



## NEWS FROM BEYOND NUCLEAR

Thursday, March 7, 2019

**Beyond Nuclear spokespeople:** Paul Gunter, reactor operation risks and regulatory capture: 301-523-0201; Cindy Folkers, radiation exposures and human health: 240-354-4314; Kevin Kamps, radioactive waste: 240-462-3216; Linda Gunter, international issues: 301-455-5655.

### **Eight years after triple meltdowns and explosions at the Fukushima-Daiichi nuclear power plant in Japan, major problems remain and many impacts are yet to manifest**

TAKOMA PARK, MD -- The legacy of the Fukushima nuclear disaster will continue indefinitely, creating long-term problems for human health, radioactive waste management and the environment:

- Around 1.09 million tons of radioactively contaminated water — used to cool the destroyed reactor cores as well as groundwater flowing across the site — is being stored onsite in growing tank farms, which are now at capacity. Absent other options, Japanese authorities are looking to dump this radioactively contaminated water into the Pacific Ocean, a move strongly opposed by Japanese fishermen, ocean protection groups and the worldwide environmental community.
- In an effort to downplay or dismiss the health dangers of radiation exposure, the Japanese government has ended financial benefits to Fukushima evacuees, putting economic pressures on these families to return to the region, even though it has not been — and cannot be — adequately or effectively cleaned up and made safe for human habitation. [According to noted physicist, Dr. Bruno Chareyron](#), who has conducted field measurements in the area, “The radioactive particles deposited on the ground in March 2011 are still there, and in Japan, millions of people are living on territories that received significant contamination.”
- In order to justify the return of evacuees and claim the region is now safe, Japanese regulatory authorities have raised the allowable radiation dose from 1 milisievert per year to 20, an unacceptably high rate that is especially dangerous for pregnant women and children. This policy has been [cited by a UN Special Rapporteur](#) as having “potentially grave impacts on the rights of young children returning to or born in contaminated areas.”
- Plans by Tepco and the Japanese government to begin removing melted reactor fuel in 2021 are fraught with risk and uncertainty since little is still known about its

condition and there is no safe, permanent radioactive waste management plan in place.

- The Japanese government plans to hold two events — softball and baseball — in the Fukushima Prefecture during the 2020 Tokyo Olympics, a public relations maneuver to “normalize” the situation. However, in addition to unacceptable radiation exposure doses, particularly from hot spots, the [discovery of radioactive particles](#) of reactor fuel debris in the area, including uranium and cesium, would put both athletes and spectators at risk.
- The implications for returning populations to the Fukushima region come with dire warnings from the [health findings in Macaque monkeys](#) who have lived there continuously. The monkeys have been found to have bone marrows that are producing almost no blood cells, and mothers are giving birth to babies with reduced brain sizes. With a 7% difference in DNA with humans, these outcomes are alarming.
- Scandals surrounding the ill treatment of workers at the stricken Fukushima plant, many of whom are migrants and already low-income, continue. [UN human rights experts](#) found these workers to have been exploited and their health willfully jeopardized, with workers coerced “into accepting hazardous working conditions because of economic hardships, and the adequacy of training and protective measures.”
- Despite widespread public opposition in Japan, the Abe government continues to try to restart nuclear reactors. However, only nine of the 42 still operable reactors are back on line (out of 58 originally). The government has instead turned its attention to the nuclear export market, but this took a serious hit when Toshiba’s Westinghouse nuclear division [went bankrupt](#) two years ago and [Hitachi](#) withdrew from two new nuclear power plant projects in the UK in January 2019.

*Beyond Nuclear aims to educate and activate the public about the connections between nuclear power and nuclear weapons and the need to abolish both to safeguard our future. Beyond Nuclear advocates for an energy future that is sustainable, benign and democratic. The Beyond Nuclear team works with diverse partners and allies to provide the public, government officials, and the media with the critical information necessary to move humanity toward a world beyond nuclear. Beyond Nuclear: 7304 Carroll Avenue, #182, Takoma Park, MD 20912. [Info@beyondnuclear.org](mailto:Info@beyondnuclear.org). [www.beyondnuclear.org](http://www.beyondnuclear.org)*