

Information bulletin



International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Japan: Earthquake and tsunami

Information bulletin n° 4
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This bulletin is being issued for information only, and reflects the current situation and details available at this time. The Japanese Red Cross Society (JRCS) has mobilized its staff and resources nation-wide and domestic donations are being received to assist affected communities. JRCS is receiving cash contributions from some Red Cross Red Crescent National Societies in the spirit of solidarity.

Summary:

As of 20 March 2011, the number of confirmed deaths was 8,133, with 2,612 injured, 12,272 missing and 362,887 displaced and/or evacuated. In addition, 14,413 houses were totally destroyed and another 98,466 houses were damaged as a result of the earthquake and tsunami. Bad weather in the last few days is disrupting emergency relief efforts and evacuees are enduring cold weather. Priority needs are fuel, temporary shelters, food, sanitation materials, clothing, medicines and household appliances.

Ten days into the disaster, Japanese Red Cross continues to provide emergency relief, medical services and psychosocial support to affected communities. As of 21 March, a total of 249 medical missions involving more than 735 persons were deployed to the affected prefectures, with over 125,000 blankets and 20,700 emergency relief packs distributed at time of reporting. A website supporting restoring family links in five languages was also launched, with over 5,100 registrations to date.



Japanese Red Cross Society staff and volunteers responded to the disaster within hours and continue to provide relief and health and care to affected communities. Photo: Toshiharu Kato/Japanese Red Cross Society.

[<click here for map of the affected areas; or here for detailed contact information>](#)

The situation

As of 20 March 2011, the number of confirmed deaths was 8,133, with 2,612 injured, 12,272 missing and 362,887 displaced and/or evacuated. Displaced individuals and families are sheltered in more than 2,150 evacuation centres in 16 prefectures, mostly in schools and other public buildings.

Information from the government as of 20 March also indicates that 14,413 houses were totally destroyed and another 98,466 houses were damaged as a result of the earthquake and tsunami. Several thousand households in Miyagi, Iwate, and Fukushima prefectures were destroyed by the tsunami.

Landslides have occurred in 119 areas, with up to 1,431 roads, bridges and railroads damaged. In the most affected northern Japan, some of the main highways remain closed, strictly available only to emergency vehicles. Airports in affected areas have reopened with the exception of Sendai airport which remains open only to aid flights.

Bad weather in the last few days is disrupting emergency relief efforts and further compounding the situation in evacuation centres, with evacuees enduring cold weather. Helicopters used for delivering relief supplies were grounded due to the rain and authorities are currently relying on road transport. However, the distribution of blankets and other relief items are starting to meet demands, with an estimated half a million blankets alone already distributed.

An estimated 10,000 people are leaving evacuation centres and returning to their homes each day as electricity is restored. However, the psychological toll on those who survived the disaster is becoming more apparent, with evacuees, including children, suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder. There is also concern for the elderly who require medication for chronic diseases and people with disabilities in the centres, especially the hearing impaired, who rely on emails via their mobile phones to communicate but are currently unable to do so until the mobile phone network is restored.

Priority needs, especially from the three worst-affected prefectures in Iwate, Miyagi and Fukushima are fuel, temporary shelters, food, sanitation materials, clothing, medicines and household appliances. One of Japan's largest oil refineries in Yokohama resumed operations on 21 March, with the capacity to provide 270,000 barrels of oil a day, which is expected to ease the current fuel shortage in affected areas.

The Japanese government has also scaled up their relief effort as the search and rescue phase phases out. The government has 74 health worker teams (three teams in transit) working in Iwate, Miyagi and Fukushima. The National Hospital Organization has 16 medical teams in Iwate (six teams, with 33 personnel), Miyagi (six teams, with 32 personnel) and Fukushima (four teams, with 14 personnel). Two government teams specialized in radiation medicine are operational in Fukushima. The National Cancer Centre, the National Centre for Global Health and Medicine, Japan Labour Health and Welfare Organization, Japan Pharmaceutical Association and Japan Society of Hospital Pharmacists have also dispatched medical and pharmacist teams to the affected areas. A total of eight psychological care teams are in Miyagi and 18 more teams are scheduled to arrive in Iwate and Miyagi shortly.

The government also delivered a total of 5.5 million meals and 3.2 million bottles of water to the evacuation centres and hospitals in the affected areas to date, as well as starting to build a total of 33,175 transitional houses in five worst-hit prefectures.

Red Cross Red Crescent action

JRCS headquarters has been coordinating with the National Broadcast (NHK) and the post offices for the system of collecting donations, which commenced since 14 March. With the tremendous support from the Japanese community and from the international and diplomatic communities, the JRCS has received a total donation of JPY 22.3 billion (approximately CHF 249 million) as of 20 March. This would enable the JRCS to render support to the affected people in the emergency as well as the recovery phases.

The President of JRCS has visited the worst affected areas in Iwate prefecture with the assessment team on 13 March 2011, and confirmed the severity of the disaster at the scene.



The president and programme coordination director of Japanese Red Cross Society visited Iwate prefecture on 13 March 2011. Photo: Patrick Fuller/ IFRC.

Emergency health and psychological support services

The temperature in the north-eastern part of Japan has dropped to freezing point last week, and snowfall has affected survivors, especially in areas where heating is not restored. As a result, the number of people falling ill has increased.

Shortly after it was notified of the devastating earthquake, JRCS dispatched trained domestic emergency response units (DERU) which provided emergency medical services to people affected by disasters. As of 21 March, a total of 249 medical teams, involving more than 735 persons and on four-day rotations, have been deployed to the affected prefectures including Miyagi, Iwate, Fukushima, Ibaraki, Yamagata, Chiba and Tochigi. Medical teams were also deployed to Hokkaido and Nagano. These teams have been conducting rapid assessments in the affected areas as well as providing first aid, medical and psychosocial support services in

government-established evacuation centres. The JRCS teams have a significant role in supporting the local health facilities as they have mobile clinics serving more remote and hard-to-reach areas. For patients severely injured, the JRCS DERU also assisted in their evacuation by helicopters to referral hospitals. Medical teams and Red Cross hospitals in affected areas are also treating patients.

In addition to the physical impact of the disasters to the affected population, JRCS recognises that the multiple disasters, compounded by the threats of the nuclear incidents in Fukushima, have a strong psychological impact especially among children. JRCS has assigned a trained psychosocial support (PS) provider in each deployed medical team – where the national society has 2,369 nurses who are trained and ready to provide PS services. In addition, some PS teams were deployed to conduct assessments in the affected areas, and to undertake PS activities involving those affected by the earthquake and tsunami. The PS teams are also supporting medical teams in doing health check services, such as taking blood pressure of people in evacuation centres.



Japanese Red Cross Society emergency response units support affected communities with medical services. Photo: JRCS

Distribution of emergency relief items

Most affected people were evacuated in a short period and are in need of relief supplies for their stay in evacuation centres for a certain period. Immediately after the disaster, the JRCS dispatched relief items from pre-positioned stocks to assist the most vulnerable people. Relief materials sent by the JRCS to the affected areas as of 21 March include:

Destination (prefectures)	Blankets	Emergency relief kit
Miyagi	82,510	10,632
Iwate	-	10,128
Fukushima	16,020	-
Ibaraki	3,000	-
Yamagata	9,000	-
Tochigi	15,000	-
Total	125,530	20,760

Each emergency relief kit consists of a portable radio, flashlight, wrapping cloth, booklet on post-disaster health knowledge, etc. Source: Japanese Red Cross Society, www.jrc.or.jp



Taking note of the scale of the disaster, the JRCS also plans to scale up its relief distribution from the initial items such as blankets and household goods from disaster preparedness stocks, to other supplies, currently being procured in Japan, including diapers, baby food, undershirts and face masks. These supplies will target up to 100,000 people.

Restoring family link

A designated webpage, <http://www.familylinks.icrc.org/eng/familylinks-japan>, with the support from the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), has been in full function for persons to register persons sought and to report their being safe. To facilitate the use of the site by people of different nationalities, an interface for up to 5 languages has been established, including Japanese, English, Korean, Chinese, and Portuguese. To date, a total of 5,103 registrations were recorded, of which 1,359 are from Japanese people.

Support from IFRC

A high level IFRC liaison/support team comprised of seven national societies and IFRC visited the affected areas with senior JRCS representatives to assess the needs and prepare recommendations of possible further actions. The outcomes of the mission are currently being reviewed by the JRCS for incorporation into their operational planning. The team leader continues to lead a team of professionals including logistics, communications and reporting delegates in supporting the JRCS and its operations.

How we work

All International Federation assistance seeks to adhere to the [Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations \(NGO's\) in Disaster Relief](#) and is committed to the [Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response \(Sphere\)](#) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.

The IFRC's vision is to inspire, encourage, facilitate and promote at all times all forms of humanitarian activities by National Societies, with a view to preventing and alleviating human suffering, and thereby contributing to the maintenance and promotion of human dignity and peace in the world.

The IFRC's work is guided by [Strategy 2020](#) which puts forward three strategic aims:

1. Save lives, protect livelihoods, and strengthen recovery from disaster and crises.
2. Enable healthy and safe living.
3. Promote social inclusion and a culture of non-violence and peace.

Contact information

For further information specifically related to this operation please contact:

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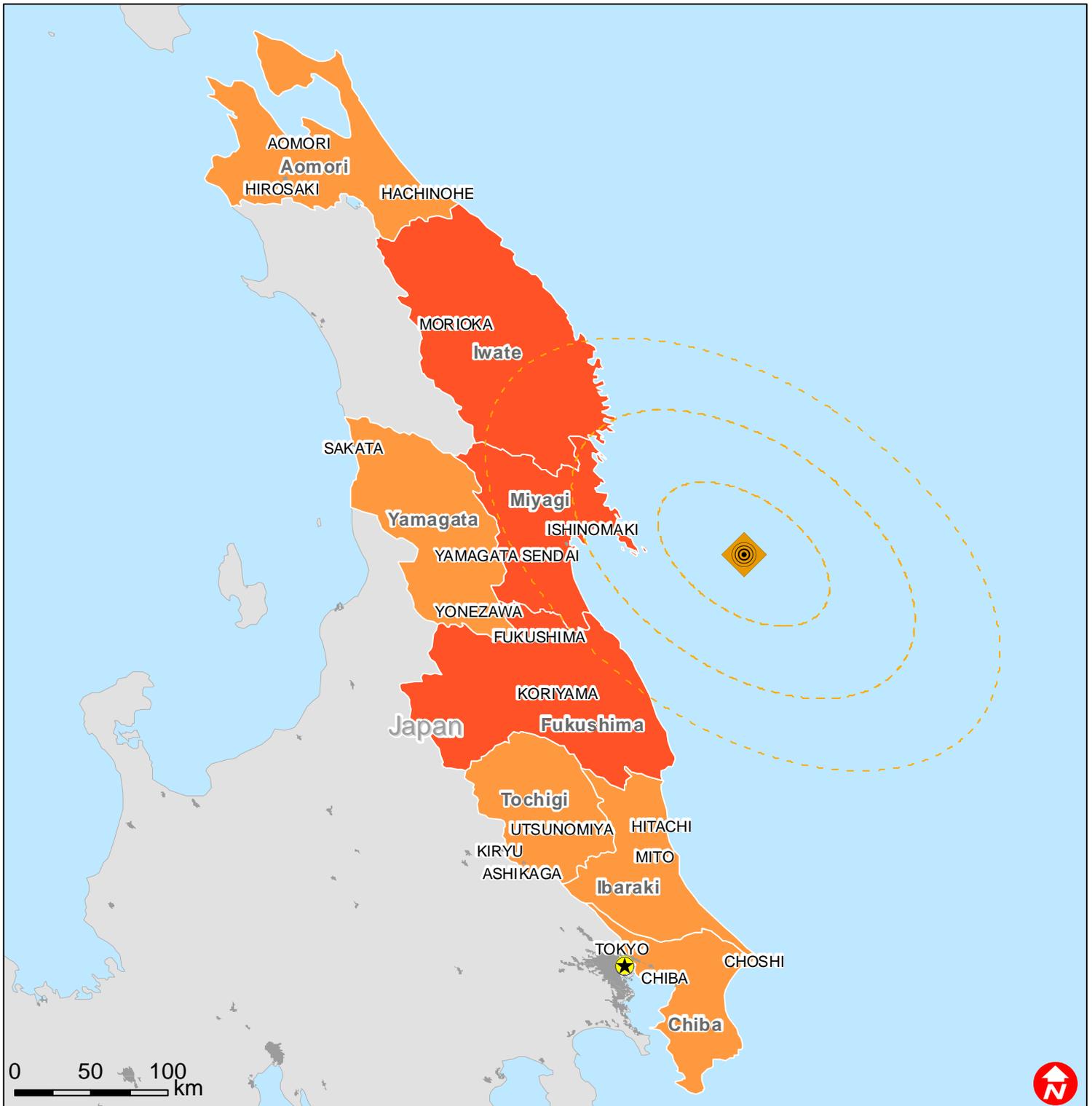
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[<map of affected areas below; click here to return to the title page>](#)



Japan: Earthquake and tsunami



- 9.0 earthquake
- 50-100-150 km lines
- Affected prefectures
- Most affected prefectures
- Main built up areas