



Some of the 14 million tons of radioactive soil and debris bagged and stacked in thousands of places following the 2011 triple reactor meltdowns at Fukushima-Daiichi. Photo: Asia News

Fukushima Reactor Disaster Ongoing

Japan’s Prime Minister endorses public spread of Fukushima radioactive waste

Japan’s new Prime Minister Takaichi Sanae visited Fukushima Prefecture December 2. One stop on her tour was at a temporary storage site holding some of the roughly fourteen-million tons of radioactive soil and debris that was collected in heavy bags and stacked in thousands of places following the March 2011 triple meltdowns. The PM said she wants to expand government plans to use some of the bagged-up radioactive waste in road building and construction projects, the national broadcaster NHK reported. Federal agencies have decided that the radioactive soil can be declared “recyclable” if it emits 8,000 becquerels per kilogram or less. (A becquerel is one measure of radioactive decay among many.) The collecting, transporting, dumping, and spreading of this material will endanger the workers involved, and will increase chances of public radiation exposures, as high winds and rainfall runoff can spread the material. *The Japan Times* reported on June 20, 2023 that a 5-year estimate of the cost of the program was then about \$12.7 billion.

China reimposes Japanese seafood import suspension

On November 8, China’s government partially lifted its ban which was imposed in August 2023 after Japan began pumping radioactive wastewater into the Pacific Ocean in the face of worldwide criticism. China’s partial easing of restrictions left in place its ban on seafood from 10 of Japan’s 47 prefectures, all of which were heavily hit with radioactive fallout from the 2011 reactor explosions and meltdowns.

Then, on November 19, following hostile statements by Japan’s right-wing PM Takaichi regarding the military defense of Taiwan, China re-imposed its blanket ban on seafood imports. In a related tit-for-tat, Taiwan on November 24 lifted its blanket ban on Japanese seafood imports and its Food and Drug Administration justified the move after it checked over 270,000 batches of Japanese food for radiation, without finding “problems.”

Waste discharge to Pacific ongoing

On October 31, 2025, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) said it had conducted analysis of the 16th series of radioactive wastewater discharges from the destroyed Fukushima-1 site, and that “about 117,700 cubic meters of water have been released through the first 15 batches.” The IAEA reported that each batch met its “standards” and that “monitoring data remained consistent with negligible environmental impact.” Fukushima’s owner/operator Tepco says it will take the next 30 years to filter and pump all 1.3 million tons of radioactive wastewater into the Pacific, but routine earthquakes nearby threaten to destroy the 1,000 giant steel tanks that now store the cooling water near the shore. About 880 tons of highly radioactive molten nuclear reactor fuel remain inside the three wrecked reactors. The rubbished fuel is composed of enriched uranium, plutonium (in fuel that was being used in Unit 3), and hundreds of highly radioactive materials created by the reactors’ operational fissioning of uranium. The melted fuel and surrounding wreckage inside the exploded reactors’ cores is so radioactive that it can only be approached and examined robotically using machines that must be controlled at a distance.

Declaration of Rights of Nuclear Victims

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increase.... We recognize that unless we end the nuclear age, humanity could become a nuclear victim (hibakusha) at any time, and we reaffirm that nuclear and humanity cannot coexist.

“We acknowledge that uranium mining and milling, nuclear testing, and nuclear waste disposals have been conducted under ongoing colonial rule, discrimination, and oppression. We also acknowledge that use of nuclear technology is based on the social structure of inequality, discrimination, oppression, and exploitation, such as building nuclear power plants and nuclear fuel facilities in rural areas and forcing radiation exposure onto subcontracted workers at nuclear power plants. In particular, we acknowledge the history and current state of “nuclear colonialism” against Indigenous Peoples around the world, which excludes them from policy-making processes, violates their rights (including those related to their ancestral lands), oppresses them when they assert their individual or collective rights, and inflicts upon them the violence of radiation exposure, which can be considered a form of genocide.

“We define nuclear perpetrators as follows: This includes nuclear-armed countries and those who,

Bomb-Grade Plutonium Offered to Private Utilities for Reactor Fuel

White House appointees have offered excess plutonium from retired nuclear warheads, now stored in Texas to private industry at no cost for potential use as fuel in commercial power reactors.

“A July 31, 2025 memo seen by Politico from the Department of Energy (DOE), prepared by Deputy Secretary James Danly, recommends delivering 25 metric tons of plutonium from U.S. government-held stockpiles to the nuclear power industry,” Politico reported September 29.

“More than 20% of the material would come from plutonium pits — the highly radioactive spheres manufactured for the cores of nuclear weapons,” Politico said.

Due to cost and availability, uranium for reactor fuel is increasingly hard to secure. The plutonium scheme is essentially a bail-out for a failing industry. Hans Kristensen, with the Federation of American Scientists, told Politico that the plan represents “collusion, essentially, with the nuclear power industry. Some of the people that are involved in these recommendations are people that have very close ties to the nuclear power industry.” It would take companies at least several years to convert the plutonium into fuel. In 2018, a similar effort attempted at Savannah River plant in South Carolina failed and was cancelled by the first Trump White House because of a \$50 billion price tag.

“It would be incredibly dangerous, complicated, and expensive to convert these impure plutonium materials into fuel that is safe enough for use in reactors,” said Edwin Lyman, a physicist at the Union of Concerned Scientists.

The government’s former plutonium production reactors and weapons fashioning facilities all across the country are burdened with thousands of tons of highly radioactive military wastes that must be contained and kept out of the environment for eons. (The long-term containment of 90,000 tons of civilian high-level radioactive waste from commercial power reactors are a separate, unsolved problem being mulled over by federal regulators.)

Military cesium-137 left from plutonium production at the Hanford Reservation in Washington state has been collected there for 75 years. There are reportedly 1,335 highly radioactive capsules of cesium-137 at Hanford. Approximately 700,000 tons of waste uranium-238, or “depleted uranium,” is stored in huge tanks in Paducah, Kentucky and Portsmouth, Ohio.

Roughly 50 tons of excess plutonium from weapons is stored at the Pantex Plant in Texas. As of 2021, a

through the use of nuclear weapons, have destroyed the foundations of human existence and created conditions that threaten the survival of all living things; the military-industrial-government-academia complex and its members, as well as the nations that support it; United Nations organizations such as the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation, and organizations such as the International Commission on Radiological Protection, whose members are pro-nuclear scientists and have previously downplayed the effects of radiation exposure and concealed the true impacts of nuclear disasters; countries that promote nuclear energy policies; and shareholders and creditors of operators that caused radioactive contamination and manufacturers of nuclear power plants and other nuclear facilities. We strongly demand that nuclear perpetrators be held accountable for their actions and be required to pay compensation to victims. We also call for the acknowledgement that the promotion, support, and investment of nuclear-related industries, including the export of nuclear power plants and the import of uranium, have the risk of violating human rights and destroying the environment....”

To see the full Declaration go to mp-nuclear-free.com/Nuclear/2025_WNVF_01.html.

total of 61.2 tons of plutonium was called “excess to the needs of the U.S. government,” of which 53.4 tons is designated for nuclear weapons,” according to Robert Alvarez in the March 8, 2021 *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*. “The Energy Department faces the daunting task of geologically disposing of this huge cache of weapons-grade plutonium...,” he said.

The cost of keeping these deadly, cancer-causing radioactive wastes contained over thousands of years is so enormous, that at various times the government has proposed civilian “re-use” of the hot waste.

Cesium-137 is offered to “irradiation” operators for the irradiation of medical equipment in need of sterilization and for “food irradiation” conducted on spices, tea, and some fruits and vegetables. Uranium-238 is given away free to weapons producers who make armor-piercing, so-called “depleted uranium” munitions. — *JL*



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The Progressive Foundation & Nukewatch
740A Round Lake Rd., Luck, WI 54853
Phone: (715) 472-4185
nukewatch1@lakeland.ws / www.nukewatchinfo.org
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