



# Human Rights Now

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ID Agenda Item 3, SR on Hazardous Wastes

Speaker: Armi Javier

Thank you, Mr. President.

Human Rights Now is concerned about the negative health impacts and labour exploitation of cleanup workers at the decommissioned Fukushima nuclear power plant, where 76,951 workers were reported doing cleanup and related work up to 2016. The Japanese government recently acknowledged the death of a cleanup worker by cancer due to radiation exposure, as well as three others who developed leukemia and thyroid cancer.

The August 16 communication by three special rapporteurs also voiced concern with reports of deception of cleanup workers about health risks and other issues by recruitment brokers and insufficient training and protective measures by contractors and subcontractors. Such practices threaten workers' rights to health, a safe working environment, and relevant labour rights.

The Japanese government's response mentioned several measures; obligating contractors to provide special training and medical checks, providing them group guidance on workers' rights, surveys to identify deception and other employment violations, urging improvements of malicious companies, and inspections by various agencies to identify violations in labour standards, working conditions, and payments. These measures have common shortcomings: Reciting obligations and providing guidance and instruction does not ensure they are respected, and the effectiveness of surveys and inspections is at best merely assumptive.

Mr. President,

We call on the Japanese government to expand its verification system to ensure contractors are following relevant duties and verify the effectiveness of existing inspections by a credible independent party or by publicly releasing for evaluation their criteria and procedures. We also ask the government to accept the Special Rapporteur on toxic waste's request to visit Japan in 2019.

Thank you.