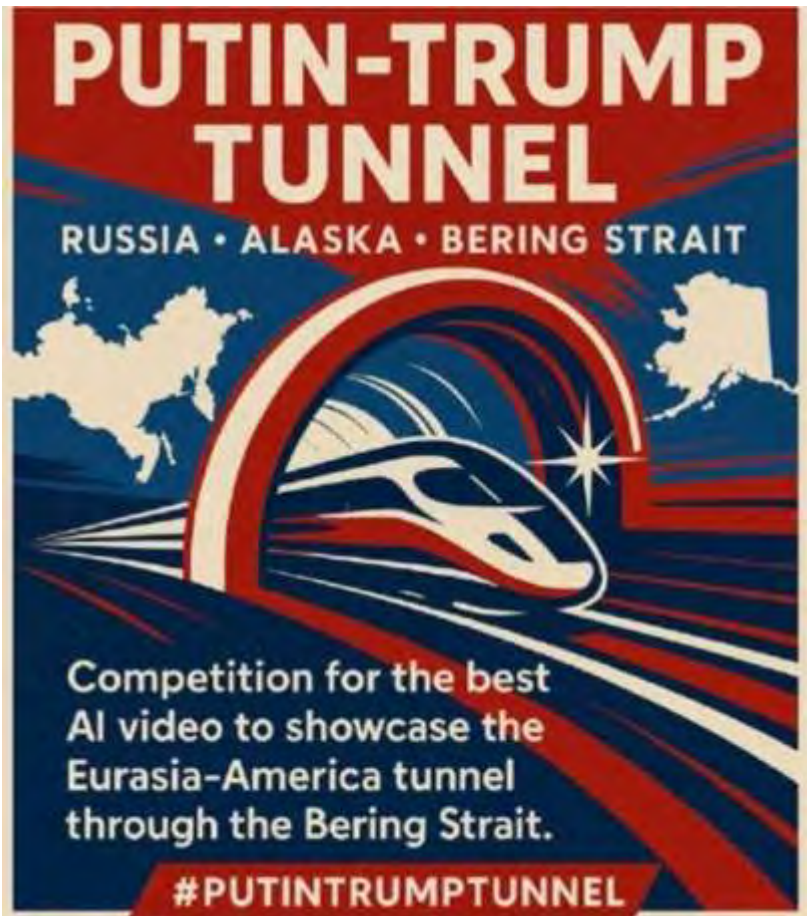


FFWPU Europe and the Middle East: Did Lim Jong-seong Get Unification Church Money?

Knut Holdhus
December 31, 2025



Ad for a competition run by the [World Peace Road Foundation](#) on its [website](#)

Foundation issues rebuttal saying report in Christian daily distorted facts about advisory fees for peace project



A statement in Korean issued by the [Family Federation](#) in South Korea to the Korean media on 30th December 2025. Translated from the [text on the Korean language website](#) of the [Family Federation](#).

Rebuttal to the CBS NoCut News Report Dated 29th December 2025, "Did Lim Jong-seong Receive Money? A Unification Church-Affiliated Organization Paid 30 Million KRW Annually in Advisory Fees"

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See also [Fact-Based Clarification of Media Misreporting](#)



On 29th December 2025, CBS NoCut News (노컷뉴스) [Editor's note: a daily newspaper run by South Korea's Christian Broadcasting System (CBS)] published an article titled, "Did Lim Jong-seong Receive Money? A Unification Church-Affiliated Organization Paid 30 Million KRW Annually in Advisory Fees." It reported as follows:

"It has been confirmed that the [Unification Church](#)-affiliated organization [World Peace Road Foundation](#) (hereinafter 'the [Foundation](#)'), for which former Democratic Party lawmaker Lim Jong-seong (임종성) reportedly served as an advisor, spent advisory fees amounting to hundreds of

millions of won over several years. Former lawmaker Lim, who is said to have served as an advisor to the [Foundation](#), maintains that he 'has never received any advisory fees.'



According to National Tax Service filings reviewed by CBS NoCut News on 29th December, the [Foundation](#) spent close to 250 million won (ca. 170,000 US dollars) under the name of advisory fees over the seven-year period from 2017 to 2024.

The [organization](#) spent approximately 36 million won (ca. 24,300 US dollars) annually on advisory fees from 2017 through 2022, reduced the amount to 22 million won (ca. 15,000 US dollars) in 2023, and further reduced it to 8 million won (ca. 5,400 US dollars) in 2024, for a total of 246.4 million won (ca. 167,000 US dollars) over seven years. Former lawmaker Lim was appointed as an advisor in December 2017, while he was still an incumbent lawmaker. Before and after that time, Lim jointly hosted several events with the [organization](#) related to the [Korea-Japan undersea tunnel](#) and attended the [organization's](#) events to deliver congratulatory remarks."



However,

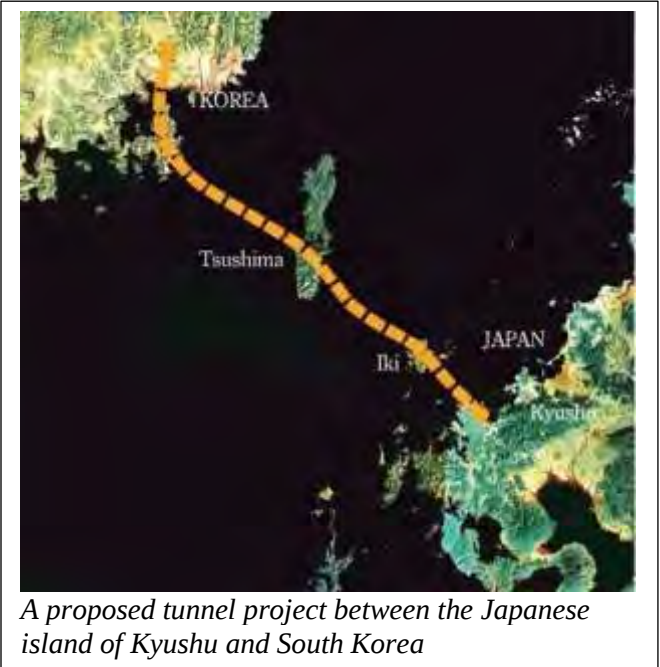
1.

The CBS NoCut News report distorted the facts by failing to accurately verify the actual nature of the advisory fee expenditures reported to the National Tax Service by the [World Peace Road Foundation](#), and by making unfounded inferences solely on the basis that former lawmaker Lim Jong-seong held an advisory position.

In reality, the only individual who received advisory fees from the [Foundation](#) was former Ambassador A, a non-politician, who was appointed in September 2014 as Chair of the [Foundation](#)-affiliated Peace Road Forum and served as an advisor to the [Foundation](#).

Beginning in September 2014, former Ambassador A served as an advisor to the [Foundation](#), performing duties such as recommending and recruiting speakers for the Forum (held four times annually) and overseeing forum operations. From 2014 onward, the [Foundation](#) paid him a monthly advisory fee of 3 million won (ca. 2,040 US dollars). These payments were duly reported to the National Tax Service, resulting in an annual advisory fee of 36 million won (ca. 24,300 US dollars) reported through 2022.

In consideration of the [Foundation's](#) financial circumstances, the monthly advisory fee was reduced to 2 million won (ca. 1,350 US dollars) starting in 2023, which is why the advisory fee reported to the National Tax Service for that year totaled 22 million won (ca. 14,800 US dollars). Due to health-related reasons that made it difficult for Advisor A to continue fulfilling his duties, he was relieved of his advisory position as of April 2024. Accordingly, advisory fees totaling 8 million won (ca. 5,400 US dollars) were paid through April 2024, after which all advisory fee payments were discontinued. These facts are fully reflected in the filings submitted to the National Tax Service.



2.

Although former lawmaker Lim Jong-seong was appointed as an advisor to the [Foundation](#) at the end of 2017, reporting as though unlawful monetary payments were made to him based solely on the suspicion that advisory fees were paid during a similar period has resulted in damage to the reputation of both the [Foundation](#) and the named public official.

To reiterate clearly, the [Foundation](#) has never paid advisory fees to any politician.

By reporting as though unlawful monetary payments were made merely because advisory fee expenditures appeared in National Tax Service filings during a similar timeframe, CBS NoCut News has recklessly infringed upon the honor and reputation of both the [Foundation](#)

and the public official referenced in the article.

For reference, the vision of the [Korea-Japan undersea tunnel](#) and the Peace Road initiatives promoted by the [Family Federation for World Peace and Unification](#) and the [World Peace Road Foundation](#) are peace-building initiatives conceived under the overarching principle of "One Family Under [God](#)". The World Peace Highway, or International Highway, is a peace movement launched with the goal of creating the "arteries of the global village" to realize "One Family Under [God](#)", connecting the world through a web-like network of highways that allows people and goods to move freely, lowers national barriers, and eliminates the justification for war.

Going forward, the [Family Federation for World Peace and Unification](#) and the [World Peace Road Foundation](#) pledge to continue devoting themselves fully to peace activities aligned with the Foundation's mission, striving toward the day when the entire world is united through an International Highway, a World Peace Highway, under the vision of "One Family Under [God](#)".

30th December 2025

[World Peace Road Foundation](#)

External Relations Headquarters,
Korea Branch of the [Family Federation for World Peace and Unification](#)

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世界日報

by the Religious Freedom Investigative Team of the editorial department of *Sekai Nippo*



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From a campaign to protest the dissolution order against the [Family Federation](#), held in front of Shibuya Station in Tokyo on 27th December 2025. Photo: [FFWPU](#)

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On 20th October, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT), with the [Family Federation for World Peace and Unification](#) (formerly the [Unification Church](#)) in mind, formulated the "Guidelines on the Liquidation of Designated Religious Corporations" (hereinafter, the "Guidelines"). While the immediate appeal against the Tokyo District Court's [dissolution order decision](#) remain pending before the Tokyo High Court, the Guidelines were prepared in anticipation of a scenario in which the High Court upholds the lower court's decision. However, Seishiro Sugihara (杉原誠四郎), former professor at Musashino Women's University, points out that there are serious problems with both the ongoing legal procedures toward the liquidation of the [religious organization](#) and the newly issued Guidelines intended to supplement them.

– I understand that you submitted a public comment to MEXT regarding the draft Guidelines. What were your main points?

Even if a [dissolution order](#) has not yet been finalized, it is, in principle, permissible to establish guidelines for liquidation procedures in the event that such an [order](#) becomes final, so long as procedures toward dissolution are already underway.

However, to provide compensation for damages – described as "specific unlawful acts, etc." – from the assets of the [religious corporation](#) slated for dissolution, based solely on damage reports submitted by individuals who self-identify as victims, would infringe upon property rights guaranteed by the Constitution and may therefore constitute a constitutional violation.



[Family Federation](#) members marching in a demonstration to protest the dissolution order against the [Family Federation](#) – 31st August 2025, Kita Ward, Osaka. Photo: Rei Miyazawa (宮沢玲)

– What exactly does the term "specific unlawful acts, etc." refer to?

"Specific unlawful acts, etc." is defined in Article 2, Paragraph 2 of the Act on Special Provisions for the Operations of the Japan Legal Support Center to Facilitate the Prompt and Smooth Relief of Victims of Specific Unlawful Acts, and Special Provisions on the Disposal and Management of Assets by Religious Corporations (hereinafter, the "Special Measures Law"), which was enacted on 13th December 2023, promulgated on 20th December, and came into force on 19th March of the following year.

The law defines the term as "unlawful acts that constituted the cause for a specific dissolution order request, acts that serve as grounds for the rescission of contract applications, other acts, and acts of the same kind, committed by the subject [religious corporation](#) or its believers or other related persons." In other words, at the core are the alleged unlawful acts that prompted MEXT to request a dissolution order against the [Family Federation](#).

However, the "harm" cited in the damage reports that MEXT treated as grounds for dissolution consists merely of damage claims made by individuals identifying themselves as victims. These do not represent acts that have been legally established as unlawful on the part of the [religious organization](#).

– What do you mean by that?

MEXT applied for a dissolution order on the grounds that, over a period of approximately 43 years – from around 1980 to around 2023 – the [Family Federation](#) caused harm to just under 1,560 victims, with total damages exceeding 20.4 billion yen [ca. 130.5 million US dollars]. In other words, it asserted that there were 1,560 victims and approximately 20.4 billion yen in damages resulting from unlawful acts by the [organization](#).





Believers rallying in Osaka City to protest the dissolution order against the [Family Federation](#) – 29th June 2025, Kita Ward, Osaka City Photo: Tsuyoshi Toyoda (豊田 剛)

However, this assertion contains two major problems. First, it completely ignores one of the fundamental principles of the rule of law: the statute of limitations. An “unlawful act” refers to conduct that causes harm to others in violation of existing laws and regulations. Under Article 724 of the Civil Code, the legal effect of such acts expires after 20 years from the time of the act, at which point compensation can no longer be claimed. To invoke alleged harm from unlawful acts committed as far back as 43 years ago is to utterly disregard this principle.

– What is the second problem?

MEXT claimed that the [Family Federation](#) engaged in unlawful acts that were intolerable in their maliciousness, continuity, and organizational nature. However, in 2009, the [Family Federation](#) issued a compliance declaration [\[See editor's note below\]](#) instructing its organization to refrain from donation solicitation practices that had drawn social criticism – such as “unverified spiritual sales-style proselytization”, “proselytization linking donations to ancestral karma”, and “excessive donation solicitation” – which had previously been recognized as unlawful acts by the [organization](#) or its related parties.

After that, only one case was recognized by the courts as constituting an unlawful act (one plaintiff, with damages awarded of approximately 4.76 million yen [ca. 30,000 US dollars]), and there have been no such cases at all since 2015. Accordingly, there is no continuity, and at present the [organization](#) is a religious corporation without legal issues.



A believer appeals to the public about the situation of the [Family Federation](#) in a busy shopping district – 29th June 2025, Matsuyama City, Ehime Prefecture. Photo: Rei Miyazawa (宮沢玲衣)

Despite this, MEXT filed its dissolution order request by including, as “damage” from unlawful acts, lawsuits in which no unlawful acts were legally recognized – even at the first-instance level – and for which settlement payments had already been completed. These included in-court settlements (419 people, approximately 5.7 billion yen [ca. 36.5 million US dollars]) and out-of-court settlements (971 people, approximately 12.5 billion yen [ca. 80 million US dollars]). In other words, the figures of 1,560 victims and approximately 20.4 billion yen [ca. 130.5 million US dollars] in damages were nothing more than a manipulation of impressions.

– MEXT also submitted 261 written statements from former members to the Tokyo District Court.

A dissolution request must be based on current circumstances. MEXT should have been fully aware that damage statements alone from people claiming to be victims are insufficient to establish unlawful acts. Presumably, in an effort to gather new evidence, it focused on collecting damage reports. However, it has already become clear that these reports not only lack legal recognition as unlawful acts but also contain numerous false statements.

In this way, the unlawful acts (specific unlawful acts) cited by MEXT as grounds for the dissolution order request reach back into the past while ignoring statutes of limitation and involve conduct that can no longer be held legally accountable. After the compliance declaration [\[See editor's note below\]](#) – particularly since 2015 – there have been no cases that have gone through procedures resulting in legally established findings. To nevertheless include such matters as subjects for compensation is inconceivable in a state governed by the rule of law. The Guidelines must therefore be fundamentally revised.

Featured image above: Seishiro Suaihara (杉原誠四郎), former professor at Musashino

Women's University and expert on issues of freedom of religion and constitutional law. Photo: [Sekai Nippo](#)

[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" (霊感商法) 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.]

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