

Free Masato Ishibashi from imprisonment by Faith Breakers

March 22, 2015

Sign a petition to free a Japanese Unification Church member being confined by his family for more than a year



Masato Ishibashi

Unification Church member Masato Ishibashi (26) has been missing ever since he returned home for New Years 2014 over a year ago. The situation indicates he is being held in forced confinement by his family while they try to break his faith.

We Seek for the Rescue of Mr. Masato Ishibashi!

Mr. Masato Ishibashi (26), a member of the Unification Church, has been missing since January, 2014, while he was visiting his parents' home in Chiba Prefecture. Judging from the circumstances, it is quite certain that Mr. Ishibashi's family has confined him in a place where he is unable to contact anyone outside, and are trying to persuade him to discard his faith. This crime is called kidnapping and confinement, forcible faith breaking, and each year,

approximately ten members of the Unification Church are victims.

We have made repeated requests to the local Chiba Police for a search and release of Mr. Ishibashi; however, until today we have not seen any positive action. Just as Domestic Violence (DV) and child abuse are criminal acts, kidnapping and confinement, forcible faith breaking are not "family issues," but clearly a crime. Due to the inaction of the police, a case of illegal kidnapping and confinement has been neglected for over a year and two months, while Mr. Ishibashi has been deprived of all freedom, and his human rights are being trampled on.

We are no longer able to quietly observe and tolerate this. There are many victims who, as a result of their freedom of faith being cruelly trampled by family whom they trusted, suffer from psychological problems such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). We have no time to lose.

We ask that you please support this campaign to help rescue Mr. Ishibashi's urgent case. We believe that this can be realized by collecting the voices of as many people as possible.

Kidnapping and confinement cases of Unificationists have been taking place for nearly fifty years now, and about 4300 members have been victimized. Among them is a woman who was raped by a deprogrammer at the place of confinement, a man who, in trying to escape from the sixth-floor confinement place, fell from the veranda and survived near-death injury, as well as a woman who was driven to commit grievous suicide in confinement.

You may wonder, whether such things can actually occur in this peaceful country of Japan. Mr. Toru Goto, representative of our organization, was kidnapped and confined for an incredible 12 years and 5 months, from age 31 to 44, while his family demanded that he leave the Church. In January, 2011, Mr. Goto filed a civil lawsuit against his family who carried out the kidnapping and confinement, and the professional faith breakers who directed this act from behind. In November, 2014, the Tokyo High Court affirmed the fact of the kidnapping and confinement, as well as the illegal act of the faith breaking

activists, and ordered the family and others a compensation of a total of 22 million yen (US\$183,000). (The family has since filed an appeal to the Supreme Court.)

As of January, 2010, victims of kidnapping and confinement formed the Japanese Victims Association against Religious Kidnapping and Forced Conversion, and have continued with various activities aimed at eliminating this problem in Japan. However, as there are limitations in working on only a domestic level, the group has reported the facts of the issue in Japan to Western countries with a high awareness of human rights, calling for cooperation to resolve the problem.

As a result, an international human rights NGO based in Brussels, Belgium, known as "Human Rights Without Frontiers International (HRWF)," issued a report in late December, 2011, outlining the reality of kidnapping and confinement of Unificationists. This report was referenced in the "International Religious Freedom Report," issued annually by the US State Department. Furthermore, the United Nations Human Rights Committee, based in Geneva, Switzerland, within the UN European Headquarters issued a report in July, 2014, expressing concern for the issue of kidnapping and confinement of Unificationists in Japan, and recommending that the Japanese government devise effective steps against this problem.

We can no longer tolerate this crime of kidnapping/confinement and forcible faith breaking, targeted at faith in the Unification Church. We strongly believe that this action seeking Mr. Ishibashi's rescue, will also be a big step toward the fundamental resolution of this grave problem. We wish to ask people throughout the world, to cooperate with this campaign!

The Japanese Victims Association against Religious Kidnapping and Forced Conversion

<https://www.change.org/p/%E5%9B%BD%E4%BC%9A%E8%AD%B0%E5%93%...>