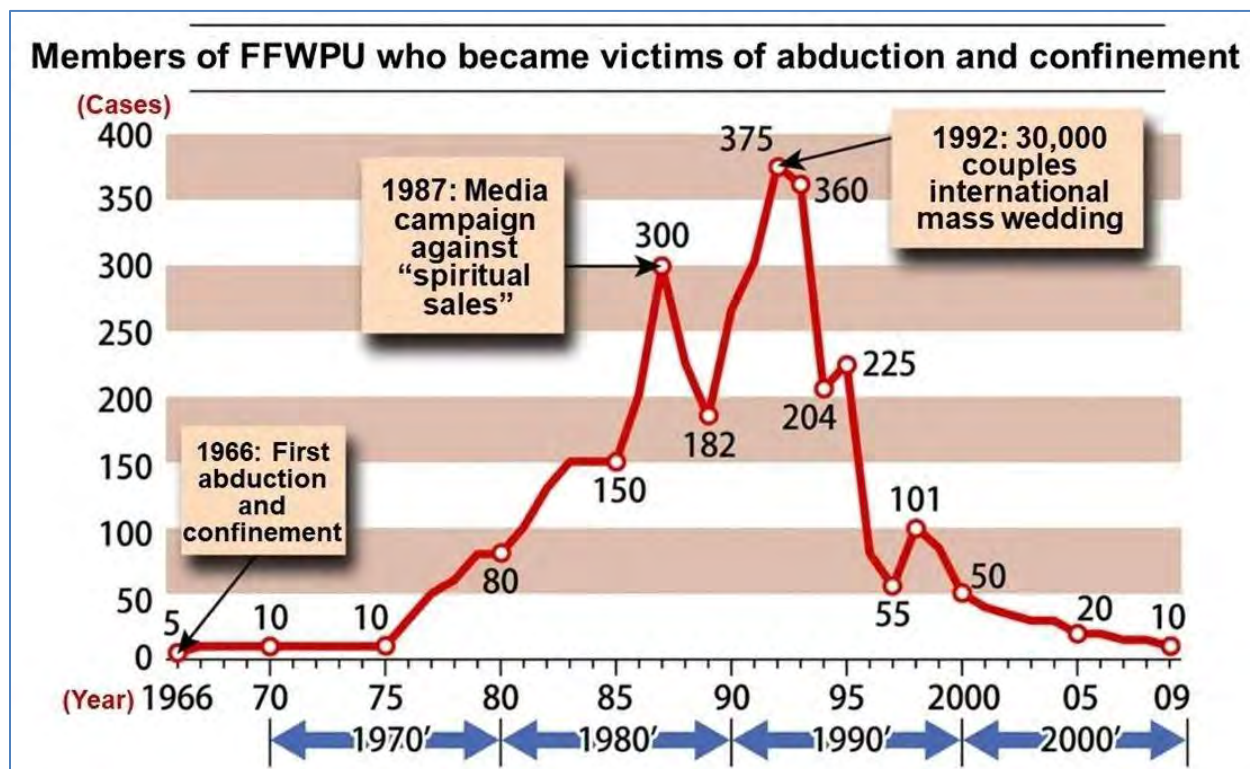


## FFWPU Europe and the Middle East: Faith-Breaking Victim Bares Criminal Set-Up

Knut Holdhus  
December 21, 2024



Overview of number of cases where members of the [Family Federation](#) / [Unification Church](#) have become victims of abduction and confinement



### Japanese Doctor of Medicine reveals how criminal set-up organized his abduction, confinement, and attempted faith-breaking

Tokyo, 19th December 2024 - Published as the 52nd article in a series in the Japanese newspaper [Sekai Nippo](#). Republished with permission. Translated from Japanese.  
[Original article](#)

Series: Freedom of Religion Under Threat - Part 7: Religion in Japan in a Global Context

The Media's Silence on Forced Renunciation of Faith

Abduction and Confinement Becoming More Malicious and Sophisticated

by the Religious Freedom Investigative Team of the editorial department of [Sekai Nippo](#)

See part 1 of the series: The Kishida Administration's Reckless Actions: [1st article](#), [2nd article](#), [3rd article](#), [4th article](#), [5th article](#), [6th article](#)

See part 2: Ripples to Local Assemblies: [7th article](#), [8th article](#), [9th article](#), [10th article](#), [11th article](#), [12th article](#), [13th article](#), [14th article](#), [15th article](#)

See part 3: Believers Suffering Discrimination and Human Rights Violations: [16th article](#), [17th article](#), [18th article](#), [19th article](#), [20th article](#), [21st article](#), [22nd article](#)

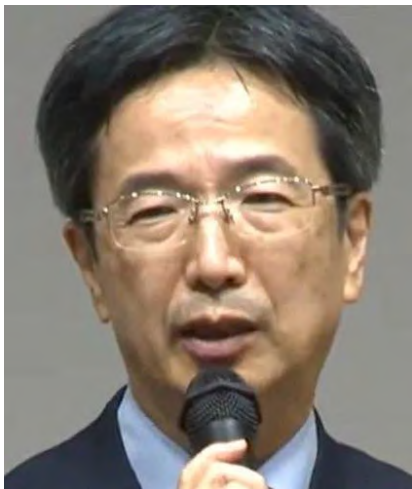
See part 4: Media Crossing the Line: [23rd article](#), [24th article](#), [25th article](#), [26th article](#), [27th article](#), [28th article](#)

See part 5: The Distorted Image of the "Second-Generation": [29th article](#), [30th article](#), [31st article](#), [32nd article](#), [33rd article](#), [34th article](#), [35th article](#), [36th article](#), [37th article](#), [38th article](#)

See part 6: Voices of Religious Leaders: [39th article](#), [40th article](#), [41st article](#), [42nd article](#), [43rd article](#), [44th article](#), [45th article](#), [46th article](#)

See part 7: Religion in Japan in a Global Context: [47th article](#), [48th article](#), [49th article](#), [50th article](#), [51st article](#), [53rd article](#)

There is an issue regarding the [Family Federation for World Peace and Unification](#) (formerly known as the [Unification Church](#)) that Japan's media has considered taboo and failed to report: the forced renunciation of faith through abduction and confinement of the organization's members.



*Hirohisa Koide telling his story  
Sep. 10, 2023 in Tokyo*



*From the front cover of the 1996  
version of Hirohisa Koide's book  
"Escape from the Kidnappers"*



*Satoshi Moriyama (1908-1996),  
Japanese pastor and co-founder of  
Ogikubo Glory Church*

"It is absolutely unacceptable as parents, siblings, or relatives to allow you to participate in and act on behalf of a criminal group like the [Unification Church](#). [...] We have prepared a separate place where we can talk without interference. Let's discuss it thoroughly there."

In June 1992, Hirohisa Koide (小出浩久), a 29-year-old doctor, was summoned back to his family home by his mother. He found himself surrounded by nearly 20 relatives, with his father starting the conversation with the above declaration.

Despite having a prior obligation with staff at the hospital where he worked, Koide attempted to inform them before heading to the "discussion place". However, everyone present firmly refused, unanimously saying, "Absolutely not!" Sensing the abnormal atmosphere, Koide tried to leave but was immediately subdued.

"At that moment, the male relatives jumped on me, carried me out of the house, and forced me into a van parked outside."

Koide first encountered the teachings of the [Family Federation](#) in September 1983 during his time as a medical student, through a close friend. This led him to adopt the faith. After graduating in March 1988, completing his residency, and beginning work at a Tokyo hospital in 1990, he continued his faith practices.

However, in June 1992, he was [abducted by his parents and relatives](#) and confined in a series of apartments, completely isolated from the outside world, for nearly two years. During this time, he was pressured to abandon his faith.

His ordeal is meticulously documented in "Escape from the 'Kidnappers': A Doctor's Testimony of Enduring Two Years of Illegal Confinement" (Kogensha), first published in November 1996 and revised in September 2023. The opening excerpt summarizes the events leading to his abduction.

According to the [religious organization](#), the practice of forcing members to renounce their faith through abduction and confinement began in 1966 with Pastor Satoshi Moriyama (森山諭) of the Ogikubo Glory Church (荻窪栄光教会). From the 1980s to 1999, this occurred at an annual rate of over 80 cases (except for 55 cases in 1997). By 2020, this practice had been carried out for more than 50 years, totaling [over 4,300 cases](#).

Of these cases, "70% of the individuals left the church" (as reported by Tomihiro Tanaka (田中富広), President of the [Family Federation](#) in Japan, in [this newspaper](#) on [2nd December 2024](#)). Even considering that some individuals were abducted multiple times, an overwhelming number of people were forced to change the course of their lives through abduction and confinement. Those who maintained their faith were left deeply scarred.

This enormous violation of human rights - particularly freedom of religion, freedom of thought, and personal liberty - persisted within Japan for over half a century, a reality that cannot be taken lightly.

Initially, the method involved confining believers in church facilities for a few days to a week while pastors attempted to persuade them. However, as the practice

expanded nationwide, so-called "faith-breakers" emerged, making a business out of forced renunciations. The methods became increasingly malicious and sophisticated.

**By the winter of 1987, a nearly systematic process had developed:**

Parental education →

Abduction and confinement →

Persuasion and coercion to renounce faith →

Expression of intent to leave the church →

Confirmation of withdrawal →

Release from confinement →

Participation in "rehabilitative activities," such as assisting in persuading others or lawsuits against the [church](#).

Hirohisa Koide was abducted in 1992, the year with the highest number of cases (375 - see featured image above), occurring at a pace of over one per day. He experienced the system almost to its final stage, including two instances of "fake renunciation," before returning to the [church](#).



Koide encountered key figures involved in his forced renunciation, such as Takashi Miyamura (宮村峻), a faith-breaker who directly coerced him; Yasutomo Matsunaga (松永堡智), a Christian pastor; former church members who collaborated with these individuals; journalist Yoshifu Arita (有田芳生 - now a member of the House of Representatives for the Constitutional Democratic Party); and lawyers Hiroshi Yamaguchi (山口広) and Masaki Kito (紀藤正樹) of the National Network of Lawyers Against Spiritual Sales. These individuals actively participated in the abduction and confinement process. Koide even spoke and acted with them during his confinement, making him uniquely familiar with the full extent of this system.

These individuals, who became vocal critics of the [Family Federation](#) and frequently appeared in the media, were directly involved in the abduction system. This may explain why media outlets, dependent on their information, have hesitated to cover the issue critically.

Despite the claims detailed in Koide's book, "Escape from the 'Kidnappers': A Doctor's Testimony of Enduring Two Years of Illegal Confinement" (Kogensha) - first published 28 years ago and never the subject of a lawsuit for defamation or falsehood - no legal actions have been taken against him.

---

See part 1 of the series: The Kishida Administration's Reckless Actions: [1st article](#), [2nd article](#), [3rd article](#), [4th article](#), [5th article](#), [6th article](#)

See part 2: Ripples to Local Assemblies: [7th article](#), [8th article](#), [9th article](#), [10th article](#), [11th article](#), [12th article](#), [13th article](#), [14th article](#), [15th article](#)

See part 3: Believers Suffering Discrimination and Human Rights Violations: [16th article](#), [17th article](#), [18th article](#), [19th article](#), [20th article](#), [21st article](#), [22nd article](#)



See part 4: Media Crossing the Line: [23rd article](#), [24th article](#), [25th article](#), [26th article](#), [27th article](#), [28th article](#)

See part 5: The Distorted Image of the "Second-Generation": [29th article](#), [30th article](#), [31st article](#), [32nd article](#), [33rd article](#), [34th article](#), [35th article](#), [36th article](#), [37th article](#), [38th article](#)

See part 6: Voices of Religious Leaders: [39th article](#), [40th article](#), [41st article](#), [42nd article](#), [43rd article](#), [44th article](#), [45th article](#), [46th article](#)

See part 7: Religion in Japan in a Global Context: [47th article](#), [48th article](#), [49th article](#), [50th article](#), [51st article](#), [53rd article](#)

Related to criminal set-up behind faith-breaking: [Japan: Exhibition Exposes Horrors of Persecution](#)

More, related to criminal set-up behind faith-breaking: [Japan Copying Faith-Breaking Concepts of China](#)

Related to criminal set-up behind faith-breaking: [Courts Using Debunked Concepts Against Minority](#)

Also related to criminal set-up behind faith-breaking: [Dissolution Case: Wild Claims, Illegal Actions](#)

Also related to criminal set-up behind faith-breaking: [Terms from Consumer Law Used to Rob Faith](#)

Also related to criminal set-up behind faith-breaking: [2nd-Generation Members Protesting Persecution](#)

Also related to criminal set-up behind faith-breaking: [Inhuman Government-Supported Mass Deprogramming](#)

And also related to criminal set-up behind faith-breaking: [Bias: No Right to Respond for Religious Minority](#)

More, related to criminal set-up behind faith-breaking: [Collusion to Rob Minority of Its Rights](#)

And more, related to criminal set-up behind faith-breaking: [State and Media Creating "Today's Non-Citizens"](#)

Still more, related to criminal set-up behind faith-breaking: [Japan Criticized for Glaring Rights Violations](#)

Even more related to criminal set-up behind faith-breaking: [Two European Scholars Warning Japan](#)

And yet more related to criminal set-up behind faith-breaking: [Japan Censured at Religious Freedom Event](#)

And still more related to criminal set-up behind faith-breaking: [Lawyer Exposes Dirty Leftwing Plot](#)

And even more related to criminal set-up behind faith-breaking: [Inhuman Government-Supported Mass Deprogramming](#)

And still more related to criminal set-up behind faith-breaking: [Malicious One-Sided Government Source Selection](#)

More related to criminal set-up behind faith-breaking: [Government's Foul Play Pointed Out](#)

More related to criminal set-up behind faith-breaking: [Kishida Has Opened Can of Worms](#)



# Term 'Cult' Is Big Part Of Anti-Religious Agenda

• December 20, 2024 • Knut Holdhus



*Leading human rights expert: Anti-cult rhetoric conceals an underlying anti-religious agenda, with the political goal of creating an anti-religious society*

Tokyo, 18th December 2024 – Published as the **51st article** in a series in the Japanese newspaper *Sekai Nippo*. Republished with permission. Translated from Japanese. [Original article](#)

Series: Freedom of Religion Under Threat – Part 7: **Religion in Japan in a Global Context**

“The term ‘cult’ is anti-religious.”








by the Religious Freedom Investigative Team of the editorial department of *Sekai Nippo*




Logo of the *Sekai Nippo*

See **part 1 of the series: The Kishida Administration's Reckless Actions: 1st article. 2nd article. 3rd article. 4th article. 5th article. 6th**

Share:     

- More Posts**
-  **Harrowing Rights Abuses Against Minority Faith**  
December 22, 2024
  -  **Victim Of Faith-Breaking Bares Criminal Set-Up**  
December 21, 2024
  -  **Japanese Government Rejects UN Investigation**  
December 20, 2024
  -  **Japan Misreading Separation Of Church And State**  
December 19, 2024
  -  **Religious Freedom To Sour U.S.-Japan Relations?**  
December 18, 2024
  -  **Media Study: Lie Told 100 Times Becomes Truth**  
December 17, 2024
  -  **Intersection Of Politics And Religion In USA**  
December 16, 2024

Search... 

**Categories**



article

See **part 2: Ripples to Local Assemblies**: [7th article](#), [8th article](#), [9th article](#), [10th article](#), [11th article](#), [12th article](#), [13th article](#), [14th article](#), [15th article](#)

See **part 3: Believers Suffering Discrimination and Human Rights Violations**: [16th article](#), [17th article](#), [18th article](#), [19th article](#), [20th article](#), [21st article](#), [22nd article](#)

See **part 4: Media Crossing the Line**: [23rd article](#), [24th article](#), [25th article](#), [26th article](#), [27th article](#), [28th article](#)

See **part 5: The Distorted Image of the “Second-Generation”**: [29th article](#), [30th article](#), [31st article](#), [32nd article](#), [33rd article](#), [34th article](#), [35th article](#), [36th article](#), [37th article](#), [38th article](#)

See **part 6: Voices of Religious Leaders**: [39th article](#), [40th article](#), [41st article](#), [42nd article](#), [43rd article](#), [44th article](#), [45th article](#), [46th article](#)

See **part 7: Religion in Japan in a Global Context**: [47th article](#), [48th article](#), [49th article](#), [50th article](#), [52nd article](#), [53rd article](#)

Marco Respinti, Director of the Italian online religious freedom magazine *Bitter Winter*, was invited by the Japan Committee of the International Coalition for Religious Freedom (ICRF), chaired by Professor Emeritus Shoichi Ito (伊東正一) of Kyushu University, to deliver a series of lectures in four Japanese cities, including Tokyo, from 6<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> December 2024.



Locations in Japan where Marco Respinti spoke from 6<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> Dec. 2024. Illustration: Maximilian Dörrbecker (Chumhwa) / Wikimedia Commons. License: CC ASA 3.0 Unp

In his lectures, which focused on the themes of freedom of religion and human rights, Respinti stated that the term “cult”, often used with a pejorative connotation, is applied to groups or individuals disliked or viewed as adversaries by individuals, organizations, institutions, or governments. He remarked:

“Cults are accused of using “brainwashing” to control their victims, but this concept has been dismissed as pseudoscience by the majority of scholars studying new religious movements in the West and by courts in countries like the United States. Moreover, the ‘anti-cult’ discourse propagated in the media is opposed by most scholarly organizations. This fact seems to be relatively unknown in Japan.”

In 1995, a group of sociologists of religion established the “Japan Society for Cult Prevention and Recovery” – headed by Executive Director Kimiaki Nishida (西田公昭) – which has continued its activities to this day. The organization, which uses the term “cult” in its name, describes on its website that “cults are organizations that violate human rights” and “often use mind control to conceal the true nature of their human rights violations.”

In the autumn of 2022, following the assassination of former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe (安倍晋三), NHK Educational TV’s religious program *Kokoro no Jidai (The Era of the Heart)* aired a discussion among religious scholars on the theme of “Religion and ‘Cults’ Under Scrutiny”. Participants included Kenji Kawashima (川島堅二), a professor at Tohoku Gakuin University and an advisor to the *Japan Society for Cult Prevention and Recovery*, and Yoshihide Sakurai (櫻井義秀), a professor at Hokkaido University Graduate School.



Professor Emeritus Susumu Shimazono (1948-), leading Japanese scholar in the field of the

Susumu Shimazono (島園進), Professor Emeritus at the University of Tokyo, who also participated in the discussion, stated, “(the term ‘cult’) is somewhat unsuitable as an academic term.”

However, the discussion proceeded on the premise that the *Family Federation for World Peace and Unification* (formerly known as the **Unification Church**) was a “cult”. Scholars present also used the term “mind control”, which is often associated with “cult” in public discourse.

Lawyers

Send us a message

First Name \* Last Name

Email \*

Email Address

Your Message \*

Submit



sociology of religion.

Photo: Screenshot / [Bitter Winter](#)

involved in activities against the [Family Federation](#)



*John Gordon Melton (1942-), American religious scholar who was the founding director of the Institute for the Study of American Religion. Photo: Throckmorton1312 / Wikimedia Commons. License: [CC ASA 4.0 Int.](#) Cropped*

[Federation](#) frequently use the term “mind control” as well. However, J. Gordon Melton, a prominent researcher of new religious movements in the United States, stated in an interview with [Sekai Nippo](#) about 30 years ago,

“Scholars who claim that new religious movements brainwash their followers are using the media to spread the terms ‘brainwashing’ and ‘mind control’, but this is merely a political argument designed to attack new religious movements.”

In the United States, an organization called the [Cult Awareness Network \(CAN\)](#) operated under the premise that followers of new religious movements were victims of brainwashing or mind control, abducting young people and forcibly deprogramming them. However, the organization lost a lawsuit, was ordered to pay massive damages, and went bankrupt and dissolved in the late 1990s.

In Western countries, terms such as “cult” and “mind control” have long been abandoned due to their role in stigmatizing religious groups and their followers, and in some cases leading to severe human rights violations such as forced deprogramming. However, these terms are still widely used in Japan – not only by the media but also by prominent scholars of religion. Respinti highlighted this distinct aspect of Japan.

He also noted that “anti-cult” activists claim they are not opposing freedom of religion but are merely against “cults”. However, he cautioned, “This quickly becomes generalized.” This is because the concept of “cult” is vague, raising the question of who determines the line between a “legitimate religion” and a “cult”. Inevitably, the target of the term becomes arbitrarily decided by those using it.

Respinti stated,

“The majority of these lawyers (engaged in anti-cult activities) are socialists or communists. Their real target was a specific new religious movement in Japan that had been successful in anti-communist activities, namely the [Family Federation for World Peace and Unification](#) (formerly the [Unification Church](#)),”

If these individuals are materialists, it suggests that anti-cult rhetoric conceals an underlying anti-religious agenda, with the political goal of creating an anti-religious society.

**Featured image** above: *Marco Respinti speaking at a conference in Japan in December 2024. Photo: ICRF Japan*

See **part 1 of the series: The Kishida Administration's Reckless Actions**: [1st article](#), [2nd article](#), [3rd article](#), [4th article](#), [5th article](#), [6th article](#)

See **part 2: Ripples to Local Assemblies**: [7th article](#), [8th article](#), [9th article](#), [10th article](#), [11th article](#), [12th article](#), [13th article](#), [14th article](#), [15th article](#)

See **part 3: Believers Suffering Discrimination and Human Rights Violations**: [16th article](#), [17th article](#), [18th article](#), [19th article](#), [20th article](#), [21st article](#), [22nd article](#)

See **part 4: Media Crossing the Line**: [23rd article](#), [24th article](#), [25th article](#), [26th article](#), [27th article](#), [28th article](#)

See **part 5: The Distorted Image of the “Second-Generation”**: [29th article](#), [30th article](#), [31st article](#), [32nd article](#), [33rd article](#), [34th article](#), [35th article](#), [36th article](#), [37th article](#), [38th article](#)

See **part 6: Voices of Religious Leaders**: [39th article](#), [40th article](#), [41st article](#), [42nd article](#), [43rd article](#), [44th article](#), [45th article](#), [46th article](#)

See **part 7: Religion in Japan in a Global Context**: [47th article](#), [48th article](#), [49th article](#), [50th article](#), [52nd article](#), [53rd article](#)

**Related to anti-religious agenda: Japan: Exhibition Exposes Horrors of Persecution**

More, related to anti-religious agenda: [Japan Copying Faith-Breaking Concepts of China](#)

Related to anti-religious agenda: [Courts Unveil Debunked Concepts](#)

related to anti-religious agenda: [Courts Using Debunked Concepts Against Minority](#)

Also related to anti-religious agenda: [Dissolution Case: Wild Claims, Illegal Actions](#)

Also related to anti-religious agenda: [Terms from Consumer Law Used to Rob Faith](#)

Also related to anti-religious agenda: [2nd-Generation Members Protesting Persecution](#)

Also related to anti-religious agenda: [Inhuman Government-Supported Mass Deprogramming](#)

And also related to anti-religious agenda: [Bias: No Right to Respond for Religious Minority](#)

More, related to anti-religious agenda: [Collusion to Rob Minority of Its Rights](#)

And more, related to anti-religious agenda: [State and Media Creating "Today's Non-Citizens"](#)

Still more, related to anti-religious agenda: [Japan Criticized for Glaring Rights Violations](#)

Even more related to anti-religious agenda: [Two European Scholars Warning Japan](#)

And yet more related to anti-religious agenda: [Japan Censured at Religious Freedom Event](#)

And still more related to anti-religious agenda: [Lawyer Exposes Dirty Leftwing Plot](#)

And even more related to anti-religious agenda: [Inhuman Government-Supported Mass Deprogramming](#)

And still more related to anti-religious agenda: [Malicious One-Sided Government Source Selection](#)

More related to anti-religious agenda: [Government's Foul Play Pointed Out](#)

More related to anti-religious agenda: [Kishida Has Opened Can of Worms](#)

« Previous [Japanese Government Rejects ...Victim Of Faith-Breaking Bar...](#) Next »



**FAMILY FEDERATION**  
FOR WORLD PEACE AND UNIFICATION  
EUROPE AND THE MIDDLE EAST

#### GET STARTED

[Home](#) [Privacy Policy](#)

#### SUBSCRIBE TO OUR NEWSLETTER

First Name

Last Name

Your Email Address

[Subscribe](#)

I agree to have my information processed and used for the purposes of the newsletter.

Follow us

