

Citizen's Movement for Establishing the Rights to Evacuate

Watari, Fukushima and Beyond



Friends of the Earth Japan
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Introduction

In 2011, the Great East Japan Earthquake and the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Disaster forced us to confront the danger of a nuclear-dependent society. An enormous amount of radioactivity was released from the destroyed nuclear reactors, contaminating the air, soil, and water. Many people in Fukushima had no choice but to evacuate by leaving behind their homes and livelihoods, while many others continue to live in fear of nuclear pollution since they could not evacuate for a variety of reasons.

Since April 2011, we, Friends of the Earth (FoE) Japan and Citizens Against the Fukushima Aging Nuclear Power Plants, have worked with people in Fukushima to ameliorate problems caused by the nuclear disaster. First of all, we tackled the so-called “20mSv/year problem.” On April 19, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) issued a directive to set 20mSv/year or $3.8 \mu\text{Sv}/\text{hour}$ as the permissible limit of radiation exposure for children while at school. Although schools in Fukushima had restricted children from using schoolyards since the nuclear disaster, they decided to lift the restriction, given the directive from the MEXT.

Parents in Fukushima became seriously concerned about the MEXT directive because 20mSv/year was as high as the permissible limit for adults working at nuclear power plants. To request the MEXT to tighten the permissible limit, seventy concerned parents went to Tokyo on May 23. They negotiated with MEXT officials with the help of several Diet members and six NGOs—Fukushima Network for Saving Children from Radiation, Citizens Against the Fukushima Aging Nuclear Power Plants, FoE Japan, Mihama Association, Green Action, and Greenpeace Japan. The parents and NGO members also protested against the 20mSv/year permissible limit by forming a human chain around the MEXT building.



In response to the demand from the Fukushima parents and NGOs, the MEXT issued another directive on May 27, promising to make efforts to lower the level of radiation exposure for schoolchildren below 1mSv/year. Even though the MEXT began moving to tighten the permissible limit, its new directive continued to be marred by problems; for example, it failed to take into account the amount of radioactivity to which schoolchildren would be exposed outside schools. The goal, 1mSv/year, was also still too high because it exceeded the permissible limit inside radiation-controlled areas ($0.6 \mu\text{Sv}/\text{hour}$).

In addition to these problems with the permissible limit, the negotiations with the MEXT shed light on new problems surrounding children in Fukushima. The most important was evacuation: the initial permissible limit, 20mSv/year, turned out to be coupled with the government policy for designating evacuation zones. Thus, we began organizing activities to reform the government’s evacuation policy by demanding compensation for “voluntary” evacuees among other things—to establish “the right to evacuate.”

1. What is the Right to Evacuate?

We define “the right to evacuate” as the right for a person to “know his or her risk of radiation exposure and decide for himself or herself whether or not to evacuate.” The right to evacuate is based on three basic rights: (1) to know the risks to one’s life; (2) to be compensated for damages one has suffered; and (3) to receive support from the government. These basic rights are in turn anchored in the right for all human beings to live a safe, healthy, and civilized life as well as to pursue their own happiness. This right is guaranteed by both the Japanese Constitution and international laws. Such a universal right should be taken for granted. So should be the right to evacuate from a dangerous situation that threatens one’s safety, health, and happiness. In the following, we explain why the right to evacuate is pivotal for people in Fukushima.

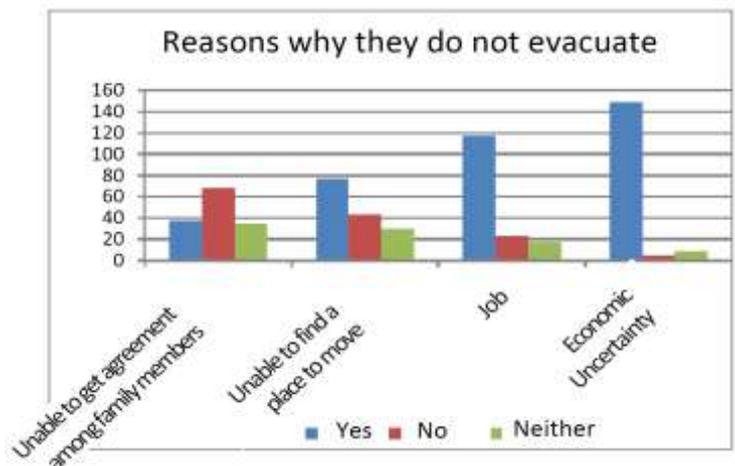
The Real Situation in Fukushima: “We Want to Evacuate, but We Cannot Afford to...”

Figure 1 shows the results of an opinion survey conducted by FoE Japan and Citizens Against the Fukushima Aging Nuclear Power Plants. The majority of respondents chose “economic uncertainty” and “job” as main the reasons preventing their evacuation.

Many respondents also wrote about their fear of invisible radioactivity, the economic burden of securing another residence for evacuation, and the anxiety of moving to a new place. They also discussed their feelings of guilt for evacuating from Fukushima as if abandoning it, as well as conflicts with friends and relatives who were not concerned about radiation risks. These answers indicated that evacuation from contaminated areas was not recognized as a “right,” and this lack of recognition contributed to people’s reluctance to evacuate.

Problems with the Current Evacuation Policy

The government currently uses 20mSv/year as a criterion to designate evacuation zones. But, 20mSv/year is very high, compared with the existing permissible limits of radiation exposure in Japan and abroad:



Opinion survey on voluntary evacuation
(total number of responses: 272), July 25, 2011

Types of Evacuation Area (as of December 2011)

- Restricted Area : 20 km. radius within the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant.
- Deliberate Evacuation Area : An area where residents are ordered to evacuate since cumulative radiation exposure is projected to reach 20mSv within a year.
- Specific Spots Recommended for Evacuation : A household that is asked to evacuate since cumulative radiation exposure is projected to reach 20mSv within a year. Households adjacent to these points, especially those with children and pregnant women, are offered support if they decide to evacuate. The government does not order them to evacuate, however.

Source: METI



- The Nuclear Reactor Regulation Law in Japan defines 1mSv/year as the permissible limit for the general public;
- 5.2mSv/year (0.6 μ Sv/hour) is defined as the permissible limit in radiation-controlled areas in Japan. Minors (under eighteen years of age) are not allowed to work in radiation-controlled areas according to Japan’s labor law. Since these areas impose strict control of radioactive materials, only those who received legally-mandated trainings can enter.
- Belarus, one of the most severely affected countries by the Chernobyl disaster, designates evacuation zones according to the following criteria:

	Soil contamination: Cesium 137 (kBq/m ²)	Cumulative irradiation
Zone of exclusion	1480	
Zone of obligatory resettlement	555	5mSv/year
Zone with the right of resettlement (※)	185~555	1~5mSv/year
Zone of living under periodic control	37~185	0.5~1mSv/year

※ In the zone with the right of resettlement, residents could decide whether or not evacuate. Those who decided to evacuate received compensation, new residences, and medical support from the government.

Source: Vladimir P. MATSKO and Tetsuji IMANAKA (1997) “Legislation and Research Activity in Belarus about the Radiological Consequences of the Chernobyl Accident: Historical Review and Present Situation”

- According to Notification No.810 by Labor Standard Bureau, Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare, 5mSv/year is defined as the minimum level of radiation exposure that can qualify workers, including those at nuclear power plants, who died of cancers and leukemia for receiving compensation. During the past thirty-five years, ten workers qualified for this work-accident compensation. One of these qualified workers had cumulative radiation exposure of only 5.2mSv.
- Germany defines 5mSv/year as the permissible limit for workers at nuclear power plants.

Since the government set such a high level of radiation exposure as a criterion for designating evacuation zones, until July 2011, the Dispute Reconciliation Committee for Nuclear Damage Compensation did not even consider compensation for those who evacuated from severely contaminated areas that fell outside government-designated evacuation zones. The government has also failed to establish a stricter limit for pregnant women and small children who are far more vulnerable to radioactivity than average adults.

2. Voices from Fukushima

We believe that it is important for policymakers to understand the opinions of those who “voluntarily” evacuated or had no choice but to stay in severely contaminated areas in Fukushima. Thus, since July 2011, we have relayed people’s voices from Fukushima to members of the MEXT and the Dispute Reconciliation Committee.

We have also repeatedly organized protests in front of the MEXT to alert policymakers’ attention to the plight of voluntary evacuees and those who stayed. The following presents some of those voices from Fukushima.



- “Only a small mountain separates my house from the evacuation zone. It is only natural for parents to protect their children. I did not evacuate because I wanted to. I was really conflicted. I decided to evacuate only after I thought really hard about the possibility of further nuclear fallout and many other problems.”
- “I want policymakers to recognize that ‘voluntary evacuation’—what we did only after long and hard deliberation and only to protect our loved ones—is a legitimate action. We simply want to protect those who we should protect.”
- “The radiation level is very high. It exceeds 1 μ Sv/hour inside our house. I really don’t know whether we should let our children stay here.”
- “Why do I have to be exposed to radiation every day?”
- “It is clear that the government raised the permissible limit to 20mSv/year for political reasons. So, I made a decision [to evacuate] for myself.”
- “My husband says he is going to stay in this house to protect his business and pay off loans.”
- “I did not give birth to my child only to make her ill because of radioactivity.”
- “Our son was enrolled in a local elementary school where the radiation level was said to reach 15mSv/year. So, we decided to evacuate to Saitama Prefecture.”
- “I know many friends and acquaintances that had no choice but to stay. They are really worried right now.”
- “We have a housing loan to pay. So, it’s hard for us to pay rent for our current place and make payment for our old house that we evacuated from.”
- “Right now, nobody can predict what will happen to the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant. Whether living inside evacuation zones or not, we should act in light of the worst case scenario.”

3. The Struggle for Establishing the Right to Evacuate

The Japanese government uses the radiation level of 20mSv/year as the criterion to designate Deliberate Evacuation Area and Specific Spots Recommended for Evacuation. Nonetheless, various places in Fukushima Prefecture that fell outside the official evacuation zones, such as Cities of Fukushima, Koriyama, Date, and Nihonmatsu, recorded radiation levels ranging from several mSv to 20mSv per year. This situation forced parents with children to decide whether or not to evacuate. Since the Dispute Reconciliation Committee did not at all consider compensation for those who evacuated from outside the official evacuation zones, however, many parents hesitated to evacuate for financial reasons. To ameliorate this difficult situation, FoE Japan and Citizens Against the Fukushima Aging Nuclear Power Plants began a campaign to establish the right to evacuate for Fukushima residents living outside the official evacuation zones.

Efforts to Extend Compensation to “Voluntary” Evacuees

“We want the right to evacuate! Compensate ‘voluntary’ evacuees!” was the slogan that we used to launch our campaign in response to the Dispute Reconciliation Committee’s mid-term report that excluded those who evacuated voluntarily from its compensation scheme. Our activities included organizing protests in front of the MEXT, submitting compensation claims to TEPCO, inviting voluntary evacuees to speak at meetings, and collecting signatures. As a result, the Dispute Reconciliation Committee decided to consider compensation for voluntary evacuees and also invited them to the Committee’s public hearing. Eventually, the Committee decided to compensate voluntary evacuees on December 6, albeit in a very limited way. During our campaign, voluntary evacuees came to Tokyo not only from Fukushima Prefecture but also from across Japan to show their support.



Protest in front of the MEXT
(October 20, 2011)



Submitting compensation claims to TEPCO
(August 12, 2011)

Timeline of Campaign Activities to Establish the Right to Evacuate

7/14	Submitted a report on voluntary evacuees to the Dispute Reconciliation Committee
7/15	Began negotiations with the Dispute Reconciliation Committee and submitted a petition to request compensation for voluntary evacuees
7/25	Published results of our opinion survey (a total of 272 respondents)
7/29	Protested in front of the Dispute Reconciliation Committee
July-August	Organized seminars on the right to evacuate in Fukushima and other prefectures
→ On August 5, the Dispute Reconciliation Committee decided to discuss the right to evacuate	
8/12	Submitted voluntary evacuees' compensation claims (411 in total) to TEPCO ¹
9/26	Submitted an open letter to the Dispute Reconciliation Committee, requesting committee members to take voluntary evacuees' voices seriously
9/28~	Submitted opinions to the Dispute Reconciliation Committee and TEPCO
10/3	Negotiated with the government to request a public hearing of evacuees' opinions
→ Setting up a public hearing	
10/18	Submitted a request and a report regarding voluntary evacuees to the MEXT and TEPCO
10/20	Protested in front of the MEXT
→ On October 20, the Dispute Reconciliation Committee held a public hearing	
11/5	Held a seminar on the right to evacuate in Tokyo
11/25	Protested in front of the MEXT
11/29	Published results of our second opinion survey (a total of 241 respondents)
12/5	Submitted a petition to the MEXT and TEPCO and organized a press conference for voluntary evacuees
12/6	Protested in front of the MEXT
→ The Dispute Reconciliation Committee issued guidelines for compensation of voluntary evacuation	

Negotiations with the Government over Evacuation and Compensation Policies

Prior to the campaign regarding compensation for “voluntary” evacuees, we already had several negotiations with the government about problems with the designation of evacuation zones. On June 30, for example, several NGOs negotiated with government officials to discuss the validity of the government scheme for designating evacuation zones, the necessity of monitoring cumulative radiation exposure among children, and the possibility of evacuating children from severely contaminated areas.² Moreover, the negotiation session in Fukushima on July 19 was attended by many residents who demanded that the government should create an “optional evacuation zone,” i.e., a zone where residents could decide whether or not to evacuate and those who decided to evacuate would be compensated. However, the government (specifically, the Nuclear Emergency Response Headquarters) refused to change the existing evacuation and compensation policies. In light of these negotiations, we decided to focus on Watari District in Fukushima City and work with local residents to lobby the government.

¹ Network of Lawyers for Protecting Fukushima Children, Citizens Against the Fukushima Aging Nuclear Power Plants, and FoE Japan submitted the compensation claims.

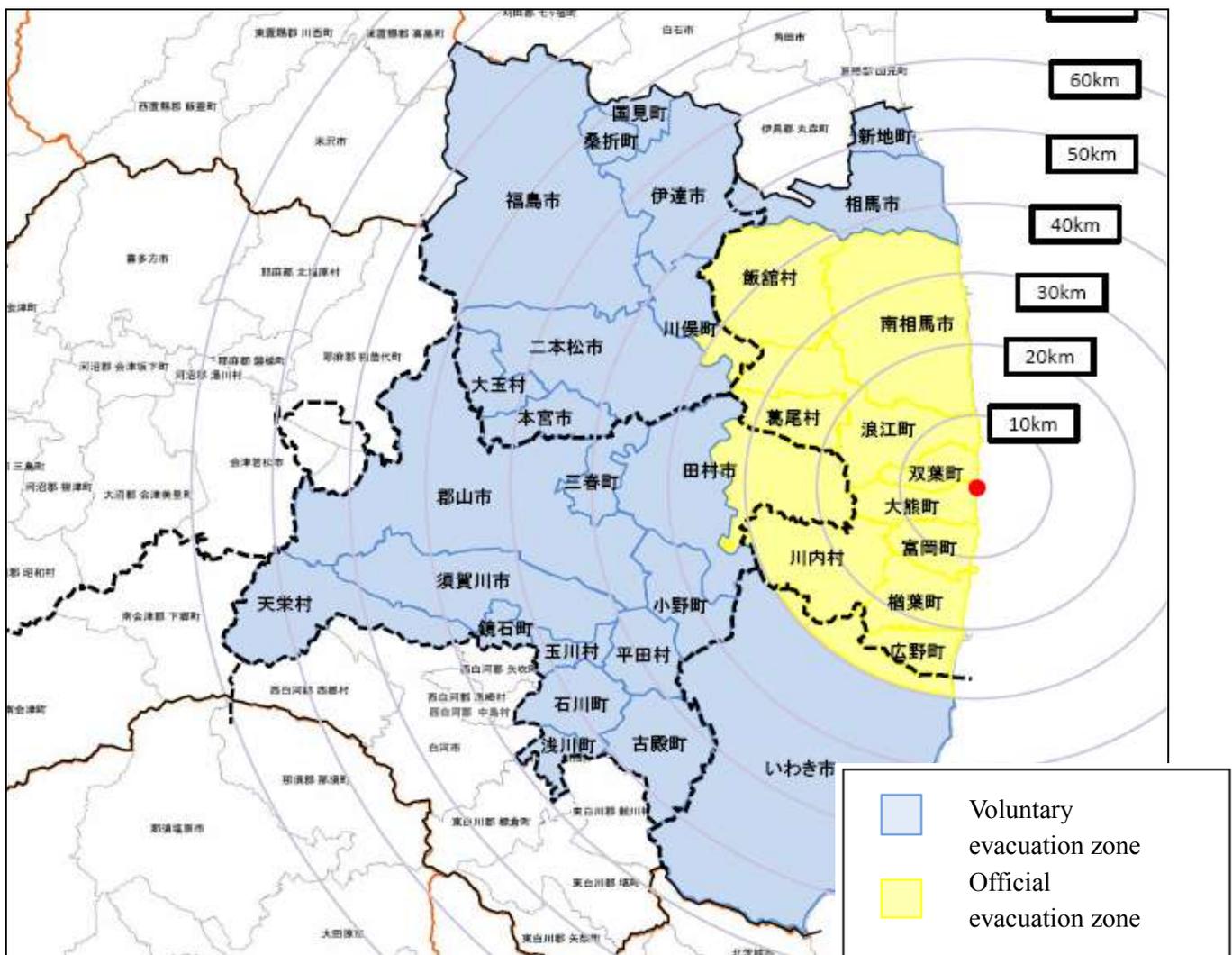
² The negotiations were jointly organized by Fukushima Network for Saving Children from Radiation, Citizens Against the Fukushima Aging Nuclear Power Plants, FoE Japan, Mihama Association, Green Action, and Greenpeace Japan.

4. Promises and Problems of the Dispute Reconciliation Committee for Nuclear Damage Compensation

The Committee's Mid-term Report Revised

On December 6, the Dispute Reconciliation Committee revised its mid-term report to include new guidelines for compensation for voluntary evacuation. The new guidelines expanded eligibility criteria to include residents in the northern and central areas of Fukushima Prefecture as well as Iwaki City and Futaba Town and to provide compensation of 400,000 yen for a child or a pregnant woman who would have voluntarily evacuated by December 2011 as well as for an adult who voluntarily evacuated in the “immediate aftermath of the nuclear accident,” while all others were to receive compensation of 80,000 yen each. However, this revision has several problems that make voluntary evacuees continue to be worse off than those who evacuated from the official evacuation zones, though they could still file individual compensation claims against TEPCO to receive more comprehensive compensation.

Map of the Areas (Shaded Blue) Newly Added to the Commission's Compensation Scheme



Unsatisfactory Justification for the Amount and Coverage of Compensation

The most important problem with the Committee's new guidelines is an unsatisfactory justification for determining the amount of compensation. We demanded compensation of total amounts of expenses that people spent for voluntary evacuation. However, the new guidelines specified the same amount of compensation for all evacuees. But the Committee offered no satisfactory justifications for the same treatment of all evacuees or for how they decided on 400,000 or 80,000 yen as the right amount of compensation. It was also unclear how the Committee expanded eligibility to residents in certain areas, but not in others. Since pro-nuclear members dominated the Committee, the Committee failed to incorporate different radiation levels in the compensation scheme for different voluntary evacuees or to compensate total amounts of expenses. The following elaborates on these problems:

- Some voluntary evacuees bear huge financial burdens due to expenses for moving and keeping two residences. Others fell into debt because they had to retire early or switch jobs to evacuate. Considering the reality of these expenses and reduced income, the amount of compensation offered by the Committee is likely to be inadequate for many voluntary evacuees.
- 400,000 yen for a child or a pregnant woman amounts to a monthly income of 40,000 yen for the duration of 10 months. This is to include compensation for damage to mental health and evacuation-related expenses for a person accompanying a child or a pregnant woman. In contrast, a person who evacuated from an official evacuation zone receives 100,000 yen every month as compensation for damage to mental health in addition to compensation for evacuation-related expenses. This arrangement creates an inequality among evacuees.
- The period of compensation is too short. The Committee planned to terminate the compensation scheme for voluntary evacuees by the end of December 2011 and consider renewing it for 2012. However, it is clear that the situation will not improve soon. According to the government's plan, decontamination will take at least two years, which means that radiation levels will remain high in the foreseeable future. Thus, the Committee should extend the compensation scheme for voluntary evacuees until decontamination succeeds in lowering the radiation levels.
- It is also unreasonable of the Committee to refuse to compensate adults who voluntarily evacuated later than the "immediate aftermath of the nuclear accident." Special considerations for children and pregnant women should not be used to limit eligibility and exclude other types of evacuees from compensation.
- Although the Committee limited compensation of voluntary evacuation to residents of the designated areas in Fukushima, high levels of radiation have been recorded at many places outside Fukushima, such as Marumori Town in Miyagi Prefecture. It is therefore important to expand the eligibility criteria further.

Implications of the Revised Mid-term Report for Voluntary Evacuation

In spite of the aforementioned problems, the Committee's new guidelines admitted that it was legitimate for people to voluntarily evacuate to avoid the danger of radiation. The new guidelines also stated the possibility that TEPCO could be held responsible for compensating those who evacuated from outside the eligible areas as well as for damages that were not defined as eligible under the guidelines. Thus, the new guidelines opened

doors for voluntary evacuees to win compensation of total amounts of their expenses.

At the December 6 meeting where the mid-term report was revised to include the new guidelines, the Committee chair talked to voluntary evacuees in attendance and acknowledged that they could file individual compensation claims against TEPCO that would exceed the designated amount. The chair's acknowledgment sharply contrasted with one of the pro-nuclear members of the Committee who continued to insist that no compensation for voluntary evacuees should be necessary.

During one of the Diet committee meetings on the following day, Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry Yukio Edano also acknowledged, "All expenses are eligible for compensation, so long as they are related to evacuation. We are going to advise TEPCO to compensate them in a timely fashion." He went on to acknowledge that people should be compensated if their incomes decreased due to voluntary evacuation. Mr. Edano continued to confirm his position at another Diet committee:

"The Committee already decided to offer the same amount of compensation for all eligible voluntary evacuees. In addition, if some of these eligible voluntary evacuees spend more than the specified amount, we will compensate those expenses as well. Now, speaking of voluntary evacuees from outside the eligible areas, I think they should be eligible for compensation, and I am going to advise TEPCO about it."

Mr. Edano's statement was also supported by Prime Minister Yoshihiko Noda who said, "Whether inside or outside the eligible areas, the principle is to compensate all expenses, so long as they are causally related to evacuation. I think we should implement our compensation policy according to this principle." Since TEPCO may try to refuse to compensate expenses related to voluntary evacuation, we believe that these statements by Mr. Edano and Prime Minister Noda are critical.

Additional Revision of the Mid-term Report

During the meeting of the Dispute Reconciliation Committee for Nuclear Damage Compensation held on March 16, the mid-term report was revised for the second time. While the first revision designated the Northern, Central, Iwaki, and Sou-sou regions as "voluntary evacuation zones," the second revision stipulated a new policy, effective January 2012, to judge eligibility of children and pregnant women on a case-by-case basis rather than according to a zoning system.

Strategy for Winning Comprehensive Compensation from TEPCO

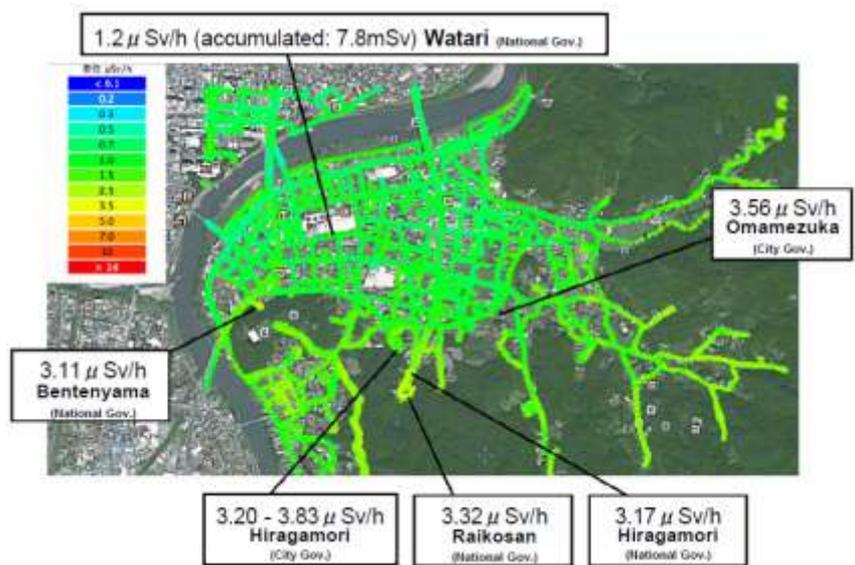
Compensation related to voluntary evacuation has thus already been granted. Nevertheless, unless voluntary evacuees take proactive initiatives, TEPCO may not provide compensation for more than the amount specified by the Committee. TEPCO may also refuse to compensate those who voluntarily evacuated from outside the eligible areas. To win comprehensive compensation, voluntary evacuees will have to file additional individual compensation claims against TEPCO. If these additional individual compensation claims are successful, this will encourage residents of other severely contaminated areas that are not yet designated by the Committee as eligible for compensation. Further, on March 22, TEPCO announced that it would pay compensation in the amount of 200,000 yen for pregnant women or children aged 18 years old or younger in nine municipalities in Southern Fukushima, such as Shirakawa City and Saigou Village. Although this amount is still inadequate, this is nonetheless an important accomplishment attained as a result of the efforts by the local residents.

5. The Plight of Residents Outside the Evacuation Zones

While the Japanese government defines 20mSv/year as a criterion for designating Deliberate Evacuation Area and Specific Spots Recommended for Evacuation, NGOs have demanded that the government should establish a broader, “optional evacuation area” to allow people to decide whether or not to evacuate for themselves. Since the Japanese government is unwilling to change its evacuation policy, however, people in Fukushima have suffered. Below, we report the situation of Watari District, one of the most severely contaminated areas in Fukushima City.

High Levels of Contamination across Broad Areas

Watari District in Fukushima City is located about 60 km. from the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant. 6,700 households of 16,000 people live in this residential area surrounded by trees and mountains along Abukuma River. The prefectural government office building is within walking distance. From early on, high levels of radiation were detected in Watari District. In June 2011, for example, a survey by Fukushima City recorded 3.2-3.8 μ Sv/hour at Hiragamori and Omamezuka sections of the district. On June 30, six NGOs jointly negotiated with the government to point out the urgent situation there.³ During the negotiations, the NGOs demanded that the government should immediately designate the entire district as a Specific “Area” Recommended for Evacuation or at least hold an informational meeting with residents. However, the government merely stated that they would improve the quality of radiation monitoring.



Air radiation levels in Watari District (June-July 2011)

Source: MEXT and Fukushima City

Then, a government survey in early July confirmed that Watari District was severely contaminated. At another round of negotiations with the government held in Fukushima on July 19, NGOs and Watari residents reiterated their concerns about high levels of radiation. The NGOs and residents also demanded that the government should hold an informational meeting to explain radiation risks to residents and to help them make informed decisions whether or not to evacuate, and that proper compensation be provided for evacuees. But again, the government ignored the people’s concerns and demands.

³ These NGOs included Fukushima Network for Saving Children from Radiation, Citizens Against the Fukushima Aging Nuclear Power Plants, FoE Japan, Mihama Association, Green Action, and Greenpeace Japan.

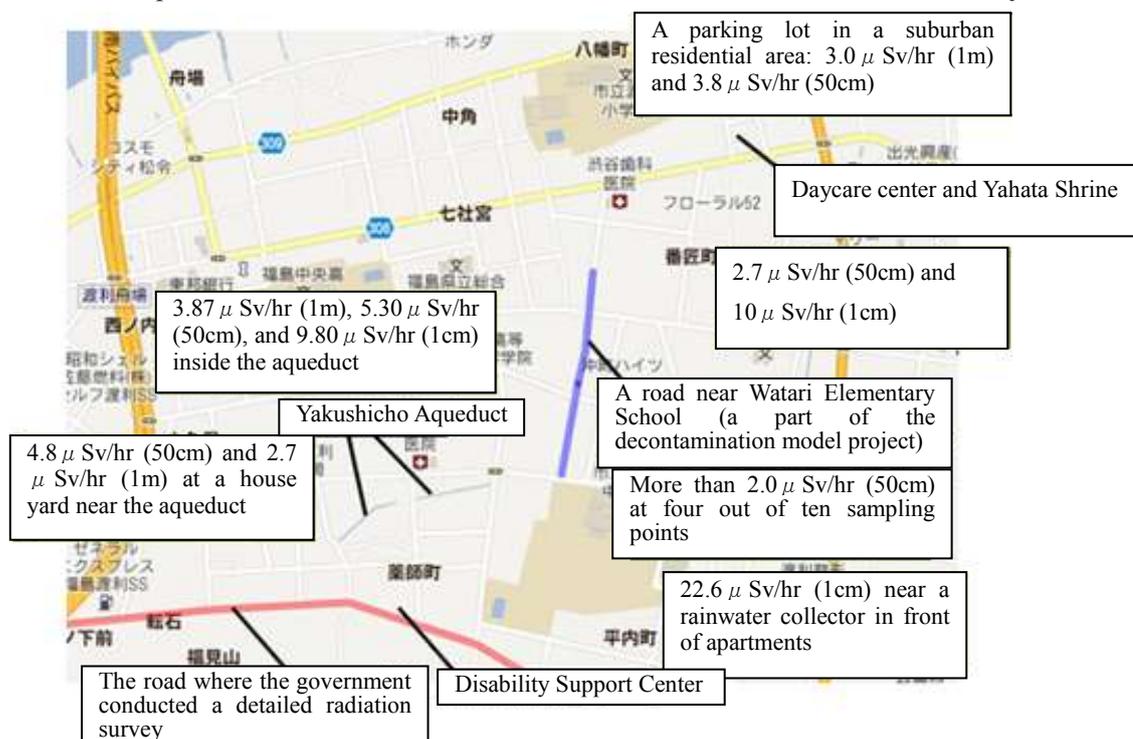
Unsatisfactory Results of Decontamination

On July 24, Fukushima City tried to decontaminate the polluted areas, including streets that children use to walk to Watari Elementary School; however, decontamination did not yield satisfactory results. According to the city, air radiation levels decreased only by 30% or less after decontamination. In fact, approximately $2.0\mu\text{Sv}/\text{hour}$ continued to be recorded at various places. Decontamination in Watari District did not yield satisfactory results mainly due to its geographical location: contaminated soils feed into the district from adjacent mountains. Local NGOs have confirmed that radioactivity becomes condensed after it rains. Finally, the government conducted a detailed survey between August 18 and 22 to decide whether or not to designate the Oguraji section of Watari District as Specific Spots Recommended for Evacuation. Nevertheless, this survey covered only a small part of Watari—about one tenth of the total number of households in the district.

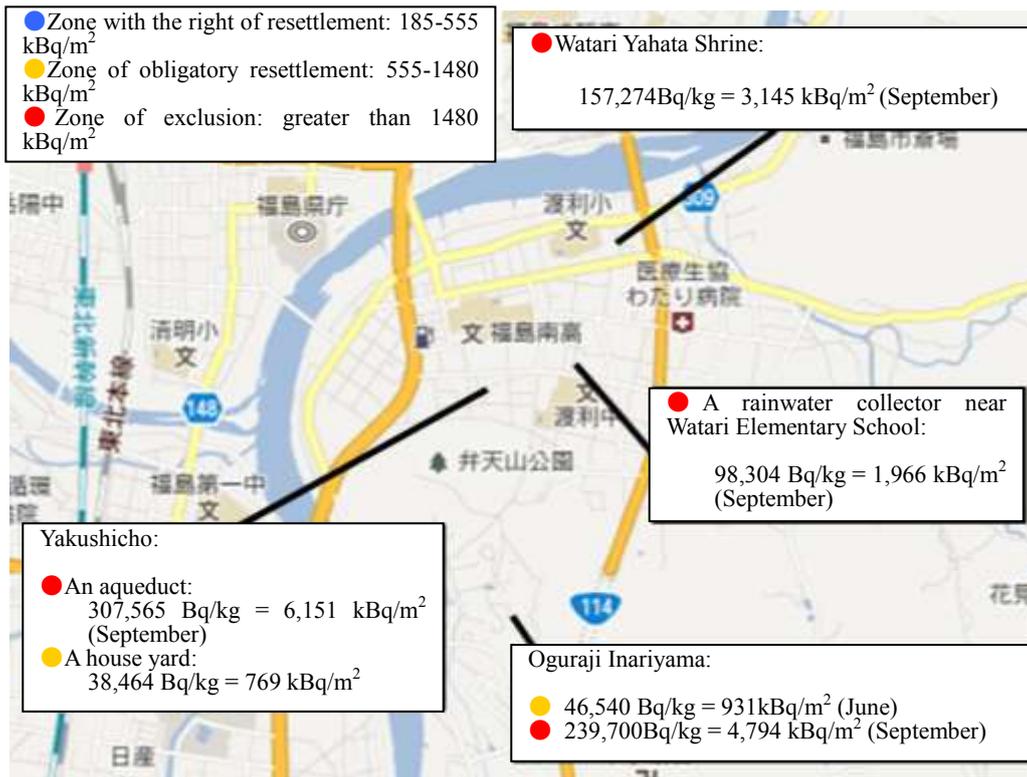
NGO Survey of Contamination

In September, Citizens Against the Fukushima Aging Nuclear Power Plants and FoE Japan organized a series of seminars on radiation levels in Watari District, problems with the government's evacuation policy, and health risks of low-dose and internal radiation exposure. A total of 310 residents participated in these seminars and engaged in heated debates. These seminars revealed that many residents were hesitant to evacuate because of their work and family situations, even though they constantly worried about high levels of radiation. It also became clear that these residents would have evacuated if the government had designated their households as Specific Spots Recommended for Evacuation or guaranteed compensations for voluntary evacuation.

In addition, on September 14, Citizens against the Fukushima Aging Nuclear Power Plants and FoE Japan conducted a survey of air and soil radiation levels in Watari District with the help of Professor Tomoya Yamauchi (Kobe University). The survey not only confirmed that air radiation levels remained high in the district but also showed that the soil was severely contaminated: soil radiation levels at four out of five sampling points were equivalent to zones of exclusion in Belarus and Ukraine after the Chernobyl disaster.



Air radiation levels in Watari District



Soil radiation levels in Watari District

Citizens' Efforts to Influence the Government

To respond to this urgent situation, Save Watari Kids, a NGO based in the district, submitted the following request to the Japanese government and Fukushima City on October 5: (1) designate the entire district as a Specific “Area” Recommended for Evacuation (not “point” per household); and (2) adopt lower levels of radiation as criteria for evacuating households with children and/or pregnant women.

On October 8, the Japanese government and Fukushima City finally held an informational meeting with residents in the Oguraji section of Watari District. Residents in other sections of the district were not informed about the meeting. At the beginning of the informational meeting, the government and the city reported results of the detailed survey. Radiation levels exceeding 3.0μSv/hour (equivalent to the government permissible limit of 20mSv/year) were recorded at two houses, but they were not designated as Specific Spots Recommended for Evacuation because these two households expressed their unwillingness to evacuate. Since radiation levels at other houses were lower than the permissible limit, the government and the city announced their intent to focus on decontamination rather than evacuation.

Watari residents were enraged because they felt that the government and the city decided on their position without listening to their concerns and demands. Their anger was so intense that one Watari resident later remarked, “People of Fukushima are generally very quiet. I was surprised to see them expressing such anger.” Opinions and questions that



Watari residents voiced at the informational meeting included the following:

- “The detailed survey covered only a part of Watari District. I request a survey of the entire district.”
- “Minamisoma City uses 2.0 μ Sv/hour in designating Specific Spots Recommended for Evacuation for children and pregnant women. Why does Fukushima City not use the same criterion?”
- “I have found several points that recorded radiation levels exceeding 10 μ Sv/hour.”
- “When on earth are you going to start decontamination?”
- “Please help us evacuate children temporarily until decontamination is completed.”
- “If some people evacuate voluntarily, they should be compensated for their evacuation expenses. If others decide to stay, they should be also compensated for risks of exposure to high levels of radiation.”
- “I want the entire district to be designated as a Specific Area Recommended for Evacuation.”
- “Hold another informational meeting for all residents of Watari District.”

Nevertheless, the government and the city refused to give clear answers.

On October 28, the frustrated Watari residents went to Tokyo to hold negotiations with representatives of the Nuclear Emergency Response Headquarters, the MEXT, and the Nuclear Safety Commission at the Upper House Diet Members Office Building. Although government officials said they would take the residents’ concerns and demands seriously, they again refused to promise any policy changes. On December 7, an elderly person who had small grandchildren went to negotiate directly with officials of Fukushima City and Nuclear Emergency Response Headquarters.



He requested the officials to designate the entire district as an evacuation zone. (At his house, 2.95 μ Sv/hour and 5.45 μ Sv/hour were recorded with 1m and 0.5m distances from the ground, respectively.) Neither the government nor the city responded to his urgent plea.

Launching the POKA-POKA Project to Protect Fukushima Children from Radiation

The government and the city have promised “thorough decontamination.” Since the surrounding mountains continue to feed contaminated soil and water to Watari District, the effect of decontamination efforts is likely to be limited. It remains unclear when decontamination can start and how long it will take. The government has delayed evacuation of children and pregnant women with the promise of decontamination. This policy can be said to violate human rights. At this very moment, children in Watari District live, study, and play in the severely contaminated environment. Here, it is crucial to facilitate their temporary evacuation until satisfactory decontamination is accomplished.

We have launched “POKA-POKA Project for Fukushima Children” in response to the dire situation in Watari District. The project is jointly managed by Save Watari Kids, Fukushima Network for Saving Children from Radiation, Citizens Against the Fukushima Aging Nuclear Power Plants, and FoE Japan. The project focuses on Watari District as well as Onami, Nankodai, and Oguraji and aims to lower radiation exposure for children of families that have to stay in the contaminated areas for a variety of reasons. If possible, we will expand the project to cover other districts in Fukushima City.

While going forward with the project, we will continue to lobby the government to change its evacuation policy. The government criterion for evacuation, 20mSv/year, is nearly four times as high as the permissible limit in radiation-controlled areas. The evacuation criterion itself needs to be reconsidered.

This is not only Watari’s problem. The problem is also relevant to Fukushima and, indeed, Japan as a whole.

Please help support this project to protect the children of Watari; thank you in advance for your support.

Timeline of the “Watari problem”

7/17 & 20	Fukushima City conducted a radiation survey: 3.30 μ Sv/hr at apartments in Hiragamori, 3.83 μ Sv/hr at a park in Hiragamori, and 3.56 μ Sv/hr near the Daizutsuka garbage collection center.
6/30	During negotiations with the government, FoE Japan and other NGOs pointed out high levels of radiation in Watari District and requested an informational meeting to discuss evacuation-related issues
7/5~8	The government conducted a radiation survey: 3.17 μ Sv/hr in Hiragamori, 3.32 μ Sv/hr in Raikozan, 3.11 μ Sv/hr in Bentenyama
7/14	NGOs demanded that the government should establish an optional evacuation zone as well as hold an informational meeting for residents in severely contaminated areas
7/24	Fukushima City carried out a decontamination model project
8/18~22	The government conducted a detailed survey of some of the contaminated areas: radiation levels exceeding 2 μ Sv/hr were recorded at 162 households in Watari, 118 in Oguraji, and 29 in Nankodai.
9/14	Professor Tomoya Yamauchi surveyed radiation levels in Watari where Fukushima City had carried out the decontamination model project: 3.87 μ Sv/hr and 5.30 μ Sv/hr (with 1m and 50cm distances from the ground, respectively) were recorded at an aqueduct in Yakushi, and 2.0 μ Sv/hr (with a 50cm distance from the ground) at four out of ten sampling points around Watari Elementary School. The survey also revealed high levels of soil contamination—on par with zones of exclusion in Belarus and Ukraine after the Chernobyl disaster—at four out of five sampling points; for example, 307,565Bq/kg at the aqueduct and 157,274 Bq/kg around a shrine.
10/5	Watari residents submitted a petition to request Fukushima City and the Nuclear Emergency Response Headquarters to designate the district as an optional evacuation zone.
10/8	The government and Fukushima City held an informational meeting only for some residents in Watari. While the residents requested for an optional evacuation zone, a more comprehensive survey of radiation levels, and special considerations for children and pregnant women,

	government and city officials argued that no households in Watari were qualified to be designated as Specific Spots Recommended for Evacuation.
10/28	NGOs and Watari residents negotiated with the government. The residents restated their requests, but government officials refused to change their position.
11/28	A survey by Fukushima City recorded $2.95 \mu\text{Sv/hr}$ and $5.45 \mu\text{Sv/hr}$ (with 1m and 50cm distances from the ground, respectively) at a house in Yakushi.
12/8	The owner of the aforesaid house requested the city and the government to designate the entire district as an evacuation zone.

Friends of the Earth Japan
(FoE Japan)

We are an international NGO working on issues of energy, climate change, deforestation, and wastes, among others, toward creating a sustainable society. Since March 11, 2011, we have been engaging in activities to help children in Fukushima and phase out nuclear power.

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Citizens Against the Fukushima Aging
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We are a group of citizens based in Tokyo, aiming to create a society free from nuclear accidents and wastes. Since the Fukushima disaster, we have been focusing on activities to protect children in Fukushima from radiation.

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