

FFWPU Europe and the Middle East: Kidnapping Victim Sues Activist Journalist

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October 5, 2023



Victims of kidnapping and forcible detention mocked and insulted by activist journalist

4th October 2023 - Published as an article in the Japanese newspaper [Sekai Nippo](#). Republished with permission. Translated from Japanese. [Original article](#)

Toru Goto, victim of abduction and confinement, files lawsuit against Eito Suzuki over his remark that Goto is a "recluse" (hiki komori).

By Sekai Nippo Editorial Department, 4th Oct. 2023

"He is not qualified to talk about human rights," Goto alleges in tears

Toru Goto, 59, a member of the [Family Federation for World Peace and Unification \(Family Federation\)](#), formerly the [Unification Church](#) was abducted and confined by his family and faith-breaking experts in order to force him to give up his faith. On 4th October, he filed a lawsuit against journalist Eito Suzuki at the Tokyo District Court, seeking damages for defamation. He is seeking 11

million yen [\$ 74,000] as compensation for emotional distress.



According to the complaint, Suzuki criticized Goto on the news website Yaya Nikkan Cult Shimbun, where Suzuki is the main writer, as "a male believer who stayed in his flat and became a NEET [Not in Education, Employment, or Training] after recuperation, becoming just a 'recluse'."

On Nippon TV's Information Live Miyaneya, he repeatedly criticized Goto, such as commenting that he was a "recluse" (引きこもり - hiki komori). Furthermore, Suzuki also defamed Toru Goto at a symposium held in July this year. When Suzuki was asked about the fact that he referred to Goto as a "recluse" (hiki komori), Suzuki replied, "I don't care." He also posted on X (formerly Twitter) that Goto was a puppet forced to play the "role of a

victim".



The head table at the briefing in Tokyo 4th Oct. 2023. From left: Attorney Tatsuki Nakayama, plaintiff Toru Goto, Attorney Shinichi Tokunaga

At a briefing session held in Tokyo after filing the lawsuit, Goto emphasized, "Eito Suzuki's remarks are truly terrible. He is not qualified to talk about human rights." "I simply cannot tolerate insulting and mocking remarks about women who committed suicide while in captivity, rape victims, and people who are victims of PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder)," he said in a choked voice. Explaining his motive for filing the lawsuit, he stated, "If we allow this to continue, the number of victims of abduction and confinement will increase even more."

According to the [Family Federation](#), more than 4,300 believers were abducted and held captive. Among them, Toru Goto was confined to a room in an apartment in Tokyo and other areas for 12 and a half years. He filed a civil lawsuit against relatives, a faith-breaking activist and a Christian pastor, who were all involved in his abduction and confinement. The Supreme Court ruled in 2015 in Toru Goto's favour.



Attorney Shinichi Tokunaga

Regarding the government's request for an order to dissolve the [Family Federation](#), Shinichi Tokunaga, a lawyer representing the plaintiffs, said that the trial would be a good opportunity to make the reality of the abduction and confinement known to the public, which could work to the advantage of the [Family Federation](#).

Separately, on the same day, the Universal Peace Federation (UPF), a collegial group of the [Family Federation](#), filed a lawsuit with the Tokyo District Court against Suzuki seeking 11 million yen in damages for defamation caused by Suzuki's comments about former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe.

Abe sent a video message to an international conference held by the UPF in September 2021. Suzuki wrote on X on 1st July this year that he had "inside information of 100 million yen to President Trump and 50 million yen to former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe." Suzuki made the same claims in lectures and magazines. UPF insists that it has neither paid Shinzo Abe nor any of his affiliated organisations.

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From the header of ffwpu.jp, the official homepage of the Family Federation of Japan.

7th September 2023 the [Family Federation of Japan](http://ffwpu.jp) issued a

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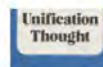
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7 September 2023 the [Family Federation of Japan](#) issued a press release in response to recent scandalous bias in media reports that the [Federation](#) had failed to report sufficiently and that the materials submitted “were scarce”.

The media did not mention that some of the questions from the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) put the [Family Federation](#) in an impossible situation as it would be forced to disclose private matters from the lives of the members. That would indeed represent a serious infringement of human rights and religious freedom.



**THE
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Sankei News reported that the *Agency for Cultural Affairs*, a special body of the *Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT)*, would

order the [Family Federation](#) to pay a fine for not having responded properly. According to the Sankei article, it appears that the source of the scandalous bias may well be found within the *Agency for Cultural Affairs* itself.

The press release was written by the [Family Federation's](#) public relations office.

Here is the text in English:

“View of the media on the Family Federation’s response to the ‘exercise of the right to question’ is insincere.

Currently, amid various media reports regarding the ‘exercise of the right of questions’ by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) to this religious corporation [[Family Federation](#)], multiple media have stated that ‘at the beginning the Agency for Cultural Affairs received 8 cardboard boxes, but the amount gradually decreased to one envelope’, as if [this corporation](#) had responded insincerely. It must be said that such reporting is biased and arbitrarily twists the facts. We will explain in detail below.



Logo of the Agency for Cultural Affairs. *Public domain image*

First of all, it is clear that the ‘volume’ of responses cannot be used to determine whether or not we answered appropriately.



文部科学省

Symbol of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology of Japan. Photo: [文部科学省\(MEXT Japan\) / Wikimedia Commons](#). License: [CC Attr 4.0 Int](#)

The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) initially required [this corporation](#) to submit a wide range of basic materials, but since the third ‘exercise of the right to ask questions’, more specific questions have come in. This is the primary reason why the volume of responses gradually decreased. As the questions were asked, the range of answers required became narrower, so it is natural that the overall volume of answers decreased.

In addition, it has been reported that [this corporation's](#) answers to the 4th and 5th ‘exercise of the right to ask questions’ are ‘one envelope’, but in reality, it was a ‘letter pack’ and contained about 100 pages of A4 size paper. It may not be wrong to

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report it as an 'envelope', but it gives the impression that **this corporation** is not answering properly. Similarly, for the sixth and seventh responses, what is reported as an 'envelope', is a 'letter pack').

On the other hand, TV Asahi's



*Toru Goto, a member of the **Family Federation**, after having being held captive by professional deprogrammers for 12 years and 5 months! He won an important court case against his captors. But according to MEXT staff, it appears that records of victories in court cases are not so important. Photo: **FFWPU***

information programs 'Good! Morning' (aired on 5th September) and 'Morning Show' (broadcast on 6th September) introduced comments from MEXT staff, saying, 'Since there were many records and pamphlets about their victories in court cases, most of the answers did not have so much content.'

This is clearly an arbitrary way of picking up the story that gives the impression that we are not answering in good faith, and it misleads viewers.

We call on the press to report fairly based on facts.

Among the questions from the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) were

(1) related to the privacy and religious freedom of believers,

(2) were clearly unrelated to civil law torts,

(3) repeated questions that had already been answered, and

(4) questions related to pending trials.

We, **this corporation**, have sincerely responded to the enormous number of questions and requests from the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology by spending a huge amount of time and effort while sacrificing our regular operations. Nevertheless, the attitude of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) that **this Corporation** 'does not answer questions appropriately' is extremely regrettable."

*Featured image above: Toru Goto, member of the **Family Federation**, held captive for 12 years and 5 months by professional deprogrammers in league with activist lawyers, some of whom are now advisers to the Japanese government. Now Toru Goto and fellow members are suffering from a scandalous bias in the media, supported by the authorities.*

Photo from April 2023: [FOREF](#)

"Response to Scandalous Bias" – Introductory text: Knut Holdhus. Translation: Tiara Boysen

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