

## Toru Goto Reveals Documents in Lawsuit against Faithbreakers

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Mr. Toru Goto, the best-known victim of abduction and confinement by paid forced-conversion experts, recently posted his depositions to a Tokyo Court that is hearing his complaint against professional confinement experts who helped imprison him for 12 years and five months. Of the 7-part deposition, the first four parts have been translated into English and posted on the blog titled “Human Rights Violations in Japan,” at [humanrightslink.blogspot.com/](http://humanrightslink.blogspot.com/).

As reported by the Unification Church, Mr. Goto filed a civil suit against the so-called deprogrammers in February 2011.

Two hearings in Tokyo District Court have been held, the first on March 22, 2011 and the second on May 17, 2011. The sessions were held for submission of the documents of the plaintiffs and the defendants and to determine the next hearing dates. The next two sessions will be held on Aug. 16, 2011 and Oct. 11, 2011.

Mr. Goto’s depositions indicate that the abduction problem for the Unification Church was much worse in the early 1990s than it is today.

Mr. Goto writes: “For three years, from 1990 to 1992, 941 members went missing. 233 members out of 941 returned to the church. According to the survey of the 233 members, they were kidnapped and confined against their will in an attempt to break their faith. In 1992, only one year, there were 375 missing members. On average, more than one member was kidnapped and confined daily.” The number of abduction victims reported by Unification leaders in recent years has been from 12 to 14.

Mr. Goto has stated that he believes his own family spent up to \$1 million to break his faith over a 12 year period. As has been reported, the fees charged by Japanese deprogrammers, which usually includes a team of Christian ministers and de-conversion experts, start at about \$40,000. It is estimated that the deprogramming units, usually working with the cooperation of law firms that sue the Unification Church after a member renounces his or her faith, have charged parents and relatives of Unificationist victims fees of which the aggregate far exceeds \$100 million. Japanese lawyers reportedly have boasted at academic conferences that they have won hundreds of millions of dollars in “lost-youth” cases advanced on behalf of former Unification Church members. In all cases, the lawyers have denied that coercion was used to confine the members who were persuaded to leave the Unification Church.

The defendants facing the lawsuit of Mr. Goto have insisted that Mr. Goto was not held against his will and that he starved himself voluntarily after he left the apartment where he says he was confined, according to Mr. Luke Higuchi, president of Survivors Against Forced Exit (SAFE), a group that is exposing the religious freedom scandal in Japan.

There are approximately 100 Unification Church members in Japan who fear that they are at great risk of being abducted and coerced to renounce their faith, according to Mr. Higuchi.