

FFWPU Europe and Middle East: Japanese Justice Twisted When Assumptions Replace Evidence

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May 31, 2025



Tomihiko Tanaka, President of the [Family Federation](#) in Japan, at a [press conference](#) on the day of the [dissolution verdict](#) March 25, 2025



June 2025 issue of the Japanese monthly magazine Seiron

Religious head points out that after the Prime Minister changed course overnight and made the impossible possible, the judiciary passed verdict based on assumptions, not evidence

Part 2 of an interview (extensive excerpts) with Tomihiko Tanaka, President of the [Family Federation](#) in Japan, published by the well-known monthly opinion magazine Seiron (正論) in its June 2025 issue. Translated from Japanese. Republished in English with permission. Seiron is a publication by the Sankei Shimbun, one of Japan's five national daily newspapers. Previously republished as two articles in [Bitter Winter](#) on [27th](#) and [28th May](#).

See part 1: [Politics Overruled the Law in Dissolution Case](#)

The Authorities Changed the Rules to Punish Persecuted Religious Minority

Interviewer: Fumihiro Kato, author

Outrageous - Changing the rules to punish us

Tanaka: On the following day, 18th October 2022, during a session of the House Budget Committee, Kishida responded to questions from Akira Nagatsuma of the Constitutional Democratic Party (CDP). Nagatsuma pointed out that under the current legal interpretation, dissolution was not possible, and demanded civil torts (wrongdoings according to civil law) recognized in civil court judgments should be included as grounds for dissolution. His point was,

"You can't dissolve them unless you change the rules."

But Kishida replied that civil torts would not be included, emphasizing the importance of due process and rejecting the proposal. In response, Nagatsuma criticized the government's stance, saying it was "unbelievable".



Akira Nagatsuma 8th June 2010

Then the next day, in the House of Councillors Budget Committee, Kishida completely reversed himself, stating that civil torts could indeed be grounds for dissolution.

MP Hiroyuki Konishi, who was questioning Kishida, expressed disbelief, saying, "This is the very definition of inconsistency."

What we can infer from this whole sequence is that, unable to dissolve us under the existing rules, they were forced to change the rules and then apply them retroactively to drive forward the dissolution process. This is a serious error. It's an unacceptable breach of procedure, and allowing such outrageous actions would collapse the rule of law.

At the very least, if the government was going to overturn a Cabinet decision, it should have convened a Cabinet meeting and passed a resolution. But that didn't happen. In the first place, I doubt there is

any precedent in developed nations for using civil torts in civil court as grounds to dissolve a religious corporation.



Hiroyuki Konishi in March 2020

The words of a nation's Prime Minister carry great weight. Bureaucrats have no choice but to comply. What followed was an acceleration of events that brought us to where we are now - this is nothing short of a historic incident. The international community will also view it with severity. We absolutely cannot accept it. We will promptly appeal and fight this thoroughly.

A Decision Full of Assumptions

- It's reported that the court recognized 1,559 victims of donation-related harm, amounting to 20,448 billion yen.

Tanaka: However, these were not newly recognized damages, nor were new compensation payments imposed. These cases involved payments that had already been made following the resolution of disputes between private individuals. The government revived these past cases and compiled the figures, claiming, "There were so many, and they were so terrible, that it warrants dissolution."

One of the key issues in the [court ruling](#) was whether [our organization](#) displayed continuity in its alleged wrongdoings - one of the criteria Prime Minister Kishida cited when calling for dissolution, along with organizational nature and maliciousness. Since 2009, we have promoted reform within [our organization](#) under our "Compliance Declaration" [See editor's note below]. As a result, there have been only four civil lawsuits over donations since 2009, and none since 2016.

We vigorously challenged the government's use of older civil cases from before 2009. Struggling to prove continuity, the government submitted written statements from 157 individuals drawn from 22 lawsuits. To argue that continuity existed, the government also included cases that had been settled, informal agreements and notices.

We pointed out that some of these written statements included fabrications.

Yet the court recognized not only lawsuits and settlements but even informal notices as evidence of illegal conduct. Their reasoning was, "It is presumed that unlawful acts occurred." No mention was made of the [alleged fabrications](#) in the written statements. Although the court acknowledged the decrease in lawsuits, it ruled that this had no bearing on the issue of continuity. They claimed that our Compliance Declaration [See editor's note below] lacked demonstrable effectiveness and described it as a mere stopgap measure - saying we had not changed in essence, only feigned reform.

They determined facts based on speculation rather than evidence. We intend to vigorously contest this injustice.

To be continued. Part 3 coming soon.

See part 1: [Politics Overruled the Law in Dissolution Case](#)

[Editor's note: 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](#).]

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Calling for an Apology from Former Prime Minister Kishida

Interviewer: Fumihiro Kato, author



Facsimile from
page 174 in
the June 2025
issue of Seiron

On 25th March 2025, the Tokyo District Court issued a ruling [ordering the dissolution](#) of the [Family Federation for World Peace and Unification](#) (formerly the [Unification Church](#)) under the [Religious Corporations Act](#). I asked Tomihiro Tanaka, President of the [organization](#), for his thoughts on the [court's ruling](#), the current state of the [organization](#), and his views on the public distrust surrounding it.

– What are your thoughts on the court's ruling, President Tanaka?

Tanaka: I was truly shocked by the [dissolution order](#). I must say that none of our claims were considered at all. Prior to the [district court's ruling](#), we were fined for not responding to government inquiries, and we lost the “administrative fine” (non-penal fine) case even [at the Supreme Court](#). However, that case was about fines, whereas this one is about dissolving our legal entity, which I see as an entirely different matter.

When I read the [decision](#) document, I was appalled. Rather than pointing out what exactly was wrong with our [organization](#) to justify its dissolution, [the decision was based on an assumption: that since the organization hasn't changed, it will likely commit the same wrongdoings again](#). This was the basis for the [ruling](#).

To impose a “death sentence” on our legal status based on such reasoning suggests a [fervent desire to “destroy the organization”](#). This is nothing short of a [“politically motivated trial.”](#) I also believe that the [verdict](#) was [influenced by the Supreme Court's hostile stance](#) shown during the “administrative fine” (non-penal fine) case.

There was [no consideration of non-retroactivity either](#). In other words, and I will elaborate on this later, [they are applying rules retroactively to past events and using those new rules to judge us](#). It feels as though people who had already finished their judicial proceedings and returned to normal life were suddenly told, “Your previous judgment was too lenient,” and given the death penalty all over again.

An organization pointed out as “socially problematic”

– The dissolution procedure was initiated by then-Prime Minister Fumio Kishida.

Tanaka: The problem with Kishida started on 31st August 2022, when he announced the “severing of ties” with [our organization](#). On that day, he held a press conference at the [Prime Minister's Office](#), speaking as the president of the [Liberal Democratic Party \(LDP\)](#), urging its members to avoid associations with “organizations that are pointed out as problematic by society.”

There's a difference between “organizations pointed out as problematic by society” and “organizations that are actually problematic.” Despite calling for severing ties, Kishida never explained what exactly was problematic about us or why we could be labeled a socially problematic organization; he didn't say a single word about it in his statement.

He essentially said,

“Because someone is saying it's a problem, cut ties with them.”

Then, on 14th October 2022, the Cabinet approved a written government response stating clearly that, since there had been no



Fumio Kishida delivering a speech at the UN Climate Change Conference in Glasgow (COP26) 2nd Nov. 2021. Photo: [首相官邸ホームページ / Wikimedia Commons](#). License: [CC Attr 4.0 Int](#). Cropped

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criminal penalties imposed on our executives, [our organization](#) did not meet the requirements for dissolution under the *Religious Corporations Act*. Therefore, no dissolution order had been requested.

Based on the existing legal interpretation, it was obvious that dissolving us was not possible – and the government officially acknowledged that fact.

However, after that, legal interpretations began to veer off course and were distorted. On 17th October Kishida suddenly announced his intent to exercise the “right to ask questions” – a measure only used when there is already a reason to consider dissolution. Since the Cabinet had just acknowledged on 14th October that there was no basis for dissolution, exercising the right to question made no sense. Kishida’s statement clearly contradicted the Cabinet’s decision.

Most likely, Kishida did not understand the law and made a hasty statement. It also seemed he didn’t fully grasp that the right to question is not for fishing around to uncover crimes. This became evident in his later remarks. The right to question is to be used only when there is already a confirmed illegal act that could justify dissolution – and only to further investigate those facts. You can’t assert there’s no reason for dissolution on one hand and then exercise the questioning right on the other.

Continued in [part 2](#).

See part 2: [Justice Twisted: Assumptions Replaced Evidence](#)

Featured image above: Tomihiro Tanaka, President of the [Family Federation](#) in Japan, at a press conference following the dissolution verdict 25th March 2025. Photo: Screenshot by [Bitter Winter](#)

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