

*This report is produced by OCHA. It was issued by the Regional Office in Asia Pacific with input from the OCHA team in Tokyo. It covers the period from 25-28 March. The next report will be issued on the 30 March.*

### **I. HIGHLIGHTS/KEY PRIORITIES**

- Poor sanitation conditions at evacuation centres in Miyagi raise concerns
- The shortage of fuel is hindering efforts to bring relief workers into the affected areas as well as move evacuees out
- An estimated 1000 children have died or are missing from the tsunami
- Authorities maintain the need for further international assistance is limited and any support should clearly be in accordance with the Government of Japan's criteria

### **II. Situation Overview**

A lack of fuel, coordination and logistical issues are still the biggest challenges facing Japan's emergency relief operations as it enters its third week in providing assistance to hundreds of thousands of people left homeless from the March 11 earthquake and tsunami. The sheer scale of the destruction means that about 250,000 people are living in more than 2,000 evacuation centres. Some of the centres are in large government buildings such as schools and sports stadiums but hundreds more are in small groups of about thirty people living in unofficial shelters such as houses. Others are living in their cars.

Because of the amount of debris, the lack of fuel and restricted access on the roads up until recently, emergency workers have been unable to move people to centres where they could receive assistance. As a result relief workers are desperately trying to provide a regular supply of food, water, warm clothing, and medicine to 2,000 evacuation centres, as well as provide critical medical, mental health and sanitation services. For the thousands of people who are living in their homes without electricity and water, there is no access to basic supplies unless they are able to receive it from one of the bigger evacuation centres.

It is still unclear how many people require assistance. There are now 28,550 dead or missing with 10,901 confirmed deaths and 17,649 reported as missing. In the 3 hardest-hit prefectures, Miyagi, Iwate and Fukushima, it is estimated that more than 230 school children (7-18 years old) have died and 885 are missing, while 13 teachers are dead and 56 are missing.

OCHA has conducted its second visit to Miyagi Prefecture accompanied by the World Food Programme (WFP), USAID's Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART), the Cabinet Office, with support on the ground by the NGO Peace Boat and local government. The team visited three evacuation centres in Ishinomaki - two official and one unofficial. There are approximately 144 evacuation centres in the city of which 36 are official. OCHA reports that there are still significant humanitarian needs that are not being met because of coordination and logistical issues. The biggest concern is the extremely poor sanitation conditions at the evacuation centres. Local media has also reported that hospitals in the areas are reporting a steady increase in cases of nausea, gastroenteritis, and diarrhea which is evidence that sanitary conditions are deteriorating in the centres. The shortage of fuel is still an issue and as soon as it is readily available it is expected that people in shelters will move out of the centres and into non-affected areas. It is also preventing volunteers and NGOs reaching the affected population.

Much of local media's focus at the moment is on the coordination challenges and local authorities' capacity to absorb volunteers. They report that many municipalities in the affected areas are unable to receive the increasing number of volunteers because of limited coordination capacity and lack of fuel and food to spare. As a result, most municipalities have limited the number of volunteers and existing volunteers are exhausted. In Kesenuma City, Miyagi, the distribution of relief supplies is being supported by a private company. The company has sent 500 staff and 200 vehicles to Miyagi, Iwate and Fukushima to support logistics in coordination with local governments.

The cleanup operation is proving to be equally challenging. In Miyagi alone, the debris amounts to roughly 15 to 18 million tons, which is equivalent to 23 years worth of waste for the prefecture. It only has capacity to

dispose of 0.8 million tons per year. Authorities say it will take three years to remove all the debris and this does not include cars and boats. The Government says it plans to cover most of the removal costs.

### **Fukushima Nuclear Plant radiation and food safety issues**

The Government says highly radioactive water detected at the No. 2 reactor of the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant is due to a partial meltdown of fuel rods but the meltdown was only temporary. The Government is putting all its efforts into preventing the contaminated water from getting into seawater or seeping into the water table.

The Government is considering lowering the standard for radiation found in food in Japan as the current criteria is too strict and should be more in line with international standards. Farmers in Fukushima Prefecture have been asked to postpone planting crops until the radiation level of the soil is fully analyzed and determined to be safe. The planting of rice and soya bean usually starts in April.

## **III. National Response**

### **Logistics**

The Government is setting up 'makeshift service stations' at evacuation centres and elsewhere in the affected areas to address fuel shortages. The Self Defence Force will provide 10 to 20 locations with 1,000 200 litre drums. The fuel will be free and they expect 2,000 cars to be refilled in three days.

The Government says 9,819,000 litres of fuel has been delivered to the affected areas to date.

### **Shelter**

The Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transportation says that only 8 percent of the land needed for the construction of temporary shelters has been secured. The Ministry has requested the Federation of Housing Production to construct 30,000 temporary shelters in two months. The number of shelters so far requested by the prefectures is over 33,000, and is likely to increase. So far land has been allocated for only 2,645 shelters. Local authorities are facing difficulties in finding suitable land, as the coastal area in Tohoku is not flat, and a large part has been damaged by the tsunami. The Ministry is also considering purchasing material for the construction of temporary shelters from abroad, if they have the same cost, size and design specifications as Japan. After the 1995 Kobe earthquake, 3,300 temporary shelters were imported, as they could not all be procured in-country.

In Iwate Prefecture, authorities are taking applications for the first 200 temporary shelters it is constructing. Rikuzentakata is the first municipality in the earthquake/tsunami area to start the registration process. The media is reporting mixed feelings towards the registration as while evacuees are keen to leave the evacuation centres where access to basic services is extremely limited, they are also concerned about remaining in the areas destroyed by the tsunami. At least 8,800 temporary housing units will be built in the prefecture.

The Special Task Force for Livelihood Support of the Affected Population says 40,500 government apartments are available in addition to the 19,500 public housing units offered for displaced families, making a total of approximately 60,000 apartments. Among them, 42,145 are immediately available. According to the National Police Agency, 99,000 evacuee families are currently living in evacuation centres.

### **WASH**

The Emergency Disaster Response Headquarters says approximately 4.3 million bottles of water have been delivered to evacuation centres in the affected areas so far. Water supply to 170,000 households has improved since 25 March, but 490,000 households still remain without water in 10 prefectures (50,000 in Iwate, 330,000 households in Miyagi and 50,000 households in Fukushima).

Furthermore, the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare is coordinating with water supply companies to provide emergency water to the affected areas. 488 water trucking vehicles are currently on the ground with 213 vehicles in Miyagi, 39 in Fukushima, and 82 in Iwate.

According to the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism 15 sewage systems are not functioning or damaged in Iwate, 59 in Miyagi, and 14 in Fukushima. This is a slight improvement in Iwate and Fukushima.

## Health

The Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare has coordinated the deployment of doctors, pharmacists, social workers, dentists, care managers, child welfare and psychological care specialists from various medical institutions across the country to Iwate (more than 42 teams), Miyagi (more than 88 teams) and Fukushima (more than 5 teams). 38 Japan Red Cross Society teams, 33 Japan Medical Association teams and 8 teams from All Japan Hospital Association are also operational in the affected areas.

According to a survey conducted in Iwate, nearly 60 percent of evacuation centers require mental health assistance for evacuees. Many people are experiencing irritations, anxieties and sleeping disorders as well as sleep-walking. One of the doctors reported that the larger evacuation centers seem to be worse in terms of mental health overcrowded.

## Food

The Emergency Disaster Response Headquarters reports that an estimated 10.7 million meals have been delivered to evacuation centres and hospitals in the affected areas to date. Approximately 890,000 meals were delivered on 26 March. The figure does not include distribution of food items by municipalities, NGOs, private sector, and Japan's Self Defence Force.

## Education

The number of schools with structural damage has exceeded 6,600 in 24 prefectures including kindergartens and higher education facilities. 399 schools are being used as evacuation centers. In eight prefectures 1,751 schools are currently closed. However because of the lack of access in the 20 km evacuation zone around the Fukushima nuclear plant, the total number of schools closed is expected to increase significantly.

Nearly 670,000 ready-to-deliver textbooks for elementary, junior high and high schools are unusable as they were damaged by the tsunami. Urgent reprinting is being considered but they will not be ready in time for the school year as many of the printing companies have also been affected.

## Protection

The Association for Aid and Relief (AAR) is assessing the priority needs of the elderly and people with disabilities in Miyagi Prefecture by contacting each of the registered welfare facilities across the prefecture. They have been delivering relief items to many of these locations as well as to government-run evacuation centres and home-based people in need of assistance. The latter includes the elderly, people with disability and families with infants who were unable to take shelter in official evacuation centres. AAR says there is a disparity in the delivery of assistance across the evacuation centres and they are working to fill this gap.

## IV. International Assistance

### NGO and Relief Supplies

The Government of Japan has requested that 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 offers of assistance by NGOs, the Government of Japan states that *"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"*.

Following the OCHA team's visit to Miyagi Prefecture on 23 March and after discussion with Government of Japan counterparts, OCHA notes: (1) that even though the scale of the damage following the earthquake and tsunami was significant and resulting humanitarian needs remain considerable, (2) Japan is a highly developed country and has, in principle, enough resources as well as the ability to respond to existing humanitarian needs. The country can both produce and procure relief supplies domestically and has the capacity to deliver those supplies to the affected population. Japan has a consolidated disaster management system for disaster response although coordination and logistical challenges have yet to be fully overcome. OCHA's initial observation is that the need for any further international humanitarian presence or internationally procured relief supplies is limited and any such assistance should only be provided upon the request of the Japanese Government and in accordance with their stated criteria. In addition it is important

not to overburden affected prefectures and local communities who are working at full capacity and do not have the resources to coordinate unsolicited offers of assistance. As a next step, OCHA is currently planning to visit Iwate and is determining how to access Fukushima in order to better understand residual humanitarian needs in those prefectures.

The Government of Japan has received 133 offers of assistance from countries as well as 33 offers from international organizations. It has accepted relief items from 24 countries.

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) has launched a program to help foreigners affected by the disaster. IOM estimates several thousand may need their support in the Tohoku region. The group will help those whom from a humanitarian viewpoint are in dire need of its support by covering the cost of transportation from their current shelter to the nearest airport and paying for one-way flights to their home countries.

## V. Funding

Individuals and private sector companies, along with countries and aid organizations, have contributed and pledged a total of US\$545 million bilaterally to the Government of Japan, Red Cross Societies, NGOs and other partners to support the immediate relief efforts, according to the Financial Tracking Service. More than 86 per cent of the contributions are funds raised from the private sector.

*Donors are encouraged to report both cash and in-kind assistance to OCHA's Financial Tracking Service (<http://fts.unocha.org>) at [fts@un.org](mailto:fts@un.org)*

## VI. 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>.

OCHA is reporting and providing coordination support functions to the Government of Japan and has a temporary presence at the JICA Tokyo International Centre in Japan.

### Information sites:

- Crisis Commons has put together a Japan Data Profile wiki containing various data sources relevant to the Japan earthquake and tsunami response: [http://wiki.crisiscommons.org/wiki/Japan\\_Data\\_Profile](http://wiki.crisiscommons.org/wiki/Japan_Data_Profile)
- The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) is posting official updates on the nuclear power plants: <http://www.iaea.org/newscenter/news/>
- 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>. As of 19 March, WHO is not advising general restrictions on travel to Japan: <http://www.who.int/hac/crises/jpn/faqs/en/index3.html>
- Japan's Ministry of Education has released results of all radiation measurements per prefecture on <http://eq.sakura.ne.jp>, and <http://www.mext.go.jp/english/index.html>
- Japan's Nuclear and Industrial Safety Agency is responsible for ensuring safety of that nuclear plant and has updates on <http://www.nisa.meti.go.jp/english/index.html>
- Japan's Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare has information on the water contamination situation available in english. <http://www.mhlw.go.jp/english/topics/2011eq/index.html>
- Official national meteorological information can be found at Japan Meteorological Agency: <http://www.jma.go.jp/jma/indexe.html>

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