FFWPU Europe and Middle East: 13 Try to Break the Faith of Toru Goto in Lockup

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Toru Goto verbally abused by professional faith-breaker Takashi Miyamura in a dehumanizing way in locked room in Tokyo. Illustration: Dola AI



Toru Goto speaking during the online conference by PnR-T on September 19, 2026

Trapped and surrounded, Japanese Toru Goto faced a daily campaign by professional faith-breaker, family members and former believers to make him renounce his faith

Part 4 of "My Experience of Abduction, Confinement, and Forced Deconversion", a testimony on 19th September 2026 by Toru Goto (後藤徹), a Japanese member of the Family Federation and victim of attempted coercive faith-breaking - locked up for over 12 years in apartment turned prison. This first-hand witness account - of high relevance for the current dissolution case against the Family Federation in Japan - was delivered at a Zoom conference organized by Peace and Reconciliation Together (PnR-T), a Dutch-registered foundation focused on reconciliation, peacebuilding, dialogue, and healing historical conflicts.

Continued from part 1: Apartment Turned Prison: 12 Years to Break Faith

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Several days later, Takashi Miyamura (宮村峻) appeared. It was our first meeting in approximately ten years. He had been involved in the faith-breaking efforts during my first confinement and had in addition played a major role in the "deprogramming" of my brother and sister as well.

Miyamura arrived with former members who had been taken away through abduction and confinement and had subsequently become involved in activities opposing the Family Federation, then called the Unification Church.

And from that point onward, the real battle began: a battle between those who sought to destroy my faith and me, as I struggled to preserve it. But at that point, I still had no idea just how intense that battle would become.

After Miyamura appeared, the atmosphere in the confinement room changed completely.



One of the many confinement apartments that existed all across Japan. Here, the location of the 8th floor apartment in Ogikubo, Tokyo where Toru Goto was held captive and dehumanized

At this point, I would like everyone to understand something important. This was not a discussion about religion taking place in a free and voluntary setting. I was locked inside an apartment. I could not freely leave through the front door, and the windows were also locked.

Even if I became tired of the discussion, I could not simply stand up and leave. I could not go outside and ask someone for help. There was no telephone, and I could not even send a letter. The people confronting me were free to leave the room whenever they wanted. But I was not free to leave.

It was under these circumstances that the faith-breaking efforts were carried out with the aim of making me renounce my faith.

Takashi Miyamura began coming every day at around 6 p.m., after dinner, bringing former members who had had their faith broken through abduction and confinement.

Miyamura, the former members, and my family would surround me.

At times, as many as twelve or thirteen people - my family, Miyamura, and former members - would gather in the Japanese-style room.

Please look at this diagram. (illustration to the right) The red circle represents me. The black circle represents Mr. Miyamura, and the blue circles represent my family and the former members.

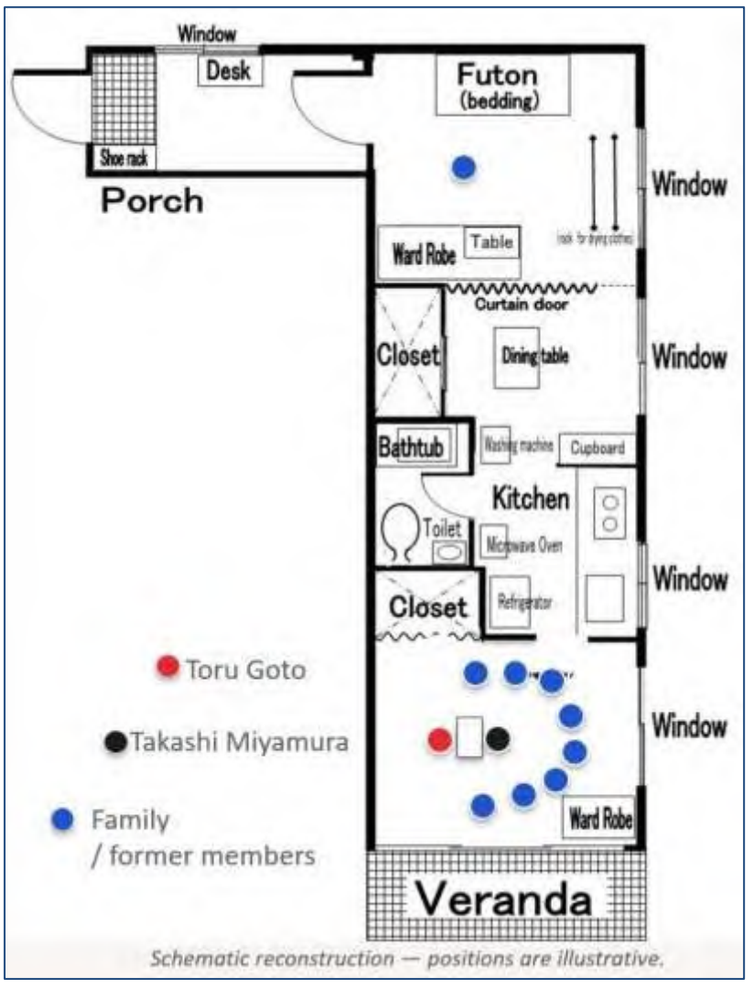
This apartment was where I was confined for the final approximately ten years. My room was the Japanese-style room furthest from the entrance, at the very back of the apartment.

To get to the entrance, I would have had to pass through the kitchen and the Western-style rooms, and there were always family members along the way. The layout was such that if I headed toward the entrance, they would immediately notice and stop me. The entrance itself was locked with a chain and other restraints.

And this was on the eighth floor. Security locks had been installed on the windows, so I could not escape through them either.

In other words, if I tried to reach the entrance, my family would stop me, while escape through the windows was also impossible. It was a setting extremely convenient for those confining me.

I would sit in front of the table while criticism of the Church, the Unification Principles, and Father Moon was directed at me from all sides.



Plan of the apartment where Toru Goto was confined for approximately ten years. Illustration: Toru Goto

This would continue for about two hours, until around 8 p.m.

Miyamura called me names such as "idiot", "stupid", and "devil". Abusive language came at me from every direction.

At one point, an agitated female former member threw hot tea in my face.

This was not a discussion. In a room from which I could not escape, one person was surrounded by a large group. It was nothing less than a collective attack - a form of psychological assault.

I could not stand it any longer and said:

"You are the ones violating human rights! What do you think freedom of religion means? Let me out of here!"

Miyamura replied:

"You have no right to claim human rights. I am not confining you. Your family is protecting you. If you want to be released, ask your family."

I was also told that I would not be allowed to leave until I was capable of thinking for myself.

In the end, I was placed in a situation where I had no idea when my confinement would end unless I accepted what they were telling me and abandoned my faith.

What made it even more painful was that it was not only the words of Miyamura and the former members.

My own family, who until shortly before had been bringing me meals, also became involved in the faith-breaking efforts. My brother and sister verbally attacked me harshly. On one occasion, my brother pointed at me and shouted,

"If it were up to me, I'd beat you half to death!"

My sister also told me,

"If you keep this up, you'll stay like this for the rest of your life, so you'd better be prepared."

When I could no longer bear it and tried to get up from my seat, my brother grabbed me and forced me back down.

I pleaded with them:

"This is abduction and confinement. Freedom of religion is guaranteed by the Constitution. Enough is enough. Let me out of here."

My brother simply replied:

"This isn't abduction and confinement. This is emergency protective custody."

He would not listen to me at all.

There were also occasions when my brother slapped me.

To be continued. Part 5 coming soon

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Tax Rules Put Overseas Religious Work At Risk

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New South Korean tax rules raise questions over overseas religious projects and funding that could affect organizations with international structure

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The logo of the Segye Ilbo

South Korea's tax regulations is creating serious uncertainty for religious organizations that support missionary, educational, medical and humanitarian work abroad. The issue was highlighted by religion reporter Jeong Seong-su (정성수) in an opinion column published by *Segye Ilbo* (세계일보) on 23rd September. At the heart of his criticism is a seemingly simple question: **Should the public-interest character of religious work depend primarily on whether it takes place inside or outside South Korea?**



Religious affairs reporter Jeong Seong-su (정성수). Photo (2025): Segye Ilbo

The concern follows amendments to the enforcement decrees of the ***Inheritance Tax and Gift Tax Act*** and the ***Corporate Tax Act***, which took effect on 27th February 2026. The amendments exclude foreign religious organizations and non-residents from the category of public-interest corporations in relevant circumstances.

Calling for new tax rules to be revised: The United Christian Churches of Korea, here its logo.

Seven months after the changes came into force, uncertainty remains over exactly how overseas missionary funding will be treated for tax purposes. Large protestant organizations like the *United Christian Churches of Korea* (한국교회총연합) and the *Korea World Missions Association* (한국세계선교협의회) have therefore been calling for the rules to be revised and clarified.

The potential consequences are significant. Korean religious organizations may hesitate to continue funding overseas projects if future tax liabilities are unclear. Yet stopping or reducing transfers could disrupt missionaries, schools, hospitals and relief programs that depend on such funding. Long-term projects – such as building churches, schools and medical facilities – are particularly vulnerable because they involve contracts and financial commitments made over several years.

The government has a legitimate reason to be concerned about financial transparency. Religious organizations should not be able to use overseas entities as a means of making disguised gifts, avoiding taxation or transferring money without proper accountability. Donations from members and the wider public also create a responsibility to demonstrate clearly how funds are being used.

But, according to Jeong, the problem is the **way the new rules determine whether an activity is in the public interest**.

Under the amended framework, the location and legal status of the organization carrying out the work can become more important than the actual purpose of the project or what happens to the money. A project operated domestically may qualify for public-interest treatment, while a similar project operated through a foreign corporation or by a non-resident may be excluded.

This can produce an unintended and counterproductive result. Imagine a Korean church supporting a school in another country. Rather than sending money directly to an individual missionary, the church establishes a properly registered local corporation, opens a dedicated bank account and operates the school through that legal entity. From an accounting and transparency perspective, this may be preferable to using a missionary's personal account.

Yet under the new approach, the fact that the organization is a **foreign corporation** could itself create a tax disadvantage. In other words, a system intended to promote financial accountability could potentially discourage precisely the kind of formalized and transparent financial management that regulators should want to encourage.

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South Korean missionaries provide food to children in rural areas of Zambia. Photo (2019): Royal Mayhem / Wikimedia Commons. License: CC ASA 4.0 Int

South Korean missionaries provide food to children in rural areas of Zambia. Photo (2019): Royal Mayhem / Wikimedia Commons. License: CC ASA 4.0 Int

There is also a broader issue concerning the nature of overseas religious activity. Missionary work is not necessarily limited to preaching. Korean religious organizations operate or support schools, hospitals, orphanages and vocational-training programs in different parts of the world. They may also provide food, medicine and disaster relief through local religious organizations and nonprofit entities. Such activities can have a humanitarian dimension regardless of where they take place.

In his opinion piece, Jeong therefore argues that **public interest should not disappear at a national border**. If an educational, medical or humanitarian project is considered beneficial when carried out in Korea, its location abroad should not by itself be sufficient reason to question its public-interest character.

Nor is the issue limited to Protestantism. The new rules could affect overseas activities supported by Catholic dioceses and religious orders, Buddhist temples and missionary centers, Won Buddhism and the Family Federation, among others. Protestant organizations may simply be encountering the problem earlier because of the scale and decentralized nature of their overseas missionary funding.

Jeong's proposed alternative is to shift the focus from **where an organization is located to what it actually does with the money**. A foreign organization that is legally registered, has an approved project plan and budget, maintains dedicated accounts and provides proper documentation could still qualify for public-interest treatment. Detailed accounting and performance reports could then be required after the project is completed.

At the same time, religious organizations would need to accept greater responsibility for transparency. Missionary living expenses should be separated from project costs, while construction, education, medical and relief expenditures should be separately documented. Personal accounts should not be used for broad, unexplained transfers, and receipts and records of asset ownership should be maintained.

Finally, Jeong calls for **transitional measures** for projects that were already underway when the rules changed. Organizations that entered into contracts and funding agreements under the previous system could otherwise face unexpected liabilities. A two- or three-year grace period, he suggests, would allow existing projects to adapt to new accounting and management requirements.

The central issue, therefore, is not whether overseas religious funding should be subject to oversight. It is **how that oversight should be designed**. A system aimed at preventing abuse should distinguish between opaque or improper transfers and legitimate, transparently administered religious and humanitarian projects.

As Jeong puts it, the decisive questions should be **the purpose of**

the money, its flow, and the results of its use – not simply the address of the organization receiving it.

What we can say with confidence is that **the legal framework has changed in a way that potentially affects a Korean religious headquarters financing foreign affiliated entities**, and that the uncertainty identified by Jeong is directly relevant to an organization with an international structure like the Family Federation.



The building housing the FFWPU World Mission Headquarters. Photo (2026): Michael Balcomb

The February 2026 tax changes could indeed have implications well beyond Protestant missionary organizations. **For the** Family Federation, whose World Mission Headquarters is based in South Korea, the issue is particularly significant. Much of the organization's international work necessarily involves transferring funds from Korea to affiliated organizations and projects abroad.

The amended rules appear to make the legal status and location of the overseas recipient more important in determining whether such transfers receive public-interest tax treatment. The potential consequences could therefore extend from routine missionary support to the financing of overseas properties, construction projects, education, humanitarian work and other activities.

Text: *Knut Holdhus, editor*

Featured image *above: South Korea's left-leaning Lee Jae-myung administration making it harder for religious bodies by introducing tax changes from 2026 with serious implication for religious organization supporting international activities and projects. Illustration: ChatGPT, 26th September 2026.*

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