

FFWPU Europe and the Middle East: 12 Year Captive Toru Goto Exposes Japan's Faith-Breaking Industry

Knut Holdhus
February 23, 2025



Toru Goto at the official launch 10th February 2025, of his book "Deadly Struggle: Surviving 4,536 Days of Confinement"

監禁
4536日
からの
生還

後藤 徹
Toru Goto

死闘

突然の拉致。
どこか分からない施設だらけのマンションの一室。
餓死寸前からの生還と、圧倒的不利な状況から全面
勝訴を勝ち取った裁判の軌跡を今、
初めて明らかにする自伝。

創藝社

Goto's book "Deadly Struggle:
Surviving 4,536 Days of
Confinement"

Japanese man locked up for more than 12 years exposes sinister tactics behind dehumanizing and illegal faith-breaking allowed by authorities

Part 2 of a talk given 10th February 2025, in Tokyo, at the official launch of the book "Deadly Struggle: Surviving 4,536 Days of Confinement" by Toru Goto (後藤徹), held captive for [12 years and 5 months](#) in an attempt to have his faith broken.

See [part 1](#)

What I'm about to share is my personal experience. I may be one of the more well-known victims of confinement, but even if just one person were to go through this, it would still be absolutely unacceptable. This is a grave violation of human rights and a criminal act. I hope you all understand that many others have suffered experiences similar to mine.

(Pointing to screen) This is the apartment where I was confined. We are currently in Suginami Ward, and this apartment is also


located within Suginami. I was locked up on the 8th floor.

The most common method of locking someone up is using a security chain with a padlock on the front door. This makes it impossible to leave. Windows are also secured using special locks and security devices. There are many ways to secure a person inside. In my case, every single window was locked, making it impossible to open any of them.

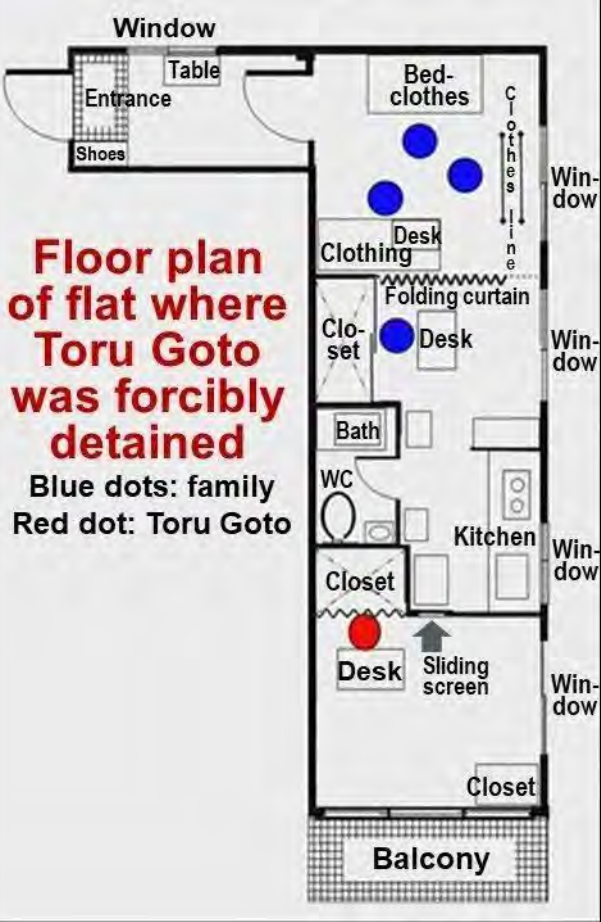
This is the floor plan of the actual apartment where I was confined.

The layout was conveniently suited for confinement. I was told to stay in the bottommost room (pointing

at the diagram). The blue dots represent where my family members stayed.



The location of the 8th floor apartment in Ogikubo, Tokyo where Toru Goto was held captive and dehumanized



Floor plan of flat where Toru Goto was forcibly detained
Blue dots: family
Red dot: Toru Goto

Floor plan of the Tokyo flat where Toru Goto was forcibly detained for about 10 years. For two and half years he was locked up somewhere else, in the city of Niigata

It turns out that multiple floors of this building were used in the exact same way - to abduct and confine [Unification Church](#) believers. This has been confirmed.

Earlier, President Tanaka [Editor's note: Tomihiro Tanaka, president of the [Family Federation](#) in Japan] also mentioned this, but the ones who physically carry out these abductions and confinements are the family members - parents, siblings.

However, abductions and confinements don't happen with just the family alone. There is always a third-party intervention. There are masterminds behind these abductions.



Parents listening to faith-breaker (deprogrammer)

Looking at the United States, in the 1970s and 1980s, there were countless cases of coercive faith-breaking - what is known in English as deprogramming. And the people who carried it out were called deprogrammers. Ted Patrick is considered the founder of deprogramming.

In the U.S., deprogrammers personally took action. They physically kidnapped people. Ted Patrick himself was convicted in seven criminal cases.

Eventually, the organization he founded was legally dismantled and declared bankrupt. By the end of the 20th century, deprogramming had effectively disappeared from the U.S.

However, in Japan, the practice of coercive faith-breaking (forced de-conversion) - what is carried out by so-called faith-breakers ("exit

Why? Why have so many people been forced to leave their faith?

As we discussed earlier, in reality, faith-breakers (deprogrammers) are behind this, thoroughly instructing the parents with claims like,

"The believer will become a criminal." - This is false information.

"The believer is under mind control." - This has never been recognized in court.

In fact, the faith-breaking itself can be said to use tactics based on "mind control".

Parents are told, "Your son (or daughter) is being mind-controlled." This is a pseudo-scientific concept. The faith-breakers tell the parents that it's difficult for their son or daughter to escape on their own. This is how the father and mother are instructed.

As was mentioned earlier, they are told, "You, the parents, are the problem." And when they ask, "Then what should we do?" they are told, "It's impossible for amateurs. You have no choice but to leave it to experts."

When the parents ask what they should do, the faith-breakers resort to the term "protective persuasion" (保護説得). This concept is extremely problematic. What the parents are actually taught/instructed boils down to abduction and confinement.

However, this deceptive term "protective" numbs you to the fact that these are criminal and unlawful acts; they are illegal. Yet you are dazed by the word "protective" (保護).

As a result, many parents have resorted to abduction and confinement.



In Japan, the faith-breakers (deprogrammers) do not directly take action themselves. Instead, they make the parents, family members, and relatives carry it out.

However, I would like to consider for a moment why abduction and confinement is necessary. The bottom line is that you cannot get someone to leave a religion unless you abduct and confine them. I think this is almost always the case when it comes to religion.

But can you simply persuade someone to quit his faith? No, you can't.

Even Jesus said in the Bible:

"For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it."
(Matthew 16,25, New International Version)



Dedicated believers: From a demonstration 11th February 2025 protesting the Japanese state persecution of the [Family Federation](#) in Japan

Religious persons dedicate their whole being, their entire life, to their faith. They love their religious

beliefs as the core of their identity and stake their entire life on it.

They do not follow their faith as a mere hobby. Therefore, no amount of external persuasion will make them quit.

To force someone to abandon the precious treasure one's faith is, one must be physically restrained. That was the conclusion they arrived at.

In the end, the method is to isolate them, confine them, manipulate the information they receive, feed them only one-sided information, and pressure them into renouncing their faith. There is no other way.

How many years this takes is uncertain. But in order to destroy someone's faith within a matter of months, there is no choice but to restrain them physically. That was the conclusion. That is why abduction and confinement became so widespread.

To be continued. Part 3 coming soon.

See [part 1](#)

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Preciousness Of Freedom: Locked Up For 12 Years

• February 14, 2025 • Knut Holdhus



A victim of most dehumanizing treatment, held locked up for more than 12 years, talks about the preciousness of freedom as his book is launched

Part 1 of a talk given 10th February 2025, in Tokyo, at the official launch of the book "Deadly Struggle: Surviving 4,536 Days of Confinement" by Toru Goto (後藤徹), held captive for 12 years and 5 months in an attempt to have his faith broken.

See part 2

Introduction to Toru Goto by Mamoru Kamono (鴨野守), the moderator of the book launch,

"Despite an unimaginable long-term confinement of 12 years, 5 months – 4,536 days – he never lost his faith and fought alongside



Front cover page of Japanese edition of Toru Goto's new book "Deadly Struggle":


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God. He has made a remarkable return and has now published his first memoir. Today, Toru Goto will deliver a commemorative lecture. Toru Goto, we look forward to your speech."

From *Deadly Struggle: Surviving 4,536 Days of Confinement*

Everyone, good afternoon.

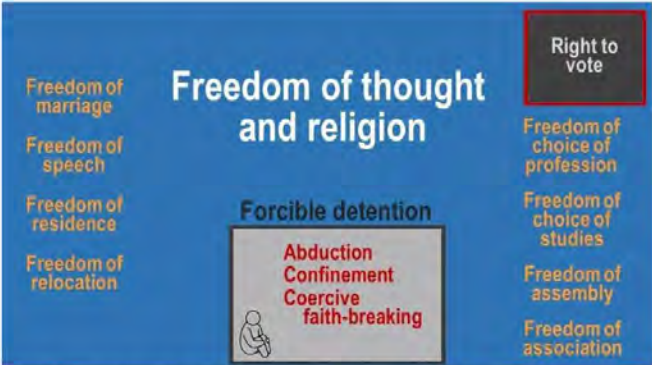
Thank you all so much for gathering here today for the book launch event of *Deadly Struggle*. Chairman Tanaka, thank you for your wonderful congratulatory remarks.

Today, I would like to speak on the theme of "The Preciousness of Freedom". This may be a sudden question, but have any of you ever experienced being locked up? As a child, perhaps when you misbehaved, your parents might have said, "Stay in the closet!" I have had such an experience myself, and I remember feeling terrified.

But as an adult, experiencing forced confinement is something quite rare. Being locked up means having your freedom taken away. And losing one's freedom is truly painful, distressing, and unbearable.

For human beings, freedom is absolutely essential. As you all know, throughout history, people have fought – spilling blood – to gain their freedom.

As a



English version of an illustrative slide used by Toru Goto during his lecture 10th Feb. 2025. Translated from Japanese.
Illustration: [National Association of Victims of Abduction, Confinement, and Forced Deconversion](#),

result, even here in Japan, the constitution guarantees freedom to every citizen. Freedom of assembly, association, speech, occupation, residence, movement, academic studies, and marriage – these are all protected. And at the core of these freedoms is the freedom of thought and religion.

Freedom of the mind – if we refer to the Japanese Constitution, it is Article 19 [\[Editor's note: Freedom of thought and conscience\]](#) and Article 20 [\[Editor's note: Freedom of religion\]](#). Looking at this on a global scale, the freedom of religion is an absolute, inviolable human right. This is firmly established under the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*.

Everyone, please look at the screen. Here you can see all the freedoms we have. But what happens when all of them are taken away? Completely. This is what abduction, confinement, and coercive faith-breaking are. Every single freedom is stripped away, including the freedom of one's mind. People are confined until their faith – something more precious than their own lives – is completely destroyed.

This is my story. This is my experience.

Article 15 of the Constitution grants every citizen the right to participate in politics. However, during the **12 years and 5 months** I was confined, do you know how many times I was denied this right to vote? (Screen displays the various elections held during those **12 years**.) Nineteen times.



The location of the apartment in Ogikubo, Tokyo where Toru Goto was held captive and dehumanized. Photo: [National Association of Victims of Abduction, Confinement, and Forced Deconversion](#)

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Without my knowledge, my residential registration was secretly moved from the confinement apartment to my family's home in Tokyo. During my captivity, there were 19 elections – national elections, Tokyo gubernatorial elections, Tokyo metropolitan assembly elections, mayoral elections, and city council elections. Do you think I received my voting ballot? Most likely, it was either thrown into the trash or left unopened in a mailbox.

And I am not the only one – many other victims of confinement have suffered the same fate.

When I was confined, I didn't even know where I was. They wouldn't tell me. I asked,

"Where am I? At least tell me that much."

Their response: "There's no need for you to know."

Then, one day, I heard a faint voice outside:

"Residents of Ogikubo 3-chome, this is Nobuteru Ishihara speaking!"

That's when I realized, *"So, I'm in Ogikubo 3-chome."*

It took six years of captivity before I finally learned where I was – thanks to the voice of a campaign announcer on the street.

Everyone, this didn't happen to just one or two persons. It happened to **4,300 individuals**. That's why this is considered the **worst human rights violation in postwar Japan**.

(Pointing to a slide) This was me just before I was abducted and confined – 31 years old.

At that time, just two weeks earlier, I had a **Marriage Blessing** with a female believer from my **church**. My heart was full of dreams and hope.



Toru Goto at 31. Photo: Toru Goto

(Pointing to a slide) The number 225 represents the abduction and confinement cases reported in just the year 1995. That means I was just one of those 225 victims.

Continued in [part 2](#)

Featured image above: Toru Goto at the official launch of his book "Deadly Struggle: Surviving 4,536 Days of Confinement". Photo: Screenshot from videorecording of the event.

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
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