

their faith or running affiliated business ventures. Rather, the cult lost the legal protections guaranteed to religious groups, including its tax-exempt status.

In addition, the Japanese Parliament passed the Law Related to the Prevention of Bodily Harm Caused by Sarin and Similar Substances. It prohibited the manufacture, possession, and use of sarin and similar substances. The laws guaranteeing religious freedom were modified after the sarin attack. On December 8, 1995, Japan's legislature (*Teikoku Gikai*) passed revisions to the Religious Corporations Law that increased the ability of authorities to monitor potentially dangerous religious organizations.<sup>37</sup> The government also began reviewing laws restricting police actions, antiterrorism policies, and consequence-management plans. In June 1996, the police law was revised "to enable prefectural police to extend their authority out of their border by their own judgment and responsibility in dealing with transprefectural organized crimes."<sup>38</sup> A few years later, the Group Regulation Act of 1999 was passed to regulate groups that committed indiscriminate mass murder. The law did not directly refer to Aum Shinrikyo, but it did allow police to put the organization under surveillance for a maximum of three years.

Aum Shinrikyo quickly experienced significant financial trouble. Donations dropped off, and Aum faced numerous claims for compensation from victims and their relatives. The Japanese government, in conjunction with the victims of the Tokyo subway attack and their families, requested that Aum Shinrikyo's assets be frozen. These steps were intended to direct Aum Shinrikyo money into compensation funds for victims before the group's debts became too exorbitant. On December 12, under bankruptcy law, the Tokyo district court froze all Aum Shinrikyo assets and began administering the provisional attachment of the group's assets beginning on December 14. On March 28, 1996, the Tokyo district court made the adjudication of bankruptcy for Aum Shinrikyo.<sup>39</sup> The court also appointed an adjudicator to replace

---

<sup>37</sup> Mullins (1997).

<sup>38</sup> Pangi (2002, p. 439).

<sup>39</sup> NPA (1996, p. 23).