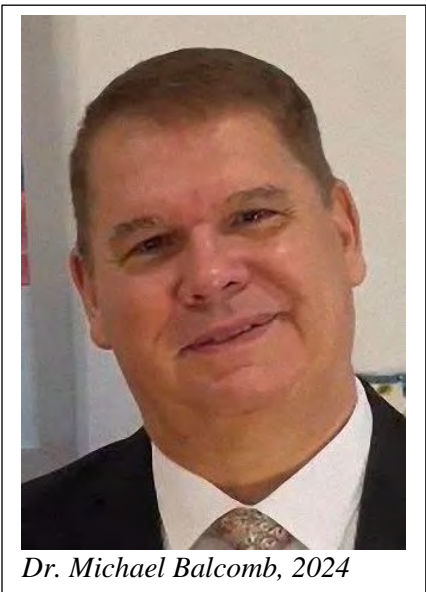


FFWPU Europe and the Middle East: Michael Balcomb's Statement on FFWPU Dissolution Order in Japan

Knut Holdhus
March 25, 2025



Japanese judges issuing a verdict



Dr. Michael Balcomb, 2024

Family Federation of Europe and the Middle east issues statement on dissolution that aligns Japan with pariah states that deny their citizens the right to freedom of religion

by Dr. Michael Balcomb



The March 25 decision by the Tokyo District Court to grant the government's request for a dissolution order against the [Family Federation of Japan](#) (formerly known as the [Unification Church](#)) is an embarrassment for Japan and a troubling setback for religious freedom.

By this act, the Japanese government has shamefully abandoned the core principles of human rights and religious liberty enshrined in the United Nations conventions that Japan itself has signed and committed to uphold. It now aligns itself with pariah states that routinely deny their citizens the fundamental right to freedom of

belief.



Sent formal UN request to Japan, but no reply: Nazila Ghanea, UN Rapporteur on Religious Freedom since February 2023

Aware of its own misconduct and vulnerability to international scrutiny, the Ishiba administration took the unprecedented step of [rejecting a fact-finding visit](#) by Dr. Nazila Ghanea, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion and Belief [See editor's note below]. This refusal speaks volumes about the lack of transparency and the profound injustice of this ruling.

The [Family Federation](#), founded 70 years ago by the late Rev. [Sun Myung Moon](#) and now led by his wife, Dr. [Hak Ja Han Moon](#), is a young yet vibrant global faith community with devoted followers across more than 175 countries. Throughout our history, we have consistently placed our accountability first to [God](#), and no government's approval or disapproval has ever altered our mission or our deeply held convictions.

Despite this unjust persecution and discriminatory action by the Japanese authorities, we firmly believe our members in Japan will

emerge stronger in their faith. Our prayers, solidarity, and unwavering support are with them during this challenging time.

Dr. Michael Balcomb serves as the President of the [Family Federation](#) for Europe and the Middle East,

and as National Director of the [Family Federation](#) in the United Kingdom. His wife, Fumiko Balcomb, was born in Japan.

[Editor's note: A Special Rapporteur (or Independent Expert) is an independent human rights expert appointed by the United Nations (UN) to provide reports or advice on human rights issues from either a thematic or country-specific perspective. These experts are selected by the UN Human Rights Council and operate independently of any government, playing a crucial role in monitoring the actions of sovereign nations and democratically elected governments.

Special Rapporteurs do not receive financial compensation from the United Nations for their work. However, they receive support from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and are often funded by charities and corporations. Annually, they convene in Geneva to discuss common issues, coordinate their efforts, and engage with various stakeholders, including states and civil society organizations.

These experts frequently conduct fact-finding missions to investigate human rights violation allegations in different countries. In addition to these missions, they regularly review complaints from alleged victims of human rights abuses. If a complaint is verified, they send an urgent letter or appeal to the concerned government. Even without a specific complaint, Special Rapporteurs can intervene on behalf of individuals or groups at their discretion.]

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Huge Scandal: “Ministry Is Falsifying Affidavits”

• January 21, 2025 • Knut Holdhus

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Several witnesses claim Japanese government ministry has been falsifying multiple affidavits in current case against the Family Federation




Logo of the Sekai Nippo

Tokyo, 21st January 2025 – Published as an article in the Japanese newspaper *Sekai Nippo*. Republished with permission. Translated from Japanese. *Original article.*

[Breaking News] Elderly Mother: “I Never Said ‘Get the Money Back’” – Ministry of Education Falsifies Affidavits


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

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The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) has filed a dissolution order against the [Family Federation for World Peace and Unification](#) (commonly known as the [Family Federation](#), formerly the [Unification Church](#)) with the Tokyo District Court. It has come to light that affidavits prepared by MEXT and submitted to the court contain statements that differ from the truth, as alleged by individuals identified as “victims”. Although the trial is being conducted behind closed doors, there appear to be multiple cases in which affidavits, submitted as evidence of “unlawful acts” to justify the dissolution of the [Family Federation](#), were not written by the purported victims themselves and contained false information.



“Well, to tell the truth, I never asked (son’s name) to get back the money I donated. So they’re just using me for their puposes.”

Kimiyo Sagayama (pseudonym), a resident of Aichi Prefecture whose name appears on MEXT’s affidavit, said this to her daughter, Miyuki Kawaguchi (pseudonym). Last summer, upon learning that her mother’s name was included in MEXT’s affidavit, Miyuki visited her mother, who lives alone, to confirm whether she had personally written the affidavit, which listed a total damage amount of approximately 35 million yen.

The mother then stated to her daughter, whom she had converted to the faith, “I don’t even want the money back.” Miyuki, who is over 60, has practiced the faith alongside her mother for more than 30 years and knew that Kimiyo had made donations of her own volition.



Disputed donations. Here, woman offering donation that her son later wanted refunded. Illustration: Microsoft Designer Image Creator, 21st January 2025.

However, the affidavit bearing Kimiyo’s name claimed that she had been “incited” to make donations by Miyuki. The unnatural claim that her mother, who had introduced her to the faith, was influenced by her own daughter left Miyuki exasperated but unsurprised. “That’s what I thought,” she said, suspecting that MEXT may have embellished the story by drafting a template of alleged victim narratives and supplementing it with details obtained through interviews. It is highly likely that Kimiyo, an elderly individual, was made to sign the affidavit without fully understanding its contents.

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Kimiyo, who is over 90 years old, has been a member of the [Family Federation](#) for 38 years and introduced her daughter Miyuki to the faith. Both Kimiyo and Miyuki also converted their respective husbands, and in 1992, they participated in the International [Blessing Ceremony](#) held in Seoul, South Korea, to renew their marriages in the ceremony of the [religious organization](#).

Kimiyo has been devout in her faith, but as she has aged, and her health has declined, she has become less able to attend church. Then,

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two years ago, the assassination of former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe occurred, which triggered a wave of intense criticism against the [Family Federation](#).

In early 2023, Miyuki was summoned by her elder brother during the New Year holiday. With their younger brother also present, Miyuki faced pressure from her brothers to "leave the [Family Federation](#)". Miyuki refused on the spot. However, according to her, Kimiyo is now effectively estranged from the [federation](#) against her will due to the influence of her sons. Miyuki laments,

"Taking advantage of her dependency on them in her advanced age and frailty, they have forced her to deny her entire life's faith. That's unfilial."

Having heard her mother's voice directly state, "I never said I wanted the money back," Miyuki feels a deep fear that the government is leveraging family members' anxieties exacerbated by the critical media coverage, along with affidavits containing falsehoods, to force the dissolution of the [Family Federation](#).

The request for a dissolution order against the [Family Federation](#) is currently being deliberated in the *Tokyo District Court*. According to reports by NHK and major newspapers, four hearings have been held so far.

The *Yomiuri Shimbun* online edition (13th December 2024) reported that "current



The flag of NHK (Nippon Hoso Kyokai), the state-owned Japan Broadcasting Corporation, [Public domain image](#). Cropped



Logo of the *Yomiuri Shimbun*, Japanese national daily, the largest in circulation of the country's "big 3" dailies. [Public domain image](#)

members claim that the allegations by former members contain falsehoods."

According to sources close to the [religious organization](#), two

witnesses presented by MEXT during the hearings admitted that there were discrepancies between the actual facts and the contents of their affidavits.

Basis for dissolution order wavers

It is not only the Sagayama family who are alleging that MEXT (*Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology*) falsified their affidavits. A 60-year-old male believer, Shinji Toyama (pseudonym), claims that MEXT's affidavit wrongly stated that he had been threatened by other believers, who told him he would face misfortune if he did not resolve ancestral grievances, leading him to make donations. Toyama, however, had informed relevant parties that "the motivation for his donations was different."

Toyama has been a believer for about 30 years and has consistently donated to support Japanese believers involved in missionary and volunteer activities abroad. Around the time of the former prime minister's assassination, however, financial difficulties left him struggling.



Japanese man offering a donation to support missionary work. Illustration: Miocrosoft Designer Image Creator, 21st January 2025.

He contacted a helpline, the number for which he found on a TV program discussing the [Family Federation](#), hoping to get his donations refunded. He was then referred to a lawyer who facilitated a meeting with two MEXT officials, where he cooperated with their inquiry.

When his refund efforts stalled, Toyama approached the [organization](#) directly, engaged in negotiations with its representatives, and ultimately reached a settlement. Regarding MEXT's affidavit, Toyama stated, "That document wasn't written by me." The affidavit concluded with the sentence, "I only hope that the [organization](#) will be

dissolved,” but Toyama insists he never made such a statement during the MEXT interview. Furthermore, he claims that MEXT officials never informed him that the affidavit was intended to support a dissolution order against the [organization](#). Toyama requested multiple corrections to the affidavit, but none were made.

Similarly, Mayumi Adachi (pseudonym), a current female believer living in Nerima Ward, Tokyo, discovered that an affidavit submitted by MEXT under her mother’s name had been filed. Upon directly asking her mother, Adachi was told clearly, “I didn’t write it.”

Adachi’s father had previously sought a refund of their donations, represented by Hiroshi Yamaguchi, a lawyer affiliated with the *National Network of Lawyers Against Spiritual Sales*. However, the donation repayments had already been completed and the matter resolved amicably. Why an affidavit supposedly written by her mother, who denies authoring it, was submitted in the trial for a dissolution order remains entirely unclear.

According to one source, some affidavits prepared by MEXT touch on the [Family Federation](#)’s doctrines, referring to the biblical figure of humanity’s ancestor as “Eve” in English. However, within the [organization](#), they follow the terminology of the Japan Bible Society’s version of the Bible, referring to her as “Eva”. “This discrepancy alone shows that the document wasn’t authored by the individual but was instead written by MEXT,” an affiliate of the [religious organization](#) stated.

The emerging pattern of MEXT using believers’ names to include false or exaggerated claims in affidavits highlights concerns about the ministry’s approach. Moreover, since the trial is closed to the public, there is no mechanism to check MEXT’s potential abuse of power, which remains a troubling issue.

The main basis for MEXT’s request for the dissolution order against the [Family Federation](#) is the [organization](#)’s loss in 32 civil lawsuits and the submission of approximately 300 affidavits from alleged victims. However, claims from these “victims” that MEXT fabricated the contents of affidavits to align with the ministry’s objectives are mounting. This development significantly undermines the credibility of MEXT’s arguments.

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Featured image above: Miyuki Kawaguchi (pseudonym) during an interview on the afternoon of 19th January 2025, in Aichi Prefecture, Japan. Photo: Takahide Ishii (石井孝秀)

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