



**UPDATE FROM THE DESK OF
ICRF PRESIDENT DAN FEFFERMAN
Date: April 15, 2011**



Mr. Goto's Case

The case of Mr. Toru Goto, the 12-year confinement victim, is now pending before a Tokyo civil court. (Unfortunately he will receive no resolution from Japan's criminal justice system.) As we informed you previously, the police did not aggressively investigate his case and prosecutors then dismissed it for "lack of evidence." Mr. Goto then appealed his case to a special citizens' commission that had the authority to reopen the case. However, they denied his appeal. This was an outrageous miscarriage of

justice: the commission even went so far as to take the word of Mr. Goto's captors that the reason they had so many locks on the doors was NOT to prevent Mr. Goto from escaping, but to prevent UC members from coming to force him to return the church! This shows how deeply engrained the prejudice against our movement is in Japan. However, Mr. Goto is still determined to win in civil court, where he will finally have the chance to present his evidence. Even with the earthquake, the case got started on schedule in March. It will take several months, and we expect the verdict to be appealed no matter which way it goes. So it will probably take two or three years to conclude. Please keep Mr. Goto, his lawyers, and the judges in your prayers. (Japan does not have a jury system.) We will keep you posted on the progress of the case.

Capitol Hill Focus:

Although In Jin Nim is currently focusing on earthquake relief efforts rather than pushing Congress to press Japan on the forced conversion ("deprogramming") issue, we are using this time to hone our strategy and reach out to key Congressional staff. For example, this week, ACC co-chair Rev. Michael Jenkins, UPF-USA president Jim Gavin and myself met with several current and former staff members to brief them on our issue and discuss strategy for obtaining hearings and otherwise bringing about a change in the Japanese government's attitude. Congress has not held a religious freedom hearing since 2006, but we expect there will be more interest this year because the changes in the Middle East are bringing this issue to the foreground.

Also, Jim Gavin and Ray Mas of the ICRF staff attended a Capitol Hill reception sponsored by the Becket Fund for Religious Freedom on March 31. The event was



Baha'i spokeswoman Kit Bigelow (right) receives IRLA award from Lincoln Steed of Liberty Magazine

Freedom Caucus--and to encourage its religious freedom issues. Mr. Gavin had an congressman Trent Franks, who is one of the most religious freedom. Jim and Ray were also able on activists who attended.

∴

Ray Mas and I attended the annual dinner of the International Religious Liberty Association earlier this month. Dr. Suzan Johnson Cook, President Barak Obama's nominee for the position of Religious Freedom Ambassador-at-Large, was the keynote speaker. As I reported earlier, ICRF has endorsed Dr. Cook's nomination. We've met Dr. Cook on several occasions and have briefed her thoroughly on our issue. We feel confident that she will bring needed passion and focus to the State Department's efforts, not only on our behalf, but for all persecuted religious minorities throughout the world. Regardless of how one might feel about President Obama, it is very important for the USA to have an effective advocate for religious freedom in the diplomatic world, especially at this time. We are glad to report that it now looks fairly certain that she will finally be confirmed (after a delay of more than a year!).

WFWP Event on Human Rights:

Mrs. Ichiko Sudo, project manager for our efforts on behalf of forced conversion victims in Japan, was the keynote speaker at a New Jersey WFWP event on the theme of women's dignity. Ichiko is the daughter of famed UC lecturer Rev. Ken Sudo. She also showed a video with several victims giving their testimonies, Mr. Toru Goto, and introduced a local survivor.



Mrs. Ichiko Sudo at WFWP event

The mayor of Irvington, NJ, Wayne Smith, attended the event. He agreed to introduce our cause to the local press. We thank WFWP NJ chairwoman Dennize Nelson for assisting our coalition to bring further awareness to the plight of our confined Japanese members.

Special Thanks . . . I'd like to express our gratitude to all of you who have responded to our recent fundraising appeals. Although we are still receiving financial support from Japan for this effort, we aspire to be funded by American members who are passionate about America's blessing of religious freedom and want to share that with others. Please join us to see that our Japanese church members may be free to practice their faith, and become liberated to welcome True Parents back to Japan after so many years.

A great thank you to those who are giving now, and for those of you who haven't responded to our appeal yet, we welcome your participation! You may donate on the lower left side at our website: <http://www.religiousfreedom.com>

Contact us:

7245-A Hanover Parkway, Greenbelt, MD 20770
Website: www.religiousfreedom.com;