

FFWPU Europe and the Middle East: Religious Freedom Assaults in China and Japan

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Annual report by US Department of State highlights not only serious assaults on religious freedom in totalitarian China, but also in democratic Japan



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Editorial: Religious Freedom Report - China Distorts the Essence of Religion with Authoritarianism

The U.S. Department of State has released a report on global religious freedom, condemning serious human rights violations by the Chinese government. These violations include imprisoning an estimated annual maximum of over 10,000 individuals, including Islamic believers in Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region, based on their religious affiliation. The report also highlights the Japanese government's request for the dissolution of the [Family Federation for World Peace and Unification](#) and emphasizes the importance of religious freedom.

Sworn allegiance to the Communist Party



In China, strict surveillance and religious repression extend beyond Uighur Muslims to include Tibetan Buddhists, Christians, and Falun Gong practitioners. In Xinjiang, there have been reports of forced detention, labor, and other abuses against Uighur individuals, raising serious concerns about potential crimes against humanity according to United Nations reports.

The U.S. State Department report further notes that the Chinese Communist Party promotes "sinicization" of religion, imposing administrative measures to ensure that religious institutions such as monasteries, churches, mosques, and temples support the Communist party. Only state-approved religious organizations are allowed to operate, and loyalty to the Communist Party is enforced, along with resistance against foreign influence utilizing religion. The U.S. has officially expressed concerns

about religious freedom violations to China.

Religion encompasses transcendent doctrines, faith objects, and religious leaders, making religious freedom essential. However, when a state wields excessive power to intervene, it distorts the essence of religious teachings. The arbitrary detention of people who believe in unauthorized religions is a frightening reality.

On the other hand, the U.S. State Department report also addresses Japan, focusing on the government's request for the dissolution of the [Family Federation](#). It presents both sides of the issue, including the government's change in legal interpretation leading to the dissolution request, the [Family Federation's](#) counterarguments, and opinions from legal experts and international human rights organizations.

In hearings with members of the Japanese parliament, so-called 'second-generation' individuals from religious families raised criticism against Jehovah's Witnesses, alleging that they force children into religious activities. On the other hand, Jehovah's Witnesses claim that media coverage based on

testimonies from former believers has been unfair and distorted, and they have expressed this to the U.S. Embassy.



State intervention in religious matters is not limited to communist countries like China. Public opinion regarding organizations like the [Family Federation](#) and Jehovah's Witnesses may be biased, as it tends to focus on information provided by lawyers representing former believers who claim harm.

The U.S. State Department has closely monitored issues surrounding the [Family Federation](#) and Jehovah's Witnesses in Japan. They have maintained communication with Japanese parliamentarians, government officials, individuals affected by these organizations, and their representatives, emphasizing the importance of religious freedom under all circumstances.

Even for a democratic country like Japan, it's necessary to pay close attention

History has shown how populist sentiments can sway politics, as exemplified by the National Socialist German Workers' Party (Nazi Party) exploiting anti-Semitic feelings in Europe to gain power through elections. The report highlights that Japan, as a democratic nation, is also under scrutiny regarding religious freedom.

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