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**Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil,
political, economic, social and cultural rights,
including the right to development**

Joint written statement* submitted by Universal Peace Federation, Women's Federation for World Peace International, non-governmental organizations in general consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[26 May 2025]

* Issued as received, in the language of submission only.



Japan: Forced Reeducation of Children by Japanese Authorities Against Their Parents' Faith in Public Schools in Blatant Violation of the Rights to a Free Education

Japanese authorities have openly endeavored to eliminate the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification (FFWPU), formerly named Unification Church (hereafter “Unification Church” or “Church” for ease of reading).

After media hype and stereotyping of the followers with the government support for years, second-generation believers are now going through hell, being stigmatized at school and marginalized. The State has launched in January last year a re-education plan specifically designed for the children of Unification Church members in public schools.

The plan entails “human rights classes” where the Unification Church members are depicted as criminals and consequently some children do not speak to their parents anymore.

Guidelines on “child abuse related to religious beliefs” adopted in 2024 give instructions to the State services to consider religious education as a form of psychological abuse, and children are consequently re-educated against their parents' faith, in violation of the right of parents to educate their children in accordance with their own beliefs protected under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR).

According to the plan posted on the Government website, the Ministry of Justice has expanded the number of “Human Rights Classes” delivered by counsellors trained by apostates of the Unification Church, and the distribution of thousands of “Children's Human Rights SOS Mini Letters” to all elementary and junior high school students. The SOS Mini Letter is an envelope distributed to the children to allow them to send an “SOS” to the authorities once they have been indoctrinated against their parents' education.

When children or teenagers eventually turn against their parents' faith or are anxious about it, the lawyers of>NNLSS are there to claim in their name the appointment of new guardians and the State agents propose them support to leave home. The new measures provide that they will be offered “a temporary living space away from their parents or other believers, facilitating their path to rebuilding their lives.”

This new form of “deprogramming” of the second generation believers of the Unification Church is part of an undertaking of eradication of the whole faith from Japan that the authorities engaged in, in violation of all the human rights commitments that they made to the international community.

The government Plan constitutes an outright violation of the parents' right to educate their children in conformity with their own convictions protected by Article 18 ICCPR that Japan has signed and ratified:

"4. The States Parties to the present Covenant undertake to have respect for the liberty of parents and, when applicable, legal guardians to ensure the religious and moral education of their children in conformity with their own convictions."

Japan has a duty of neutrality in religious matters and can in no way replace the parents in the religious education of their children, as is done in certain totalitarian countries.

Japan should be reminded to honor its commitments and stop harassing minority faith communities in its territory.
