

FFWPU Europe and Middle the East: Demonstrators: Japan, Withdraw FFWPU Dissolution

Knut Holdhus
May 27, 2025



Followers of the [Family Federation](#) march in protest holding placards - May 25, 2025, East Ikebukuro, Toshima Ward, Tokyo, Japan



Demonstrators from persecuted religious minority take to the streets in Japan protesting unjust dissolution order orchestrated by militant activist leftwing lawyers

Tokyo, 26th May 2025 - Published as an article in the Japanese newspaper [Sekai Nippo](#). Republished with permission. Translated from Japanese. [Original article](#).

"Withdraw the Dissolution Order!"

Family Federation Members Protesting in Demonstration

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

"We have lived our lives earnestly. Please don't rob us of our places of worship!"



The demonstration in Tokyo was led by a sound truck. Here, from a similar event in Shinjuku, Tokyo, Japan May 11, 2025

Following the Tokyo District Court's issuance of a [dissolution order](#) in March against the [Family Federation for World Peace and Unification](#) (formerly the [Unification Church](#)), a group of followers called "Tokyo Residents' Association for the Protection of Basic Human Rights and Freedom of Religion" held a protest march on 25th May opposing the [order](#). The march started at East Ikebukuro Central Park in Toshima Ward, Tokyo, and circled around the Ikebukuro area. About 550 members participated, spending an hour appealing to the many citizens along the route.

Led by a sound truck, participants repeatedly raised their fists and chanted messages such as

- "Don't rob us our beloved places of worship!"

- "Please listen to the true voices of the believers!"

The presence of young mothers pushing strollers and elderly followers in the procession drew attention.

A female believer in her 40s who led the chants spoke to the media after the march with tears in her eyes:

"The members of the [Family Federation](#) are like my dear family. Losing the place where we gather is truly painful. That's why we want this [dissolution order](#) to be withdrawn."



Members of the [Family Federation](#) march through a busy downtown area to advocate for freedom of religion - May 25, 2025, Matsuyama City, Ehime Prefecture, Japan

On the same afternoon in downtown Matsuyama City, Ehime Prefecture, around 100 members of the [Family Federation](#) also held a demonstration demanding freedom of religion and human rights. The demonstrators raised their fists and appealed to passersby, shouting slogans such as:

- "Let's protect freedom of religion and human rights!"
- "Let's protect Japan from communism!"

A similar speech was given earlier in front of the Ehime Prefectural Office before the demonstration.

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"Forced Into Lawsuits, Exploited To Fit Narrative"

• May 26, 2025
• Knut Holdhus



3-time victim of abduction and confinement and Christian pastor reflecting on dissolution order based on lawsuits following narrative of lawyers in league with professional faith-breakers



Tokyo, 24th May 2025 – Published as an article in the Japanese newspaper *Sekai Nippo*. Republished with permission. Translated from Japanese. *Original article.*

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by Yasuhiro Uno (宇野 泰弘)

“Face the pain of the past” – Pastor Haruhisa Nakagawa (中川晴久)
“A chance for the religious organization to change” – Soichiro Kobayashi (小林宗一郎)

Haruhisa Nakagawa: Dropped out of Waseda University’s School of Letters and dedicated himself to his church. Since 2007, he has been the head pastor of *Christian Church of the Lord’s Sheep*. He is also active in public discourse through the Christian opinion site “SALTY” and YouTube.

Soichiro Kobayashi:
Born in 1971 in Tokyo. A current member of the *Family Federation for World Peace and Unification* and a three-time victim of **abduction and**



Professional faith-breaker and victim. Illustration: Grok xAI, 20th April 2025

confinement. He now supports victims and their parents in rebuilding relationships damaged by such experiences.

The hearing on the **dissolution order** against the *Family Federation for World Peace and Unification* (formerly the *Unification Church*) has **moved to the Tokyo High Court**. In this interview, we spoke with two individuals who work to repair family relationships broken by **abduction and forced de-conversion** (also known as “deprogramming” or “faith-breaking”) [See editor’s note below]:

- Soichiro Kobayashi (小林宗一郎), an active believer and former victim of **abduction and confinement**, and
- Pastor Haruhisa Nakagawa (中川晴久) of the *Christian Church of the Lord’s Sheep* in Yokohama.

Interviewer: Yasuhiro Uno (宇野 泰弘)

– What do you think about past court cases where individuals who left the *Family Federation* after being **abducted and confined** became plaintiffs, and how those cases influenced the *Tokyo District Court’s* **decision**?

Kobayashi:
People in **abduction and confinement** situations can’t make sound judgments. Some were even coerced into lawsuits they didn’t want to be part of and were exploited to fit a narrative. Using such trials as grounds for a **dissolution order** is highly questionable.

More about this: [Politicians, Lawyers, and Criminal Faith-Breakers](#)

– Is the *Family Federation* an organization deserving of dissolution?



Working in league with faith-breakers forcing believers into lawsuits and exploiting them to fit narrative: Hiroshi Yamaguchi, activist leftwing lawyer and founder and leading member of National Network of Lawyers Against Spiritual Sales (NNLASS). Photo: Screenshot / [Bitter Winter](#)



Working in league with faith-breakers forcing believers into lawsuits and exploiting them to fit narrative: One of the architects of new law and advisor to the Japanese authorities: Masaki Kito (紀藤正樹), one of the hostile lawyers of National Network of Lawyers Against Spiritual Sales (全国霊感商法被害対策弁連) and Nationwide Unification Church Damage Countermeasures Legal Team (全国統一教会被害対策弁護団). Photo: Screenshot / [Bitter Winter](#)

Nakagawa: Reading the court’s decision, I sensed they were trying hard to construct a rationale by adding weight and reasoning to prove

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hard to construct a rationale by adding weight and reasoning to prove continuity [of wrongdoing]. That suggests there actually was no continuity. This is essentially a politically motivated trial. We should be broadcasting to the world:

“This trial is clearly unjust!”

Kobayashi: I choose to see the inclusion of civil issues in the dissolution criteria as an opportunity for the [religious organization](#) to repent for past shortcomings and undergo transformation.

– “Repentance” implies reflection and self-examination. What specifically do you mean?

Kobayashi: Through my experience of being [abducted and confined](#), I’ve worked to help heal relationships between similarly affected parents and their sons and daughters. I’ve faced both the Christian pastors who instructed the abductions, and the parents who carried them out. Through this, I’ve realized that both the [religious organization](#) and the opposing side had their own biases. The [organization](#) seemed to assume that any voice of opposition was entirely bad, thereby shutting down opportunities for dialogue.

– How was the [religious organization](#) viewed by the opposition?

Kobayashi: There was a deeply rooted assumption among parents and pastors that “the [Family Federation](#) was evil, and its members are mind-controlled.” This often made meaningful communication impossible.

The widespread occurrence of [abductions and confinements](#) was likely due in part to issues with the [religious organization](#)’s evangelism methods and organizational structure. The same can be said for the current [dissolution order](#). At this point, it’s essential for the [Family Federation](#) to sincerely ask itself, “Were there no problems on our side?”

Nakagawa: I’ve heard that the [Family Federation](#) went through a phase of pushing too hard “for the sake of the ideal”. That said, there is a teaching that says, “Cherish (Put) your family first.” If there is pain from the past, then facing it honestly is crucial.

– Mr. Kobayashi, you’ve now reconciled with your mother, who carried out your [abduction and confinement](#).

Kobayashi: My mother told me, “Everyone went through it. Everyone was a victim.” In other words, the parents were [deceived](#). She added, “If people just realized that, they’d all understand.”

Even parents who had a deeply negative view of the [religious organization](#) were able to understand the truth once we had calm, open conversations. They realized they’d been [misled](#). I believe the same could be said for public opinion.

Featured image above: *Soichiro Kobayashi (小林宗一郎) (left) and Pastor Haruhisa Nakagawa (中川晴久) in discussion — Shibuya Ward, Tokyo. Photo: Reiwa Kato (加藤玲和)*

[Editor’s note 1: Coercive faith-breaking (“deprogramming”) in Japan refers to the practice of coercively attempting to separate individuals from their religious affiliations or beliefs, typically through intervention by family members, professional faith-breakers (deprogrammers) or organizations hostile to new religious movements (NRMs). This phenomenon often targets members of such movements, e.g. relatively large faiths like the [Family Federation](#) or Jehovah’s Witnesses, but also smaller groups like Happy Science (Kōfuku no Kagaku) and other newer religious movements.



Also subject to faith-breaking attempts: *Members of Soka Gakkai. Here students belonging to the faith in 2001. Photo: Wikimedia Commons. License: [CC ASA 3.0 Unp](#). Cropped*

However, also Soka Gakkai, a Buddhist-based lay organization with more than 8 million Japanese members, and affiliated with Nichiren Buddhism, has occasionally been subject to faith-breaking attempts.

The practice gained attention in the latter half of the 20th century, particularly in the 1980s and 1990s. Parents or concerned family

members often hired faith-breakers who taught them how to abduct and forcibly detain believers. Almost all such cases involved confining the individual believer and cutting him or her off from the religious community. During the confinement, the believer was subjected to intense questioning or indoctrination designed to break his or her faith. The aim was to "rescue" the person from what the family often had been tricked by faith-breakers or lawyers to regard as harmful influence from the religious organization.

Critics of forced de-conversion argue that it violates fundamental human rights, including freedom of thought, religion, and association. Reports of psychological trauma and accusations of unlawful detention have sparked debates over its ethical and legal implications. In response, some religious groups, particularly NRMs, have lobbied for greater protections against such practices.

Japanese courts have been inconsistent in addressing cases of coercive faith-breaking. While some verdicts have condemned the practice as illegal detention, others have been more lenient, citing family concerns about "mental health" or alleged "exploitation" as mitigating factors.]

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