



## NEWS FROM BEYOND NUCLEAR

For Immediate Release

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### **Claims in new UN Fukushima report contradict its own science**

*Suggestion that increased thyroid cancers among children from Fukushima Prefecture are not related to March 2011 nuclear disaster isn't credible*

TAKOMA PARK, MD, March 11, 2021 — A new UN report which dismisses the March 11, 2011 Fukushima disaster as the cause of elevated rates of thyroid cancer in that region's children leaves serious questions unanswered and appears to be a rush to press to maximize publicity around the nuclear accident's 10th anniversary, concluded Beyond Nuclear today.

An advance publication of a section of the 2020 United Nations Scientific Committee on Atomic Radiation (UNSCEAR) report — [Sources, effects and risks of ionizing radiation, Scientific Annex B, Advance Copy](#) — claims that “a rise in thyroid cancer among children in the last decade was not related to increased radiation,” and instead attributes the increases to more thorough and sophisticated testing.

But according to [Dr. Ian Fairlie](#), a leading radiation scientist, the doses delivered by the Fukushima disaster — and as established by UNSCEAR's own estimates— would be high enough to cause thyroid cancer among exposed children. Dr. Fairlie asserts the report's conclusion, that “the increase...is not the result of radiation exposure”, is “scientifically unsound...[and] inconsistent with UNSCEAR's own estimates of high collective doses to the thyroid published in its 2012 and 2013 reports.”

Medical professionals continue to [criticize](#) the methodology and conclusions of the thyroid study referred to in UNSCEAR, pointing out that this study actually shows “20 times as many children contracting thyroid cancer ...as was to be expected.” Further, they [point](#) out that many studies not emphasized by UNSCEAR show significant disease excess.

As to UNSCEAR's claims that the “large increase” in childhood thyroid cancers is due to more and better medical testing; this is analogous to former US President Trump's discredited assertions that COVID-19 cases were only higher in the US because the US was testing more. In fact, the value of increased and more detailed screening is borne out by the likely prevention of more serious health outcomes had children exposed to Fukushima radiation not been screened so thoroughly.

“It's a good thing they were looking, because up to 2018, nearly 80% of the thyroid cancers removed from these children had begun to invade other tissues or organs, a

process called ‘metastasizing,’” pointed out Cindy Folkers, radiation and health specialist at Beyond Nuclear.

“This indicates that, had they not been removed, these cancers could have presented a greater and more immediate health threat. The increase in these cancers did not result from merely ‘looking for them’. This was not over-diagnosis. For these children it was just the right amount of diagnosis,” Folkers said.

According to Dr. Fairlie, using UNSCEAR’s own published collective dose estimates, at least 39,000 cases of thyroid cancer could be predicted as a result of the Fukushima nuclear disaster.

This makes the UNSCEAR claim that “no adverse health effects” from the Fukushima nuclear disaster are “discernible”, disingenuous at best.

“The UN report itself notes some [studies](#) have shown large increases in perinatal mortality and thyroid cancers in exposed children, impacts that are absolutely discernible,” said Folkers.

Reports such as UNSCEAR’s fail to tally disease cases first, which is the whole point of looking. Instead, they often begin by calculating individual radiation doses, which are unreliable, particularly as chaotic and catastrophic events like Fukushima, unfold. Movement of people and weather are unpredictable, and industry is often unwilling to quickly admit how big the problem is or how much radiation is escaping.

“Biology doesn’t lie, but dose estimates can be mistaken,” Folkers concluded.

“The rush to release this report around the 10th anniversary of the nuclear catastrophe looks suspiciously like a politically-timed effort to whitewash the true health effects of the Fukushima disaster,” said Linda Pentz Gunter, international specialist at Beyond Nuclear.

“This is exactly what UNSCEAR did in its response to the Chernobyl nuclear accident, findings which were also [soundly debunked](#) by medical experts from International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War.”

*Beyond Nuclear is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit membership organization. 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).*