

FFWPU Europe and the Middle East: Dissolution Amounts to Deprivation of Rights

Knut Holdhus
December 12, 2024



Participants listen to Marco Respinti's lecture in the afternoon of December 9, 2024, Naka Ward, Nagoya City



Japanese authorities' ill-advised measures against minority religion and requesting its dissolution amount to deprivation of rights for 600,000 members

Tokyo, 10th December 2024 - Published as an article in the Japanese newspaper [Sekai Nippo](#). Republished with permission. Translated from Japanese. [Original article](#).

Request for Dissolution of the Former Unification Church Amounts to "Deprivation of Human Rights"

Italian Journalist Gives Lecture in Nagoya

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



Marco Respinti speaking in Japan December 2024

A rally on the theme of "The Crisis of Religious Freedom and Democracy in Japan" was held on 9th December 2024 in Nagoya City. Marco Respinti, an international journalist and director of the Italian online religious freedom magazine [Bitter Winter](#), and Seishiro Sugihara (杉原誠四郎), president of the International Historical Debate Institute (国際歴史論戦研究所), delivered keynote speeches. They argued that politics should not oppress religious freedom, which is a fundamental human right.

Respinti criticized the Japanese government's request to dissolve the [Family Federation for World Peace and Unification](#) (formerly the Unification Church), calling it "a grave violation of human rights, an attack on democracy, and a dismantling of freedom". He analyzed that the government's decision was influenced by lawyers, socialists, and communists labeling the [organization](#) as a

"cult".

He further emphasized that "protecting the right to freedom of religion or belief is an obligation of the Japanese government." Infringing on that right constitutes "an injustice not only to all Japanese citizens of every religious belief but to the entire world."



Professor emeritus Seishiro Sugihara

Sugihara, an expert on religious issues, described the dissolution request as "misleading leadership by then-Prime Minister Fumio Kishida (岸田文雄)." He urged members of the [Family Federation](#) to assert their legitimacy through social media and international human rights organizations.

In addition, Pastor Paula White, who serves as a religious advisor to the upcoming U.S. President Donald Trump, sent a video message. She warned that the Japanese government's handling of the [Family Federation](#) could have "severe implications for [...] the global perception of Japan's commitment to human rights" as well as its relationship with the United States. She called on Japan to "to uphold religious freedom for all."

The event was hosted by the Japanese Committee of the International Coalition for Religious Freedom (ICRF), represented by Professor Emeritus Shoichi Ito (伊東正一) of Kyushu University, and the Aichi

Prefecture Peace Ambassadors Council. Approximately 2,300 attended the rally.



Paula White delivering a video message at a conference on religious freedom in Tokyo December 8, 2024

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Japan: Exhibition Exposes Horrors Of Persecution

• November 19, 2024 • Knut Holdhus



Panel exhibition reveals the horrors of persecution in Japan, the land of abduction, confinement, and forcible faith-breaking

Tokyo, 19th November 2024 – Published as an article in the Japanese newspaper *Sekai Nippo*. Republished with permission. Translated from Japanese. [Original article](#).

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Panel

Exhibition in Kitakyushu on Abduction, Confinement and



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Location of the city mentioned, located on the southern island of Kyushu.

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Confinement, and Forcible Faith-Breaking

by the editorial department of *Sekai Nippo*

A panel exhibition showcasing the reality of religious persecution faced by members of the [Family Federation for World Peace and Unification](#) (FFWPU, formerly known as the [Unification Church](#))

was held on 17th and 18th November on the second floor of the south exit of Kokura station in Kitakyushu. The exhibition, titled "Abduction, Confinement, and [Forcible Faith-Breaking](#)", was organized by the "Kitakyushu Citizens' Association to Protect Human Rights and Religious Freedom". Many members of the association provided explanations of the panels to passersby, highlighting the horrors of abduction and forcible detention.

Among the panels depicting the intensity of the persecution was an image of Toru Goto (後藤 徹), who was [held in confinement](#) by his relatives in a single apartment room for [12 years and 5 months](#) but still refused to renounce his faith. The panel showed his emaciated appearance. One of the organizers said,

"When people saw the panel of Toru Goto, they were shocked to realize that something like this could happen so close to home. And when we told them about cases like a woman who developed severe atopic dermatitis due to her confinement and passed away at the age of 48, they listened attentively."

On Sunday, with many tourists and shoppers passing by, 750 flyers introducing the activities of the above-mentioned association were distributed. The person in charge said,

"We want people to understand our daily activities. Currently, there is an ongoing dispute due to the Kitakyushu City Council's resolution to sever ties with the [Family Federation](#). We want people to understand the details of that issue as well."



Photo used at the panel exhibition: Toru Goto in 2008, barely able to move after being held in forcible detention by his own family in league with professional faith-breakers for more than 12 years. Photo: Kazuhiro Yonemoto / [Japanese Victims' Association against Religious Kidnapping and Forced Conversion](#)

Featured image above: A panel exhibition on victims of abduction held at the south exit of Kokura Station in Kitakyushu City on the southern island of Kyushu, Japan on 18th November 2024. Photo: Kennosuke Teraguchi (寺口露之介)

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