

This report is produced by OCHA. It was issued by the Regional Office in Asia Pacific with input from the UNDAC team in Tokyo. It covers the period from 16-17 March. The next report will be issued on the 18 March.

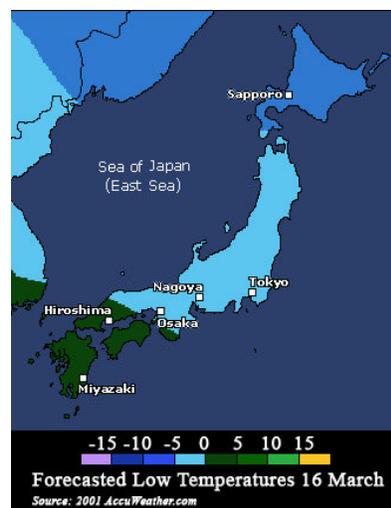
I. HIGHLIGHTS/KEY PRIORITIES

- Significant increase in the amount of humanitarian aid delivered but a lack of fuel is a major obstacle
- Government prioritizes assistance to the half a million sheltering in evacuation centres
- Bitter winter conditions, debris, and damaged roads continue to hamper relief operations
- International NGOs are urged to wait until search and rescue operations have finished before commencing activities.
- Military and Police help efforts at the Fukushima Nuclear Power Plant

II. Situation Overview

Winter weather continues to hamper relief operations and worsen conditions for survivors of the 11 March earthquake and tsunami. It is now seven days since the disaster occurred and an estimated 23,000 people still remain isolated around the worst affected coastal areas in the north east according to the Prime Minister's Office. The National Meteorological Agency has now reported that the highest tsunami wave on the 11 March was 15 meters high in Mekawa, Miyagi - twice as high as the 7.3 meter waves earlier reported.

Large amounts of humanitarian aid have been gathered nationwide, but the largest obstacle has been transporting it to the 430,000 homeless who are now sheltering in evacuation centres. The Government has been working around the clock to restore land, air and sea access. To date, 18 main routes, five airports and six ports have been restored for aid delivery near and in the affected areas. However, a lack of fuel is making it difficult to deliver the assistance to each evacuation center. In an effort to solve this problem, the Government has established a centralized delivery scheme which involves local governments collecting the aid and the Defense Force then delivering it to the evacuation centres.



There is increasing concern about the health of the evacuees. In Fukushima Prefecture, 14 people evacuated from hospitals have died to date, most of them elderly. The lack of medical supplies and heating equipment is a concern. According to doctors deployed to the affected regions, many of the evacuees have fallen ill, have diarrhea and other illnesses caused by the freezing weather, lack of clean water and sanitation. The Minister of State for Disaster Management has announced that from 17 March, services for those people living in evacuation centres will be prioritized. The Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare will take the lead in providing essential health services and assistance for the elderly, children and pregnant women. The Minister also asked that treatment be made available for post-traumatic stress disorder among the affected population as well as rescue teams.

The number of casualties continues to rise. The Government has now confirmed 5,178 people have died and another 2,285 are injured. The number of people who are missing has increased to 8,913 from 7,844. The number of people without electricity has now reduced to 451,786 households compared to 634,465 reported yesterday. Approximately 2.5 million households still do not have access to water.

Meanwhile, a joint UNDAC/DART assessment team flew from Tokyo to the tsunami affected area on a U.S. Military helicopter today. The first stop was in Oarai, a small town in Ibaraki Prefecture. Having conducted an aerial survey of the affected area, the team landed and secured ground transport to assess tsunami damage within the city. Considerable damage to boats and some shore front properties was observed. Locals also reported fuel and food shortages which they stated were due to damage to roads into the area making it difficult for supplies to be brought in. The team then attempted to fly to Sendai around the U.S.

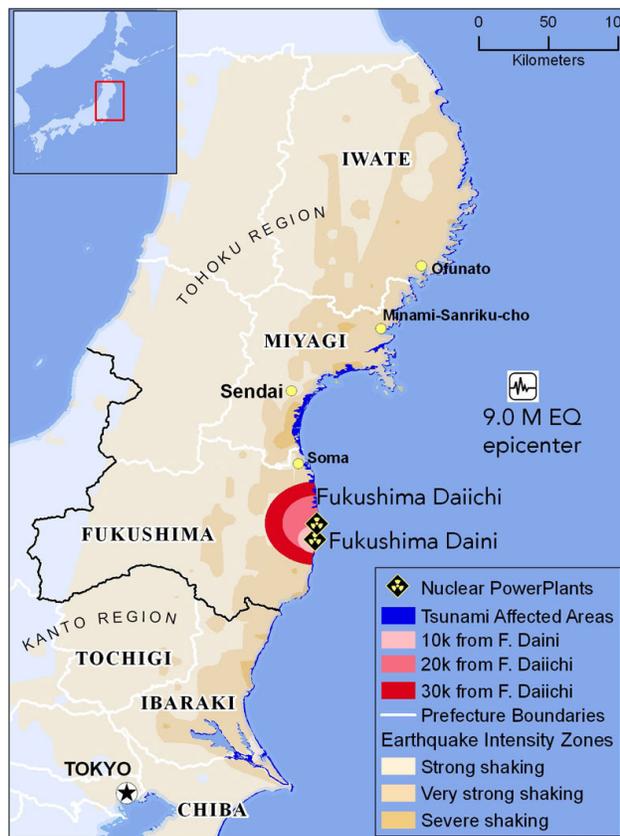
specified 80 km zone but bad weather over the mountains prevented the helicopters from proceeding and the team was forced to return to Tokyo.

Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant:

Efforts to cool the earthquake damaged Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant continue. Special Defence Force helicopters and police water cannon trucks have spent the day spraying sea water onto the nuclear power plant in an attempt to cool the plant's reactors. The Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency, Yukiya Amano, is expected to arrive in Japan shortly. The IAEA says Japanese authorities have reported concerns about the condition of the spent nuclear fuel pool at the plant. Concerned about potential radiation exposure, the U.S. military has announced it will not allow its troops within 80 km of the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear plant.

The Embassy of Germany in Japan have instructed their nationals residing in Tokyo and Yokohama to evacuate either to the western part of Japan or outside the country. The Embassy has also transferred some of their operations to Osaka. The British, Australian and French embassies have given similar instructions to their nationals. Australia has moved their embassy to its Honorary Consulate in Osaka. The Embassies of Iraq, Bahrain and Angola have temporarily closed their embassies. According to 2007 data from the Japan Statistics Bureau, there are about 2.1 million foreign residents living in Japan, with the majority from China, Korea, Brazil and the Philippines. The Tokyo Regional Immigration Bureau says that approximately 10,000 foreign nationals have left (or are leaving the country).

Regular updates from the Ministry of Education on radiation measurements per prefecture are available at <http://eq.sakura.ne.jp>.



III. Government Response

Logistics: On 16 March, the Government announced a plan for managing and delivering food and relief items to evacuation centres in the affected areas. Evacuation centres will send requests to municipalities, and the prefecture will consolidate these requests and liaise with the national government. The national government will then request relief items and food from the private sector and other municipalities. These will be consolidated at Japan Self-Defence Force (JSDF) sites (there are 50 sites nationwide) and the JSDF will transport these relief items to the affected areas. Distribution of relief items will be conducted by the Municipalities and/or JSDF.

However, the current shortage of fuel is limiting the delivery capacity of transportation companies and municipalities. This is due to the breakdown of six out of nine oil factories in Kanto and Tohoku areas. Furthermore, the lack of capacity in the most affected areas as well as poor communications has further restricted the delivery of relief items.

The private sector is also providing support. The Government requested All Nippon Airways (ANA) Group to transport humanitarian personnel and relief items free of charge by air. ANA Group has agreed to provide support for a month.

Shelter: The six most affected prefectures have a total population of about 16.9 million people. To date, approximately 430,000 have been evacuated from these areas and are currently living in temporary shelters across seven prefectures. Other prefectures not affected by the emergency are offering to take some of the evacuees. As reported on 15 March, the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism has ordered

the construction of 600 temporary shelters to be built within two weeks 4,200 shelters in four weeks and 30,000 shelters in two months.

Food: According to the Emergency Disaster Response Headquarters in the Office of the Prime Minister, 1.5 million meals have been delivered in total to evacuation centres and hospitals in the affected areas. This is a significant increase from the number of meals delivered as of yesterday (483,550 meals).

The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries of Japan has requested the private sector increase the production of food products, such as rice, bottles of water, bread, instant noodles, formula milk, snacks and instant food. Thirty-seven private sector companies have offered 2.4 million meals and 300,000 litres of water. According to the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (MHLW), Japanese Consumers' Co-operative Union has delivered a total of 1.3 million non-food and food items to the affected areas.

NFIs: A substantial amount of non-food and food items have been mobilised at logistics hubs close to the affected areas. However, coordination and transportation is a major challenge. Rolling power outages by power companies are also affecting production of basic livelihood items. According to media reports, water, gasoline, paraffin oil, ready-to-eat meals, portable stoves, plastic plates and utensils, tooth brushes, powdered milk, diapers, sanitary napkins, clothes, blankets, batteries, candles, medicines, masks, soaps, and potable latrines are in need.

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene: According to the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, 1.6 million households are still without water in 12 prefectures which is same figure reported yesterday. A total of 320,000 households in Fukushima, 450,000 households in Miyagi, 110,000 in Iwate, and 660,000 households in Ibaraki do not have water. The actual number of households without water may be higher as some areas have not been reached. MHLW is coordinating with 245 water supply companies to secure an emergency water supply. The Ministry has arranged to send 314 water supply vehicles to the most affected areas including Miyagi (120 vehicles), Fukushima (96 vehicles) and Iwate (70 vehicles). Bottled water has also been distributed through the local authorities.

Health: The number of Disaster Medical Assistance Teams (DMAT) operating in Iwate, Miyagi and Fukushima has decreased from 100 to 30 as the teams are deployed to provide emergency medical assistance at the early stage of a response. The Ministry of Health has authorised the dispatch of health worker teams from other non-affected prefectures to assist in Iwate, Miyagi and Fukushima.

The Japanese Red Cross Society has deployed 134 response teams, including domestic Emergency Response Units to Miyagi, Iwate, Fukushima, Ibaraki, Chiba, Tochigi, Nagano and Yamagata. Fifty-one have completed their missions, 59 are still active and an additional 24 are on the way. The Red Cross is also undertaking psychosocial support and has deployed five specialists to Miyagi.

Telecommunications: NEC Group is providing 24 hour support to affected prefectures, hospitals and private companies in the northeastern region to restore IT systems.

IV. International Assistance

The Government of Japan has requested its position on international donations of relief items and on international Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) operating in Japan be made public. With regard to **relief items**, *“the Government of Japan has received offers for relief goods/material from many countries, international organizations, NGOs and private sector. The Government is identifying the needs and establishing a mechanism for storage and transportation to affected people. Therefore, it is recommended not to send any relief goods without coordination with the Government and local governments”*.

Concerning NGOs, the Government of Japan says *“Search and Rescue operation phase still continues in the affected areas at this moment and the access to those areas is strictly limited to rescue workers. It is also reported that there is temporary shortage of petrol in the affected area. International/foreign NGOs are recommended to wait until the situation improves so that those NGOs are able to conduct their activities in a self-sustainable way”*.

It is understood that some 13 NGOs are providing assistance in the tsunami and earthquake affected areas, working through local partners. Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF) has a team of 10 people divided into three groups, conducting mobile clinics and assessments in Miyagi prefecture. Turkish Red Crescent, Switzerland Humanitarian Aid Response Team, Save the children, and Plan International have deployed technical assistance teams in the affected region.

Search and rescue teams are continuing their activities in cooperation with their Japanese counterparts with the focus now on recovery. Four teams have now completed their mission in Japan bringing the number of International Search and Rescue specialists down to 637 (14 teams) with 29 search dogs. The teams report that bad weather conditions continue to hamper operations along with poor telecommunications, debris on roads and fuel shortages. The teams are monitoring radiation levels for safety. All teams are working well beyond the 80 km zone that the U.S. has implemented for its own personnel.

Currently nearly 5300 U.S. service men and women are supporting the disaster relief effort in Japan. The military operation includes eight ships, including the aircraft carrier USS Ronald Reagan, transport aircraft and more than 100 military helicopters which are being repositioned to northern Japan to best assist ongoing humanitarian efforts. The U.S. military has flown reconnaissance flights and provided the Japanese government with images of the areas affected by the earthquake and tsunami. Search and rescue flights and missions along the coast continue, relief operations including the delivery of food, water and other relief supplies also continue.

The World Food Programme (WFP) in collaboration with TNT, has started to assist in the transport of 60,000 blankets to the affected areas. International Telecommunication Union (ITU) says it has dispatched emergency telephone equipment to the region, including satellite phones with GPS devices to search assist in rescue operations. According to ITU, a total of 37 broadband global area network terminals have been sent and more are on the way.

V. Coordination

The Government of Japan's Emergency Management agencies are leading the response through the Emergency Response Team, headed by Prime Minister Naoto Kan. Information from the Government of Japan, including situation reports can be found at <http://www.kantei.go.jp>.

The Government of Japan announced the establishment of a "Volunteers Coordination Unit" under the Chief Cabinet Secretary's Office. The newly created unit will coordinate the activities of volunteer groups and Non Profit Organizations in support of the earthquakes/tsunami victims in close consultation with relevant ministries. It will facilitate the exchange of information among numerous organizations and allow coordinated action on the ground. Several Japanese NGOs are already in the affected areas, assessing the situation and providing water, food, hot meals and social assistance to those suffering from the impact of the disaster.

An UNDAC team, based at JICA Tokyo International Centre is supporting the Government with information management and supporting the International USAR teams. Regular updates on USAR teams are posted on the Virtual OSOCC. MapAction is supporting the UNDAC team with mapping.

Crisis Commons (<http://www.crisiscommons.org>), at the request of OCHA, has put together a Japan Data Profile wiki (http://wiki.crisiscommons.org/wiki/Japan_Data_Profile) containing various data sources relevant to the Japan earthquake and tsunami response. The original request was to help find appropriate datasets to fulfil OCHA's obligation in providing Common Operational Datasets during an emergency, but has evolved to include many other relevant data sources.

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) is posting official updates on the nuclear power plants: <http://www.iaea.org/newscenter/news/tsunamiupdate01.html>. The World Health Organisation has information on its website regarding radiation-related health risks: <http://www.who.int/hac/crises/jpn/faqs/en/index.html>

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