

Declaration of Greenpeace International

UPR Pre-session on Japan, Geneva, November 2022

- 1. Presentation of the Organization** - Greenpeace International through its regional office works on the impact and legacy of the Fukushima nuclear disaster.
- 2. National consultations for the drafting of the national report** - Limited consultation including an on-line event in October 2022.
- 3. Plan of the statement** - The Fukushima nuclear disaster and human rights in Japan, specifically:
 - Radiation risks and evacuee status and right to health
 - Pacific Ocean radioactive waste discharges and human rights
- 4. UPR 3rd Cycle recommendations and follow up** - Japan accepted recommendations to respect the right of persons living in Fukushima, in particular pregnant women, and children, to the highest level of physical and mental health. It accepted the recommendation to restore the allowable dose of radiation to the globally accepted maximum recommended level of 1 mSv/year limit (161.216). Japan also accepted recommendations to continue providing housing, financial and other life-assisting support to evacuees (161.214 and 161.216) and to applying Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement to all those impacted by the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear disaster (161.215). None of these recommendations have been implemented. The Japanese government entered its 4th cycle UPR review with many outstanding human rights issues related to the Fukushima nuclear disaster.
- 5. Radiation risks status** - The 11 March 2011 earthquake and tsunami off the coast of Japan led to destruction of three nuclear reactors at the Fukushima Daiichi power plant on Pacific coast of mainland Japan. Radioactive contamination released into the atmosphere and ocean, spread across wide areas of Japan and the Pacific Ocean. Due to the level of radiation contamination across large areas of Fukushima prefecture, the Japanese government increased the maximum limit of radiation exposure for all its citizens, including pregnant women, children, and infants to 20 milliSieverts per year (mSv/y). This is the same level recommended by the International Commission on Radiological Protection (ICRP) for adult nuclear industry workers. The global recommended maximum public exposure set by the ICRP is 1mSv/y per year. One reason for this policy is the limited effect of a radiation decontamination program. In areas with the highest levels of radiation, which includes towns and villages, an average of only 15% of the land had any decontamination work as of 2021.

Concerns have grown in particular over radiation exposure and risks to children as it is an established fact that children are more sensitive to radiation and are more likely to experience short-term and long-term effects of radiation exposure. Thyroid cancer rates in children of Fukushima are statistically significantly higher than wider Japan. In January 2022, six young people filed a class action lawsuit against Tokyo Electric Power Company Holdings Inc. (TEPCO) claiming that they developed thyroid cancer due to exposure to radiation emanating from the Fukushima nuclear disaster.

- 6. Evacuee status** - As of November 2022, over 30,000 people remain displaced. The UN Human Rights Committee in October 2022 noted that as a result of the accident, citizens, “were subsisting without any source of livelihood, compensation or government housing assistance and

remained forced to live in unsafe areas.” In 2022 the majority of citizens from higher contaminated areas remain displaced from their homes, while due to the failure of decontamination efforts and the persistence of radiation hazards those returning, due to financial and societal pressure, are at risk from higher radiation exposure. Many feel they are being forced to return to areas that are unsafe, including those with radiation levels above what the Government previously considered safe.

7. **Right to health** - The nuclear accident in Japan has affected the right to health of evacuees and residents alike and has had an impact on physical and mental health, particularly of pregnant women, older persons, and children. Financial support essential for evacuees to access medical services is planned to be reduced from 2023.
8. **Pacific Ocean nuclear waste disposal and human rights** - A consequence of the 2011 nuclear disaster is the accumulation of over 1.3 million tons of nuclear waste water on the Fukushima Daiichi site. An additional 1 million tons is expected to arise during the coming decades. The government of Japan decided last year that radioactive waste water is to be discharged into the Pacific Ocean starting in 2023 and to take place over the next 30-40 years via a sub sea bed pipeline. Communities in Japan, devastated by the original 2011 disaster, including and in particular fisheries, are strongly opposed to the nuclear waste dumping. The radioactive waste water containing many different radioactive materials which will remain radioactive for tens to thousands and hundreds of thousands of years will lead to increased radioactive pollution of the marine ecosystem and wider Asia Pacific region. Human Rights Special Rapporteurs in 2021 stated that the discharge could impact millions of lives and livelihoods in the Pacific region, threatening human rights of concerned populations in and beyond the borders of Japan. Japan is required under the UN Convention for the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) to prevent marine pollution, including transboundary pollution. There is international concerns over the discharge plans, including from Pacific island nations, already suffering the impacts of decades of nuclear weapons testing. Scientists commissioned by these nations warn that there are many risks and uncertainties with Japan’s plans and that they cannot be justified on scientific grounds. The planned discharges are a direct threat to the human rights of people, including of indigenous peoples in the Asia-Pacific region to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment. The viable alternatives to discharge, including long terms storage and processing have been discarded largely due to financial considerations.

9. Recommendations for Japanese government

- Set a date for when permitted radiation exposure for citizens is restored to the globally accepted maximum recommended level of 1 mSv/year limit and to suspend the lifting of evacuation orders in areas of Fukushima where these levels are exceeded.
- Conduct comprehensive and long-term health check-ups for children in areas with radiation doses exceeding 1mSv/year.
- Continue to provide housing, financial and other life-assisting support to all evacuees.
- Halt plans for radioactive wastewater discharge from Fukushima Daiichi, and in full consultation with domestic and overseas stakeholders, develop and implement alternatives to Pacific Ocean marine pollution.

