

[SPECIAL APPEAL]

NEVER FORGET FUKUSHIMA, NEVER AGAIN

March 11, 2011. It has now been four years and eight months since the Fukushima nuclear power plant disaster shocked the world. Even now the disaster has not been resolved nor is it under control, and leaking of “contaminated water” continues. Families are split apart, and the affected regions have been robbed of their livelihoods, industry and local culture through radioactive contamination which will continue for decades and centuries to come. We can never fully estimate the damage to health from radiation exposure, and its health impacts transcend generations.

Every day, a great number of workers are forced to confront the nuclear power plant and environmental contamination under harsh working conditions and exposure to radiation, as they struggle to bring the disaster under control, decommission the reactors and conduct decontamination efforts. How many years and decades, no, centuries will it take for lives to return to as they were? What immense funds will be required, and how many more people will be sacrificed? The situation is overwhelming.

We will not, we must not, forget Fukushima. This means we must stand side by side with those whose lives and livelihoods are affected by the disaster, and seriously engage with their wish not only for compensation, but for such a disaster to never again be repeated.

The Belarusian author Svetlana Alexievich was awarded this year’s Nobel Prize for Literature, in praise of her work, “Voices of Chernobyl.” The testimonies of victims of the Chernobyl disaster overlap with the situation of those affected by the Fukushima disaster, 25 years later.

Hiroshima, Nagasaki, Alexievich’s Chernobyl and Fukushima are all historic tragedies, representing turning points of an era.

No attempts are being made to take responsibility for the enormous tragedy of the Fukushima nuclear disaster - neither by the Tokyo Electric Power Company Inc. (TEPCO), nor the Japanese government which has promoted nuclear power generation as a national policy. Although the majority of the Japanese public is opposed to promotion of nuclear energy, the government and electric utilities are forcibly going ahead with nuclear restart, even though a major nuclear power plant disaster could once again occur. Furthermore, the government is now attempting to increase the maximum radiation exposure limit for nuclear workers in emergencies, forcing workers to be exposed to high levels of radiation. These are unacceptable actions while there is still no adequate understanding of the causes of the Fukushima nuclear disaster, no progress in measures to bring the accident under control and respond, and importantly, while relief for survivors is being cut.

Within such a situation, the Japanese government is promoting export of nuclear power plants to countries around the world as a main feature of its growth strategy. Citizens in Japan and around the world are raising their voices in strong anger and opposition that Japan - as a country which has experienced the atomic bombings - could go forth with such a policy, not learning from the Fukushima nuclear disaster.

Next year marks thirty years since the Chernobyl nuclear disaster, and five years since Fukushima.

Based on the principle that humanity cannot exist with nuclear weapons and nuclear power, we pledge to join in solidarity and take action for a global policy shift to renewable energy that does not depend on nuclear power, for the abolition of nuclear weapons, and for the protection of humanity and the earth. We declare this Special Appeal, taking the will and suffering of Chernobyl and Fukushima as our own, to work together to realize a nuclear free future.

November 23, 2015

70th Anniversary of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki nuclear bombings

For a nuclear free future! May Fukushima be the beginning of the end of the nuclear age!

Participants in the World Nuclear Victims Forum