

Religious Oppression in Japan

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Japan's Family Federation for World Peace and Unification (Family Federation) has recently been subjected to religious persecutions in various forms.

The most egregious of these human rights violations are the coercive attempts to force believers to leave religious groups by means of kidnapping and incarceration.

The phrase, "kidnapping and detention" refers to the abduction of believers followed by their forced confinement under the pretext of "protecting endangered children" and giving them the chance to "talk with" Protestant pastors who work to forcibly convert people who have different beliefs. Over several decades, those who oppose the Family Federation have mobilized lawyers, parents, and siblings to forcibly kidnap and confine Family Federation members. Starting from 1966, when the first such kidnapping occurred, up until 2015 we have had about 4,300 of our members kidnapped in this way. As these criminal acts were carried out behind closed doors, such criminal acts of abduction and forced conversion became rampant and uncontrolled, and the damage was severe. In addition to suffering assault, kidnapping, detention and forced conversion, some members also suffered suicide and severe mental health problems.

Toru Goto, who was kidnapped and detained due to his belief in the Family Federation, was forced to live in confinement for 12 years and five months and exposed to repeated attempts to break his faith. At the SLC General Assembly held in Seoul in August, Toru Goto, came forward and spoke about his experience.

Thankfully, in the case of Toru Goto, he was able to maintain his faith, but 70 to 80 percent of the members of the Family Federation who suffered kidnapping and detention ended up losing their faith. Members who lost their faith in this way and became former members, were then mobilized by those who had kidnapped them to criticize the Family Federation through the media or to attack the Family Federation by filing lawsuits. Many of them were coerced into doing this by being told that if they didn't engage in opposing the Family Federation, they would be locked up again.

Currently, religious persecution by the left-leaning media has reached a serious level in Japan. Since the assassination of former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe on July 8 this year, biased and distorted reports about the Family Federation have been repeated in the media day after day. After the shooting of former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, the media rushed to portray the suspect as if he was a member of the "Family Federation," and the narrative of the original story was hidden to the world.

The media began their opposition on the grounds that former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe was a close colleague of the Family Federation. In addition, the ruling Liberal Democratic Party of Japan announced a new party policy of investigating all members of the National Assembly regarding any contact they had with the Family Federation, forcing Assembly members to sever their Family Federation connections. Further, a number of lawmakers from Japan's ruling Liberal Democratic Party have recently been forced to resign from their cabinet positions. The media has garnered high ratings by featuring former believers and their families, whom they call "victims" of the Family Federation. But what they say is far removed from the facts.

When current Prime Minister Fumio Kishida's approval rating fell to its lowest level since the start of the Kishida government, he encouraged the media and press to pursue policies that markedly disregard freedom of religion, such as working to disband religious corporations and revising views on legislation regarding the regulation of religious donations. Communist Party Chairman Kazuo Shii also described his party's fight against Family Federation as a long-standing struggle. He further declared that this time, he will fight until a decision is reached. Right now in Japan, not only the freedom of religion but also the underpinnings of the democratic system are being endangered by the actions of Japan's leftist forces.

I ask you to understand the severity of the situation and help Japan to move in the right direction. Thank you very much.