

## FFWPU Europe and the Middle East: Evidence Tampering in Japan's FFWPU Dissolution Case

Knut Holdhus  
February 20, 2025



Japanese government officials submitting documents containing fabricated "evidence" to the court of law



### Government ministry accused of grave evidence tampering in dissolution case against religious minority the Family Federation

Tokyo, 20th February 2025 - Published as an article in the Japanese newspaper [Sekai Nippo](#). Republished with permission. Translated from Japanese. [Original article](#).

#### Ministry of Education's "Evidence" Identified as Fabrications

#### Family Federation Responds to Dissolution Order Request

by the editorial department of [Sekai Nippo](#)

On 19th February 2025, the [Family Federation for World Peace and Unification](#) (formerly the [Unification Church](#)) announced on its official website that several pieces of evidence submitted by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) to the Tokyo District Court as part of its request for a dissolution order contained "intentionally and systematically falsified information".



The [Family Federation](#) claimed that these fabricated pieces of evidence were uncovered during the process of refuting and countering the allegations in court and were further exposed during witness examinations held late

last year. The [religious organization](#) argued that the fabrication of statements by MEXT has significant implications for religious freedom and stated that, in addition to informing its members, it was publicly disclosing this issue to uphold the public's "right to know".



Among the 294 written statements and testimonies submitted by MEXT under the names of former members, it was revealed that 33 individuals were not former followers but rather included relatives of members, MEXT officials, and opposition lawyers. Additionally, of the remaining 253 individuals (excluding eight former second-generation followers), approximately 90% had joined more than 15 years ago, with some having left the [religious organization](#) decades earlier.

Meanwhile, there were 19 statements from first-generation members who joined the [Family Federation](#) after it issued its "Compliance Declaration" in 2009. Of these, 18 statements were reportedly created based on interviews conducted by MEXT, with the final documents signed and sealed by the individuals concerned.

Regarding the alleged systematic fabrication of false information in MEXT's statements, the [Family Federation](#) asserted that the ministry resorted to falsifications because it believed it would otherwise be

unable to file for the dissolution order or win the case. The [organization](#) strongly condemned MEXT, stating,



*Japanese government official getting woman to sign document containing evidence tampering*

"The crime of fabricating evidence to request the dissolution of a religious corporation is extremely grave."

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# Toru Goto's Fight For Justice: Faith Under Siege

• February 19, 2025 • Knut Holdhus

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*Justice prevails when victim of 12 years of horrendous abuse by anti-religious activists wins defamation case against one of them*



Logo of the Sekai Nippo

Tokyo, 17th February 2025 – Published as an article in the Japanese newspaper *Sekai Nippo*. Republished with permission. Translated from Japanese. *Original article.*

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Eito Suzuki Loses Defamation Case

by the Religious Freedom Investigative Team of the editorial

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**“This case has shed light on the grave human rights violations of abduction and confinement.”**

On 31st January, Toru Goto (後藤徹) – now 61 – representing the [National Association of Victims of Abduction, Confinement, and Forced Conversion](#), shared his legal victory with supporters, who responded with applause.

This triumph came approximately one year and four months after Goto [filed a defamation lawsuit](#) against journalist Eito Suzuki (鈴木エイト) at the *Tokyo District Court* in October 2023. Suzuki had previously ridiculed Goto's past abduction and confinement experience by dismissing him as a mere “hikikomori” (recluse) [[See editor's note below](#)].



Eito Suzuki in January 2024. Photo: [FFWPU](#)

**Background of the Case**

Suzuki and attorneys from the *National Network of Lawyers Against Spiritual Sales* (Zenkoku Benren) do not recognize [abduction and confinement for the purpose of coercive faith-breaking](#) as religious persecution. Instead, they argue that it is a form of “protective persuasion” by family members aimed at rescuing believers. They claim that lawsuits alleging human rights violations are merely desperate attempts by religious organizations to avoid dissolution.

Lawyer Shinichi Tokunaga (徳永信一), representing Goto, **criticized the media for only presenting anti-religious organization perspectives and failing to report on the truth regarding coercive faith-breaking**. He stressed that this verdict could be a pivotal step in overturning **Japan's discourse, which he described as “built on lies”**.

Goto was held in captivity for [12 years and 5 months](#). In January 2011, he filed a civil lawsuit against his relatives, a Christian pastor, and an “anti-cult” activist involved in his confinement. In September 2015, the *Supreme Court* finalized the ruling, ordering the defendants to pay 22 million yen in damages.



Toru Goto in March 2011, at the start of a civil case. Photo: [FFWPU](#)

However, Suzuki, in an online article published on 13<sup>th</sup> March 2013, in *Yaya Nikkan Cult Newspaper*, downplayed Goto's ordeal, stating:

*“After persuading his family, he simply stayed in the apartment, became complacent, and ended up as a mere ‘hikikomori’ (recluse).” [[See editor's note below](#)]*

Even after the *Supreme Court* ruling, this article remained online. In a post on X (formerly Twitter) 1<sup>st</sup> August 2023, Goto expressed his frustration:

*“Does he not understand the suffering of being forcibly coerced into renouncing one's faith?”*

Despite the court ruling, Suzuki continued to call Goto a “hikikomori” in articles and television appearances. In an 15<sup>th</sup> October 2015, article in *Yaya Nikkan Cult Newspaper*, he wrote:

*“After 12 years of being a hikikomori, he won 20 million yen in court.”*

On 12<sup>th</sup> August 2022, during an appearance on *Miyane-ya* (a news program on Nippon TV), Suzuki described Goto's lawsuit as a case where *“the court was swayed by an unusual fervor.”* He also claimed that Goto had been *“practically in a hikikomori state, always free to leave if he wanted.”*



Logo of Miyane-ya

**Ongoing Defamation and Court Ruling**

The defamation against Goto continued. In July 2023, Suzuki attended a symposium hosted by second-generation members of the [Family Federation for World Peace and Unification](#) (formerly the [Unification Church](#)). When asked by nonfiction writer Masumi Fukuda (福田ますみ) why he

Send us a message form with fields for First Name, Last Name, Email, and Your Message, and a Submit button.

insisted on calling Goto a "hikikomori",  
Suzuki replied dismissively:

"It doesn't matter. Take it however you like."

Masumi Fukuda, here delivering a speech 23rd Sep. 2024 in Chiba City, Japan. Photo: Tsuyoshi Toyoda (豊田剛)

A few days later, he posted on X:

"There is no value in covering the 'victim narratives' of anti-social groups. It's all irrelevant."

The Tokyo District Court ruled that Suzuki's statements in the 15th October 2015 *Yaya Nikkan Cult Newspaper* article and his August 2022 *Miyaneya* appearance constituted defamation. However, other statements, including his 2013 article, his comments at the 2023 Goto's legal team had also argued that Suzuki's repeated use of "hikikomori" implied that Goto was a "liar and conman who is pretending to be a victim of confinement", but this claim was not accepted by the court.

### Appeal and Future Battles

Lawyer Tokunaga expressed his determination to appeal, vowing to challenge all dismissed claims in the higher court. As public sentiment remains strongly against the [Family Federation](#), Goto fears that abduction and confinement cases may resurge. For him, this fight that cannot be lost continues.



Attorney Shinichi Tokunaga (徳永信一). Photo: Takahide Ishii (石井孝秀)

See [part 1](#), [part 3](#)

**[Editor's note:** The Japanese term "**hikikomori**" (引きこもり) refers to people who completely withdraw from social life, often isolating themselves at home for extended periods – sometimes years. It describes both the phenomenon and the individuals affected by it.

Hikikomori typically avoid school, work, and social interactions, often due to anxiety, social pressure, or mental health struggles such as depression. The term is sometimes used in a derogatory way but is also recognized as a serious social issue in Japan and other countries.]

**Featured image** above: A press conference held after the verdict. From right: Lawyer Shinichi Tokunaga (徳永信一), Toru Goto (後藤徹), representative of the [National Association of Victims of Abduction, Confinement, and Forced Conversion](#); and Lawyer Tatsuki Nakayama (中山達樹) – 31<sup>st</sup> January 2025, Chiyoda Ward, Tokyo. Photo: Takahide Ishii (石井孝秀).

(中山達樹) – 31<sup>st</sup> January 2025, Chiyoda Ward, Tokyo. Photo: Takahide Ishii (石井孝秀).

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