

FFWPU Europe and the Middle East: Deep Fake Black Propaganda As Cover For Criminal Acts Against Religious Freedom in Japan

Knut Holdhus
March 7, 2024



Haruhisa Nakagawa, Tokyo Christian Theological Institute Executive Secretary, President of Japan Christian Theological Institute

Japanese Christian leader claims black propaganda engineered by activist lawyers serves as cover for criminal acts of abduction and confinement

JINF 28th February 2024, Japan Institute for National Fundamentals (JINF) in the "Speaking out" section on its website published an article titled "Religious Believers Should Not Acquiesce to Religious Freedom Violations". It was written by Rev. Haruhisa Nakagawa (中川晴久), Pastor of Christian Church of the Lord's Sheep (主の羊クリスチャン教会), Executive Secretary of Tokyo Christian Theological Institute, President of Japan Christian Theological Institute. [Original article](#). He conducted an undercover investigation of the [Unification Church](#) in 2012.



Masahito Moriyama

Nakagawa points out that Education Minister Masahito Moriyama (盛山正仁) has staunchly denied any affiliation with the [Unification Church](#), despite receiving support from an [association](#) affiliated with the [church](#) in past election campaigns. Some now claim that members of the [Unification Church](#) who provided this support feel abandoned by Moriyama and have retaliated by disclosing their past connections with him to the media.

The conflict stems from the assassination of former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe on 8th July 2022, by a terrorist with anti-[Unification Church](#) sentiments. Due to the negative media coverage the [church](#) received, and fear of it affecting the support for his party, Prime Minister Fumio Kishida declared officially that his governing party was cutting all ties with the [Unification Church](#) on 31st August of the same year.

Subsequently, the government has, according to Nakagawa, manipulated legal interpretations, including retroactively applying a reinterpretation of requirements for dissolving religious corporations under the Religious Corporation Act to include civil law violations. On 13th October 2023, the government filed a dissolution order request for the church with the Tokyo District Court without any formal cabinet decision or documented meeting minutes regarding this reinterpretation. Nakagawa describes the Kishida administration's sudden relentless pursuit to dissolve the [church](#),

"The government has tried desperately to dissolve the [church](#) in accordance with the terrorist's aspiration, leaving the matter confused and out of control."

The Christian leader claims that the [Unification Church](#) has faced exaggerated criticism, particularly from a limited pool of sources initially. Tabloid TV shows featured hostile activist journalist Eito Suzuki (鈴木

エイト) and other activists such as former House of Councilors member Yoshifu Arita (有田芳生) from the Constitutional Democratic Party of Japan, Masaki Kito (紀藤正樹) from the National Network of Lawyers Against Spiritual Sales (全国霊感商法被害対策弁連), and Kimiaki Nishida (西田公昭) from the Japan Society for Cult Prevention and Recovery, who all consistently voiced opposition to the [Unification Church](#). These individuals have long been associated with anti-[Unification Church](#) sentiments, leading to the perception that they were all essentially echoing one and the same viewpoint through "different mouths".



Yoshifu Arita, former communist politician

Nakagawa makes clear that he has held his own critical stance towards the [Unification Church](#) for over 25 years, but has been skeptical of the information provided by Suzuki and others, which often seemed biased, exaggerated, and erroneous. It appears that the National Network of Lawyers Against Spiritual Sales has a distinct left-leaning inclination, and the issue of the [Unification Church](#) seems to have been politically exploited within this context.

An important yet overlooked aspect of the National Network of Lawyers deserves attention. Haruhisa Nakagawa writes,

"In fact, the network has deep connections with perpetrators involved in the abduction and confinement of [Unification Church](#) followers. So far, more than [4,300 people have been confirmed as victims](#) of confinement. After having their faith broken, the confinees have sued the [Unification Church](#) to demonstrate their apostasy [that they have left the faith], accumulating the number of court cases involving the [church](#). Faith is at the core of religious believers' personality, and

forcibly taking it away through confinement is unacceptable."

Nakagawa shares his insights from years' of study and claims that the crux of the matter lies in the association of abduction and confinement with what is known as "black propaganda" - information campaigns characterized by exaggerations and distortions. By branding the [Unification Church](#) as a "cult", continuously damaging its social standing, and amplifying negative perceptions, this black propaganda has sought to justify abduction and confinement under the guise of "rescuing" individuals. It is imperative that we do not endorse such black propaganda, especially when it serves as a cover for criminal acts like abduction and confinement. Instead, we should acknowledge the positive aspects of the [Unification Church](#) and work towards restoring its reputation.

Furthermore, the government's current actions constitute a violation of the religious freedom of a particular [religious organization](#) and an attempt to strip it of its political participation rights. Surprisingly, Japan's religious community has remained largely silent in response to these developments. Allowing the government to continue unchecked in this regard will inevitably lead to the deterioration of the religious landscape. If religion declines, Japan risks losing its valuable spiritual and cultural heritage. Such a consequence cannot be tolerated.

Japan Institute for National Fundamentals (国家基本問題研究所 - Kokka Kihon Mondai Kenkyūjo or Kokkiken - 国基研) is a privately funded think tank. Since its founding in 2007, it has addressed issues as energy, defense and international relations.

"Black propaganda as cover for criminal acts" - text: Rev. Haruhisa Nakagawa

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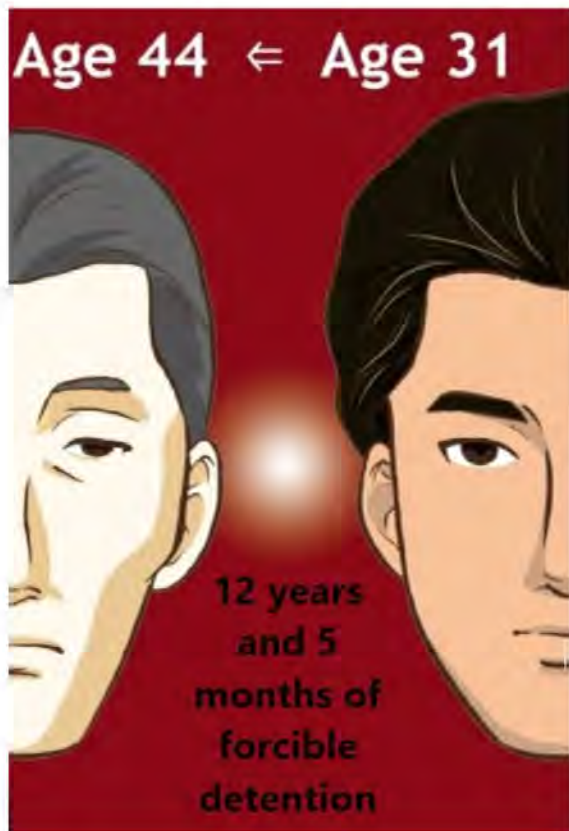
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Harsh Reality Of 4300 Forcibly Deprogrammed

January 31, 2024 • Knut Holdhus

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Kishida administration pushing for many more to be forcibly deprogrammed

6th of six parts of large Monthly Seiron report – More on [part 1](#), [part 2](#), [part 3](#), [part 4](#), [part 5](#).

Seiron (正論), a Japanese monthly opinion magazine, carried in its December 2023 issue a large report on the vicious



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persecution of the [Family Federation](#) (formerly the [Unification Church](#)) in Japan.

Two parts of the report by Makiko Takita, well known journalist and editor-in-chief of the magazine, contain an interview with Toru Goto, victim of horrible abuse during more than a decade of forcible detention.

**BITTER
WINTER**

Bitter Winter published this part of the report

of Seiron on 24th January 2024, as the **sixth of six parts** of the English version of the original Japanese large report. Read the [whole Bitter Winter article](#). More on [article 1](#), [article 2](#), [article 3](#), [article 4](#), [article 5](#).

In this article, headlined "The Unification Church Case in Japan: The Harsh Reality of Deprogramming, Part II", journalist and editor Makiko Takita continues her interview with Toru Goto, recounting his ordeal of being forcibly abducted from the [Unification Church](#). Goto describes being neglected by his family during a hunger strike until he was on the brink of death. Despite pleading for a normal diet after his strike, he was subjected to further food deprivation, leading to extreme physical deterioration.

Goto describes what he went through,

"My family completely ignored me. I did not fix a term to end the third hunger strike, but my consciousness began to fade, and my breathing became increasingly labored. My mother was concerned and said to me, 'It's time to end it,' but the confinement did not end. If I continued like this, I might die. Feeling that my life was in danger, I finally gave up after 30 days.

But it did not end there. In the past two hunger strikes, food was served at the end of the fasting. This time, however, I was cut off. It was unexpected. My family said, 'What is wrong with you that you fasted on your own and asked us to serve your food? Are you stupid?' 'Continue until you die!' My heart was completely broken."

Toru Goto explains how he was treated,

"Finally, food was served. However, the food sanctions in the name of a recovery diet continued. The only food I ate each day was some watery porridge and a sport drink. This continued for another seventy days. My body was emaciated, and I was on the verge of starvation."

Eventually, after **enduring years of confinement and emotional abuse**, he was abruptly expelled from the place where he was forcibly detained, leaving him physically injured and emotionally shattered.

He recalls the day he was finally set free on 10th February 2008,

"My brother and his wife, my mother, and my sister all came in and sat down in front of me. The first thing my brother said to me with a stern expression on his



「正論」令和5年12月号
Facsimile from page 53 of Monthly Seiron Dec. 2023.

expression on his face was, 'Do you have any intention to admit the faults of the **Unification Church**?' Everyone was silent. 'No,' I said. As if to confirm, my brother said, 'Are you sure about that?' and I said 'Yes.' Then my brother stared at me, his words getting stronger and more vehement shouting, 'Then get out of here right now!'



The end of Toru Goto's forcible detention 10th Feb. 2008. Photo: [Japanese Victims' Association against Religious Kidnapping and Forced Conversion](#)

I was so stunned by this sudden turn of events that for a moment I could not understand what my brother was saying. My brother suddenly grabbed me with a terrible look on his face. My brother-in-law, sister, and mother joined in, grabbing me by the torso, arms, and legs, lifting me, carrying me toward the front door, and forcibly pushing me outside."

Goto's story sheds light on the **widespread practice of forcibly deprogramming church members**, with an estimated 4,300 individuals subjected to such treatment. Many of those individuals were coerced into renouncing their beliefs and becoming plaintiffs in legal cases against the **church**.

Toru Goto details the **immensity of the faith-breaking business** of abducting and forcibly detaining members of the **Unification Church**,

"The number of **Unification Church** believers abducted and imprisoned by the deprogrammers and their families is estimated to be 4,300. Of these, some 3,000 were forced to apostatize.

Many of those who have been forced to apostatize, as well as their brothers, sisters, and brothers and sisters-in-law, often harbor hatred toward the church and are driven to the next stage of forced apostasy or conversion by being directed to the lawyers of the National Network of Lawyers Against Spiritual Sales (National Federation of Bar Associations) and become plaintiffs in court cases. More than half of the plaintiffs in the 22 civil lawsuits (increased to 32 at the time of the request) listed in the request for the dissolution order are former believers who were forced to apostatize."

However, Goto expresses frustration at the lack of media coverage on the experiences of those who were forced to go through dreadful faith-breaking sessions and the complicity of certain individuals, including his own family members, in perpetuating these abuses.

Despite legal victories against deprogrammers and a decline in lawsuits against the church in recent years, Goto criticizes the ongoing efforts by the *Cultural Affairs Agency* and



Toru Goto in 2008, barely able to move after being held in forcible detention by deprogrammers for more than 12 years. Photo: Kazuhiro Yonemoto / [Japanese Victims' Association against Religious Kidnapping and Forced Conversion](#)

the *National*

Network of Lawyers Against Spiritual Sales to pursue a dissolution order against the [Unification Church](#). He highlights the **lack of transparency and fairness in these proceedings**, which seem to be driven by political motives rather than genuine concerns for religious freedom.

The article concludes by urging readers to **question the motives behind the dissolution order and to consider the broader implications for religious freedom** in Japan. It raises concerns about the silence of other religious organizations and political leaders in the face of these attacks on freedom of belief, emphasizing the importance of defending this fundamental human right against authoritarian encroachments.

Editor of *Monthly Seiron*, Makiko Takita, points out, that the magazine has disclosed details that newspapers and TV stations are aware of, but don't publish. **She calls the whole process strange** that led to the Kishida administration requesting the Tokyo District Court to issue an order to dissolve the [Family Federation](#) (formerly the [Unification Church](#)).

In her concluding remarks, she says,

"To our horror, no objections have been raised by other religious organizations or religious people.

The same is true in the political world. We wonder whether Soka Gakkai, the original parent body of the New Komeito Party, should not think that the dissolution order may create future risks for them too. Does all this mean that other religions are relieved because the government is targeting the [Unification Church](#)?"

Makiko Takita calls the **steps taken by the Japanese authorities a violation of religious freedom**,

"I feel a sense of crisis when I see that the whole of Japan is silent on a process trampling freedom of belief and freedom of religion without following the proper procedures and with a political agenda. What leaders of dictatorial regimes fear is people's inner feelings. That is why they focus their efforts on shattering freedom of religion or belief. Have we lost sight of the preciousness of freedom of belief?"

"Harsh Reality of 4300 Forcibly Deprogrammed" – text: Knut Holdhus

Featured image above: Toru Goto went through 12 years and 5 months of forcible detention. Illustration: [Japanese Victims' Association against Religious Kidnapping and Forced Conversion](#)

Read Toru Goto's own account of his ordeals: [Heroic Battle Against Evil Japanese Practise](#)

and [Gross Human Rights Violations in Japan](#)

More on [part 1](#), [part 2](#), [part 3](#), [part 4](#), [part 5](#) of the *Seiron* article.

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