

What the Abe assassination reveals about tolerance of hate speech and the deficit of religious freedom in Japan

31 January 2023 11:30-13:00

Room XXII - Palais des Nations, Geneva

On July 8th 2022, the assassination of Shinzo Abe, by a lone assassin, caused shock and consternation in Japan and around the world, triggering a nationwide media campaign against the Unification Church, which the assassin falsely blamed for his family's troubles.

In response, the government initiated a whole raft of measures aimed at severely limiting the activities of the church, if not eliminating it altogether. The Communist Party of Japan later boasted that this was part of its "final war against the Unification Church."

Since then, the government has rushed to introduce those measures and, in so doing, has unleashed a campaign of hate speech against Unification Church members and seriously violated the commitment to religious freedom enshrined in Japan's post World War II constitution. These violations threaten not only the rights of the Unification Church and of its members there, but those of all faith communities in Japan, as well as Japan's credibility as a nation upholding fundamental human rights & civil liberties.

Our panel of top global experts on human rights will examine how the Abe assassination has revealed the tolerance of hate speech and the deficit of religious freedom in Japan.

Moderation

Ms Christine Mirre, Director, CAP Liberté de Conscience

11:30 - Speakers

Dr. Massimo Introvigne, Founder and Managing Director, Center for Studies on New Religions (CESNUR)

Dr. Aaron Rhodes, president of the Forum for Religious Freedom - Europe and former Executive Director of the International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights

Hon. Jan Figel, EU Special Envoy on Religious Freedom Outside the EU (2016-2019)

Mr. Willy Fautré, Executive Director, Human Rights Without Frontiers

Question and answers

13:00 – End

