

Annex 6

December 19, 2011

Safety • Security Action in Koriyama
Representative Tokiko Noguchi
Deputy Representative Yoshie Nemoto

**Report and requests regarding the situation in Koriyama city following the
disaster at the TEPCO (Tokyo Electric Power Company) Fukushima Daiichi
Nuclear Power Station**

Dear Human Rights Now,

In Koriyama city, there is an urgent need to ensure safe food and the living environments in which residents can raise their children without feeling anxious about their futures. In response to this need, our organization, composed mainly of parents of newborns and elementary, junior high, and high school students, has been establishing networks among various people and engaging in activities with the support of various relevant parties to ensure our safety and security. However, since we are still a fledgling organization, we are having difficulties making administrative organs accept our requests, opinions, and recommendations. Therefore, we are requesting the support of Human Rights Now to address the violations of “rights to life” and “rights to know” caused by the lack of accountability and the concealment of information on the part of the Koriyama government and city council.

I. Decontamination in Koriyama city

1. Our view on decontamination

1) “Safety • Security Action in Koriyama” recognizes that experts hold differing opinions about the effect of low-dose radiation on health and that a safe

decontamination method has not yet been established. Therefore, we believe that the current situation in which citizens are undertaking decontamination with neither the guidance of experts nor proper protection is increasing the risk of secondary radiation exposure.

2) Although we are not against decontamination itself, we are concerned about the danger that decontamination may cause through further exposure to radiation, particularly in environments where children and expecting mothers live.

3) Recently, we see the news that there is a need to reexamine the effect of decontamination as even experts are voicing doubts about the issue. In fact, decontamination in the urban districts in Koriyama city reduced only radiation by 10 percent. Comparing the level of radiation-caused contamination in the city to the limited effect of decontamination and its lack of safety, we cannot help but have concern about the current methods of decontamination.

2. Frictions among residents

1) Koriyama city is encouraging local residents (in neighborhood associations) to conduct decontamination under the name of subsidy projects “the Koriyama City Project for Supporting Radiation Reduction”.

2) Although resident participation in the activities of neighborhood association should be voluntary, some neighborhood associations make the decontamination almost mandatory. Thus, in many cases, the fact that women, sometimes even expecting women, are forced to participate in decontamination activities is causing frictions among residents.

3. Frictions between the government and Koriyama residents

1) “Koriyama City Decontamination Manual” and other publications stipulate that the location of temporary storage sheds for contaminated soil should be selected, with the consent of the neighborhood association, from public spaces (such as parks and athletic fields) within school districts.

2) In some districts, decisions on the location of temporary sheds are made between members of neighborhood associations and the Koriyama city. They do not provide

briefings or meetings for residents but rather only report the decisions by passing a notice around the neighborhood.

3) The manual stipulates that temporary sheds should be fenced off to keep people away and also labeled to indicate that the sheds contain contaminated soil. However, contrary to the rules, temporary sheds are neither labeled nor made public. This suggests that there are many residents who live near a temporary shed without recognizing it.

4) Koriyama city explains the situation by arguing that they are trying to avoid rumors and illegal dumping, and that the levels of air radiation near the sheds are negligible.

4. Problems

1) We believe that the government should be taking initiatives to conduct decontamination and that its decision to pass the responsibility onto neighborhood associations should be considered inaction and a failure to fulfill its duty.

2) We believe that the government should take initiatives to select the location of temporary sheds, and that the approach taken by the Koriyama city is equivalent to the abandonment of its responsibility and accountability.

3) We believe that the city's decision to neither label temporary sheds nor make them public is not based on rational grounds, and thus constitutes a violation of residents' rights to know.

II. Safety of Food in Koriyama city

1. Our position on the safety of food (particularly on school lunches)

1) Even nine months after the nuclear disaster, residents are put at risk of external and internal exposure, and it is expected that with regard to external exposure, a large number of elementary and junior-high school students in Koriyama city have been exposed to radiation levels that exceed 1 mSv/h per year.

2) Also, radiation levels that exceed the current restriction have been found in farm products produced in various locations across eastern Japan. For example, in the case of newly harvested rice, the shipment of brown rice produced in four districts, including Owa districts in Fukushima city, has been banned on a voluntary basis. Given this situation, Fukushima Prefecture is considering requesting the districts to stop the shipment of rice until after the re-examination, in case any amount of radiation were to be found in the first examination by the prefecture.

- 3) As described above, since the safety of food is ensured, parents are worried about the safety of school lunch as well.
- 4) In order to meet the safety standards of school lunches set by the School Lunch Law, it is necessary to establish a public administrative organization composed of related educational staffs together with the support of parents and local residents.
- 5) Considering that children and parents do not have an option of selecting food products used in school lunch, we believe that the government is required to ensure a high level of food safety and to give detailed information about food safety to children and parents.

2. Situation of school lunch in Koriyama city

- 1) After the disaster, although schools gave explanations on documents, they have not set up a face-to-face briefing and question-and-answer session on the matter. Given this situation, we submitted a petition to the city council meeting in December 2011, asking for the government to hold face-to-face meetings and a Q/A session for parents on a regular basis.
- 2) The petition was rejected at Standing Committee on Education and Welfare, with 3 votes for the petition and 6 against. The main reason for the against vote was that the holding of meetings on regular basis would increase the workload of the government and incite residents' anxiety, and thus the matter should be dealt with within the existing framework.
- 3) Moreover, the petition was voted down by the majority at a general meeting, on the grounds that schools have already been notifying parents about school lunch.
- 4) In Koriyama city, a rice brand "Asakamai" has been used in school lunches under the policy of "local production for local consumption," and the use of Asakamai harvested in 2011 has started since the mid-November. Regardless of the fact that the city is considering the restriction of shipments of newly harvested rice into Koriyama city until after its re-examination (as mentioned in section 1-2), Asakamai has been used in school lunches.

3. Problems

- 1) Residents who are raising children in Koriyama city regard the safety of food as a matter of great concern. Therefore, ensuring the safety of food products used in school

lunches is one of great concern as well.

2) Based on this viewpoint, we submitted the petition with the hope that the government would provide an opportunity for detailed explanations about school lunches and Q and A session for parents. We were hoping that such opportunities, through which we could receive explanations and answers from city officials in person, would promote mutual understanding and dispel our distrust of food safety.

3) However, Koriyama city council turned down the petition on the grounds that it would increase the workload of the government and that schools have already been notifying parents. We believe that this decision shows that the city council is standing on the side of the government rather than that of its own residents' for whom it should really be responsible.

4) Moreover, we cannot help but worry and have doubts over the continued use of the local rice brand "Asakamai" despite the fact that its safety has not been proven.

III. Human Rights Violations

1. Accountability of the government

1) We are concerned about the government's abdication of responsibility. For example, although the government should be taking an initiative in conducting decontamination, it is passing the responsibility on to residents because the safety of decontamination has not been proven. Similarly, it is allowing residents to select the location of temporary sheds to store contaminated soil after decontamination work, which also should be the government's responsibility.

2) The city is failing to fulfill its responsibility by selecting the location of temporary sheds only among some presidents of neighborhood associations and neglecting to consult with residents.

3) The government is neglecting its responsibility regarding its accountability on the use of rice in school lunches.

2. Transparency of the government

1) The government is failing to comply with the "Koriyama City Decontamination Manual" and violating residents' rights to know by not publishing and labeling the location of temporary sheds used for storing contaminated soil.

2) Apart from written notifications, the government has made no attempt to give parents

a detailed explanation of school lunches through in-person briefings and Q and A sessions. Such an approach falls short of School Lunch Law and School Lunch Hygiene Management Standards.

Article 3-1(1)-4(Hygiene management standards for cooking process): To respect opinions of nutrition educators, parents and other all relevant parties by setting up a menu planning committee etc.

Article 4-1(1)-4 (Hygiene management standards for hygiene management system): In order to achieve a high level of hygiene management of school lunch a school principal should establish a system in cooperation with parents and experts including nutrition educators, health supervisors, teachers such as nursing teachers, school physicians, school pharmacist, and a director of a health center by way of utilizing a school health committee.

3. It is a grave concern that the government's negligence of accountability and its lack of transparency are the causes of violations of residents' rights to life and rights to know.

December 28, 2011

Safety • Security Action in Koriyama
Representative or President Tokiko Noguchi
Deputy Representative or Vice-President Yoshie Nemoto

Eligibility of Voluntary Evacuees for “Regional Admission System”

Dear Human Rights Now,

In Koriyama city, there is an urgent need to ensure safe food and the living environment in which residents can raise their children without feeling anxious about their futures. Therefore, we are requesting the support of Human Rights Now regarding the the violations of children’s rights caused by inadequate measures of the Koriyama city.

1. “Regional Admission System” in Koriyama City

“Regional Admission System,” based on Article 56-6 (1) of Child Welfare Act, is a system that allows children in Koriyama city to go to nursery schools in other municipalities, and children in other municipalities to go to school in Koriyama city.

2. Response of Koriyama city

Although Niigata city intends to accept children who voluntarily evacuated from Koriyama city at its request, Koriyama city denies its applicability of the system despite the provisions in the Child Welfare Act.

3. Decisions of Koriyama city

We believe that the decision of the Koriyama city regarding the applicability of the system is not adequate considering the Child Welfare Act and “Koriyama City Regional Admission Implementation Guideline” set by the city as follows.

1) Koriyama city is failing to ensure the welfare of children under Article 25 of the Constitution by not complying with the Child Welfare Act which states that “for the

purpose of promoting welfare of children, local governments shall facilitate mutual liaison and coordination in order to ensure adequate implementation of the payments of Nursing Care Benefits ... and other kinds of guarantee of welfare.”

2) Koriyama city’s failure to fulfill its obligation under the aforementioned provision constitutes an omission of its duty as an administrative department.

3) Article 3-1 of the implementation guideline states that children eligible for the regional admission system are those whose parents temporarily reside in other municipalities for the purpose of childbearing, nurse care, or sickness. In addition to the condition, Article 3-2 stipulates that children who received permission from a mayor can be eligible for the regional admission system. Considering these provisions, children who evacuated from Koriyama city to other municipalities should be eligible for the system.

References

- “Koriyama City Regional Admission Implementation Guideline (April 25, 2005)
- Child Welfare Act
 - Article 56-6 For the purpose of promoting welfare of children, local governments shall facilitate mutual liaison and coordination in order to ensure adequate implementation of the payments of Nursing Care Benefits, etc., Institutional Benefits for Disabled Children, Large-amount Institutional Benefits for Disabled Children or Benefits for Meal Expenses, etc. for Specified Institutionalized Disabled Children, the measures pursuant to the provision of Article 21-6 or Article 27 paragraph (1) or (2) and the Daycare Practice, etc., and other kinds of guarantee of welfare
- The Constitution of Japan
 - Article 25. All people shall have the right to maintain the minimum standards of wholesome and cultured living. In all spheres of life, the State shall use its endeavors for the promotion and extension of social welfare and security, and of public health.