Piece by Well-Known Nonfiction Writer

by Masumi Fukuda (福田ますみ), investigative journalist and award-winning Japanese author.



The case against the [Family Federation](#) in Japan in a nutshell, as described by investigative journalist Masumi Fukuda. Illustration: Chat GPT

When the [first-instance decision](#) was issued on 25th March last year, it seems that quite a few believers never imagined that a dissolution order would actually be handed down. However, I had long said at gatherings and elsewhere that we could by no means be optimistic. After reviewing many records of lawsuits concerning [large donations](#) made to the [religious organization](#), I noticed that there were numerous unjust rulings in which the [organization](#) was made to lose for unreasonable reasons. Unfortunately, my fears proved correct. Yet the content of [this decision](#) was truly terrible.

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The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT), facing the fact that there had been almost no damage since the compliance declaration, forcibly [fabricated evidence](#) by even [falsifying and altering written statements](#) from former believers. However, this [fabrication](#) was exposed in court, and the court could no longer adopt these materials as evidence. As a result, the grounds for dissolution effectively ceased to exist. In response, the court - apparently anxious that it must dissolve the [organization](#) no matter what - resorted to [speculating about damage](#).

Even though it acknowledged that harm had significantly decreased after the compliance declaration [See editor's note 1 below], the court simply [assumed](#) that there must still be latent, hidden damage.

Furthermore, it went so far as to judge that settlements and negotiated agreements themselves constituted illegal acts. I am not a legal expert, but even so, I was stunned by this acrobatic stretch of logic. It has reached the level of mere fault-finding and nitpicking.

Even after the case moved to the High Court, I had a pessimistic view: if the High Court inherited such irrational reasoning, then no matter how strong the [Unification Church](#)'s arguments were, it would have no chance of winning. However, according to what I heard indirectly, the High Court judges asked MEXT to "present concrete evidence in accordance with the principle of trial by evidence", yet MEXT did not produce any new evidence. Hearing this gave me a glimmer of hope. Nevertheless, the High Court ultimately [issued a decision](#) that followed the [first-instance ruling](#).

Even I, who am not a believer, was truly shocked. Japan's judiciary [issued this decision](#) with the clear intention that the [Family Federation](#) must be dissolved, ignoring even the proper procedures (due process) guaranteed by the Constitution. Just like the [first-instance ruling](#), there is no doubt that this is a politically driven trial.



Will Soka Gakkai be next? Here, Daisaku Ikeda (1928-2023), Buddhist philosopher, peacebuilder, educator, author and poet who was the Founding President of Soka Gakkai International. The photo shows him with the Soka Gakkai Student Division in Takasaki, Gunma Prefecture, Japan

This is no longer merely a problem affecting a single religious organization. By making such an unjust and extra-legal [decision](#), a precedent has been created in which an unpopular group can be crushed by force. I have even heard people say that the next target might be Soka Gakkai [See editor's note 2 below] or others. This would constitute clear religious persecution and would shake the very foundations of the

rule of law.

What is most worrying, however, is discrimination and persecution against the believers themselves. A situation is approaching in which believers - who have committed no crime - may be chased away as if they were criminals. The fundamental human rights that Japanese citizens normally enjoy are now at risk of being taken away. I believe the [organization](#) must urgently demand that the government strongly protect and safeguard the human rights of its believers.

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[Editor's note 1: The 2009 compliance declaration of the [Unification Church](#) of Japan (now the [Family Federation for World Peace and Unification](#)) was a formal commitment by the [organization](#) to reform its practices in response to longstanding public criticism and legal challenges.

The [Unification Church](#) in Japan had faced numerous allegations related to recruitment tactics and donation solicitation, termed "spiritual sales" (靈感商法) by a hostile network of activist lawyers who had declared the [religious organization](#) an enemy. These issues led to multiple lawsuits orchestrated by the activist lawyers and significant media backlash. This prompted the [organization](#) to take measures to restore its reputation and demonstrate compliance with legal and ethical standards.

The [religious organization](#) pledged to stop possibly unethical donation practices, including what the hostile network of lawyers claimed amounted to "pressuring members into making large financial contributions under spiritual pretexts."

This was in response to accusations from the same activist lawyers that followers "were being manipulated into giving away substantial amounts of money or property."

The [Unification Church](#) stated it would enhance internal oversight to ensure compliance with ethical and legal standards. Measures included better training for leaders and stricter guidelines for evangelization and solicitation of donations.

After this compliance declaration, there was a significant decrease in the number of lawsuits against the [Unification Church](#) - since 2015 called the [Family Federation](#). The [religious organization](#) has used this as evidence that it has improved its practices and should not be subject to [dissolution](#).]

[Editor's note 2: Soka Gakkai, a global lay Buddhist organization originating in Japan, aims to create an "ideal world" based on the principles of Nichiren Buddhism, which emphasizes individual empowerment, inner transformation, and societal harmony. Their vision is often framed as kosen-rufu, meaning the widespread propagation of Buddhist values to establish peace and happiness for all.

Soka Gakkai promotes peace, culture, and education through initiatives that focus on personal transformation (human revolution) - the belief that changing oneself positively impacts society; peace activism - anti-nuclear campaigns, human rights advocacy, and interfaith dialogue; education - institutions like Soka University emphasize value creation and global citizenship; community engagement - social welfare programs, disaster relief, and environmental sustainability efforts.



To actualize these ideals in governance, Soka Gakkai founded the Komeito party in 1964 (now known as New Komeito or simply Komeito). The party's purpose was to translate Buddhist-based humanistic values into public policy. While legally separate from Soka Gakkai, Komeito has long been backed by members of Soka Gakkai and focuses on peace-oriented diplomacy (e.g., supporting Japan's pacifist constitution); social welfare policies (benefiting education, healthcare, and the elderly); grassroots democracy (reflecting the voice of ordinary citizens)

Since 1999, Komeito has been a coalition partner with the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), influencing policies while maintaining a centrist stance.

Despite its contributions, Soka Gakkai's political role has been controversial, with critics accusing it of blurring the lines between religion and politics. Some also argue that Komeito's alliance with the conservative LDP compromises its original pacifist ideals.

Soka Gakkai envisions an ideal world through personal empowerment, education, and political engagement. While its approach is rooted in Buddhist ethics, its political involvement remains a complex and debated issue.]

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Preparations Underway For Supreme Court Appeal

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Statement issued after Tokyo High Court upholds dissolution of organization of large religious minority as preparations are being made for last resort special appeal to Supreme Court



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Federation President Masaichi Hori Issues Statement Following Tokyo High Court Decision on Dissolution Order

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



Japanese followers of the [Family Federation](#) gathering in a private home 8th March, on the first Sunday after the [Tokyo High Court ruling](#) on 4th March 2026. Photo: Personal

On 4th March, the [Tokyo High Court](#) decided to uphold the [first instance ruling](#) of the [Tokyo District Court](#) ordering the dissolution of the religious corporation [Family Federation for World Peace and Unification](#) (formerly the [Unification Church](#)).

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In response, Masaichi Hori (堀 正一), who had served as president of the [Family Federation](#), released a statement on 5th March in his personal capacity. In it, Hori declared that the decision violates the principle of [trial based on evidence](#) and that preparations [[See editor's note below](#)] are underway to file a special appeal to the Supreme Court.

He also stated that he will respond sincerely to [liquidation procedures](#) and called for measures to ensure that human rights violations against believers do not occur. Hori lost his position as president when the [liquidation process](#) began following the [High Court's decision](#).

The full text of the statement is as follows.

Statement Following the High Court Decision

As you know, at 11:00 a.m. on 4th March, the [Tokyo High Court](#) issued [its decision](#) and dismissed the [Family Federation's appeal](#). It is extremely regrettable that the [Family Federation's](#) arguments were not accepted in the appeal proceedings.

In particular, regarding the [original decision](#) of the [Tokyo District Court](#), although it deprives the believers of the preeminent human right of freedom of religion, the court readily endorsed and retroactively applied [arbitrary changes](#) to long-established legal interpretations. This constitutes a [violation of both the Constitution](#) and international law.

Furthermore, we argued before the High Court that arbitrary conjecture [not based on facts or evidence](#) violates the principle of adjudication based on evidence.

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In addition, in October last year, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights issued a [press release](#) warning that the [Tokyo District Court's decision](#) violated international law. However, the *Tokyo High Court* rejected the above arguments and issued [its decision](#) while completely ignoring the warnings from the international community.

Moreover, since 2022 the [Family Federation](#) has implemented a number of church reforms, including obtaining donation confirmation forms and establishing certified counselors. After the *Act on the Prevention of Improper Solicitation of Donations* was enacted in 2023, there have been no cases in which the [organization](#) received recommendations or orders from the *Consumer Affairs Agency*.



No more access to its cemeteries. Here, the “Central Japan Cemetery” which spreads across a mountain area in Suzuka City, Mie Prefecture. Photo: Takahide Ishii (石井孝秀); image partially edited.

Recently, through [settlements with parties in group lawsuits](#) and through a [compensation committee](#), the [organization](#) has also addressed claims from many individuals alleging damages, even beyond what is required by law.

Despite such efforts toward reform and improvement, the [dissolution order of the District Court](#) was [upheld](#) primarily on the basis of settlements and agreements, without recognizing these reforms and without concrete evidence of legal violations. This is deeply regrettable. After consulting promptly with our attorneys, we intend to proceed with preparations for an appeal to the Supreme Court.

At the same time, on 4th March the court appointed a liquidator to oversee the [liquidation process](#). We intend to respond sincerely to the liquidation procedures.

Unfortunately, following the assassination of former Prime Minister Abe and also when the [District Court issued the dissolution order](#), numerous [human rights violations](#) occurred against members and their families, including [discrimination](#), [prejudice](#), [defamation](#), and [harassment](#). We sincerely ask everyone to ensure that such [violations against our members](#) and their families do not occur in the future.

Furthermore, we are an organization that sincerely believes in and follows [God](#), the Heavenly Parent, and works to realize God’s will. Therefore, even if our corporate legal status is [denied](#), there will be absolutely no change in our commitment to continue religious activities aimed at fulfilling Heaven’s will.

Rather, taking this event as an opportunity, we intend to make even greater efforts to let many people know the truth about our activities. While continuing missionary and evangelistic work, we will strive to earn the trust of society more broadly.

5th March 2026
Masaichi Hori (堀 正一)

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Featured image above: Masaichi Hori (堀 正一), former president of the [Family Federation for World Peace and Unification](#). Photo: [Sekai Nippo](#)

[Editor's note: The phrasing 準備する (junbi suru – prepare) in the Japanese original text suggests that Hori intends to organize or initiate the filing to the Supreme Court, likely with lawyers or on behalf of interested parties (e.g., believers).]

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