

Statement

by Lawyers from Across Japan
for the Victims of the Unification Church

Re: the Court Order to Dissolve the Religious Corporation of the Unification Church

March 25, 2025

1. Today, the Tokyo District Court found that the Unification Church had “committed acts clearly determinable as seriously damaging to the public welfare in violation of laws and regulations” (Article 81, Paragraph 1, Item 1 of the Religious Corporation Law) and ordered the Unification Church to dissolve under the Religious Corporation Law.

The Unification Church has been systematically and illegally violating the constitutionally guaranteed “freedom of religion” and “right to property” of individuals for many years by recruiting them to join the church while concealing its identity, inciting their anxiety and distress, preventing them from making free decisions, and making them pay large sums of money as donations and purchase of goods, etc. This has not only driven many citizens to financial ruin but has also disrupted their lives and families, causing financial devastation and enormous damage.

Today’s corporate dissolution order shows that the court has listened sincerely to the voices of these many victims and their families and understood the enormous grave damage. We highly commend the court decision.

We would also like to express our sincere respect to the Agency for Cultural Affairs, government officials, and all other parties concerned for their efforts in reaching this court order.

2. When a religious corporation status is revoked by the dissolution order, the organization loses its qualification for tax benefits. Furthermore, the dissolution order means that the judiciary has recognized the religious corporation as having been conducting activities harmful to public welfare, which has an impact on our activities to bring relief to the victims and to prevent future damage. Today’s court order is a significant step toward the relief of all victims of the Unification Church and deterrence of future damage to the public, yet we must further enhance our efforts.

Since February 22, 2023, we have brought up class claims to the Unification Church for damages totaling over 5.7 billion yen for 194 victims, most of which have been moved to class mediation.

Many individuals may learn about today's dissolution order and wish to report their sufferings for the first time. Some members of the Unification Church may consider leaving the Church with the dissolution order as momentum. We will continue providing consultations regarding the Unification Church and do our utmost to help victims. We welcome consultation requests from all victims of the Unification Church, including current members. Please contact us at the following number or through the web form:

Phone (weekdays 10:30am-3:30pm): 03-6261-6653 Consultation form (24-hrs/365 days): https://www.uchigai.net/#

In addition, on Saturday, April 5 of this year, A Telephone Consultation Day sponsored by the Japan Legal Support Center (Houterasu), which has an agreement with our legal team, is scheduled (10am-4pm, Phone:0120-005931). Consultation will be available for calls from all over Japan, and member lawyers of our team will also be there to assist you. Please feel free to make a call.

3. The Unification Church should take today's dissolution order seriously and reflect deeply on the enormous damage it has caused. It should accept the dissolution order without filing an appeal (immediate appeal) and promptly apologize and compensate all the victims.

In this regard, the Unification Church, in a press release dated February 14th of this year, called the victims "tools" for "manipulating impressions" and used other such terms to blame the lawyers as "the biggest obstacle that has made it difficult to resolve the dispute." In addition, in the class mediations, the Unification Church repeatedly made unjust claims such as "the spiritual sales scam was carried out by the sales company and the Church has nothing to do with such," and "the donations were made of the free will based on faith, and there exists neither damage nor illegality" and they admitted receiving only minimum fractions of the amount claimed. The settlement proposal made by the Church was as low as merely 5% of the damage suffered by the victims.

Evidently, the Unification Church's refusal to face the damage they have caused is the biggest obstacle to resolving the dispute. The Unification Church should immediately rectify its attitude and engage in sincere discussions to provide relief to the victims.

4. The dissolution order will become final and binding upon expiration of the statutory appeal period of two weeks if the Unification Church does not file an appeal (immediate appeal), or upon dismissal of the appeal by the Tokyo High Court if an appeal is filed. Once the order is finalized, a liquidator lawyer will be appointed by the

court, and liquidation procedures for the dissolution of the corporation will commence under the supervision of the court.

However, under the current legal system, the liquidation process will not proceed smoothly and expeditiously because the legal provisions regarding the liquidation of a religious corporation are extremely vague and insufficient. As such, the relief of victims through the liquidation process may be hindered. It is necessary to clarify the authority of the liquidator and allow the appointment of multiple liquidators through legislative measures such as enacting a special law. We urge the government and the Diet to take the necessary actions promptly to ensure relief to the victims.

We, as a legal team for the victims of the Unification Church, will continue to do our utmost to provide relief to the victims.

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