

# Japan Antinuclear-plant protests: Tokyo, Osaka, Ehime, Fukuoka...

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## Massive signature campaign on nuclear power launched in Tokyo, Osaka

A residents' advocacy group seeking support for a local referendum on the use of nuclear power launched a pro-and-con nuclear power signature campaign in Tokyo and Osaka on Dec. 10.

Minna de kimeyo "Genpatsu" Kokumintohyo (Let everyone decide on nuclear power through local referendums) was formed in June 2011 amidst increased residents' concerns in the aftermath of the Fukushima nuclear disaster, triggered by the Great East Japan Earthquake and tsunami.

Celebrities such as actor Taro Yamamoto, "manga" (cartoon) artist Tetsuya Chiba, and movie director Shotaro Kobayashi are among the most vocal supporters and members of the group.

According to the law, campaign organizers are legally required to collect signatures from at least one-fiftieth of registered voters in Tokyo, or about 214,200 people, within a two-month period to demand that Gov. Shintaro Ishihara take action to revise a local ordinance to introduce a referendum.

If enough signatures are collected on time, Gov. Ishihara will have to officially submit the petition to an upcoming Tokyo Metropolitan Assembly session for deliberation.

"This is not an anti-nuclear power demonstration. We want to provide space for open debate where both anti and pro-nuclear power people can discuss the issue," said Kobayashi to residents in Tokyo's Shibuya Ward on Dec. 10.

During a press conference on Dec. 9, Gov. Ishihara said that he is not against people debating their personal opinions. "This is an open society," he said. "But I wish people would take radiation issues a bit more calmly."

*Mainichi Shimbun*, December 10, 2011

<http://mdn.mainichi.jp/mdnnews/national/news/20111209p2a00m0na038000c.html>

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## 300 campaigners file suit to suspend nuclear plant operation in Ehime

TOKYO (Kyodo) — About 300 campaigners filed a lawsuit Friday in Ehime Prefecture demanding Shikoku Electric Power Co. suspend the operation of its nuclear power plant in the town of Ikata in the prefecture.

The plaintiffs from Ehime and 15 other prefectures argue that the plant site is vulnerable to landslides and at risk of being hit by a devastating earthquake due to its proximity to a major fault

line.

They said the power plant should not operate unless the government takes steps to ensure its complete safety because the disaster at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant showed that government safety standards there were flawed.

At present, the Nos. 1 and 3 reactors at the Ikata plant are undergoing regular checkups and the No. 2 unit is due for a similar test in January. Shikoku wants to restart the No. 3 reactor at an early date.

“Local citizens are anxious (about the Ikata plant),” said Nobuo Komoda, leader of the legal counsel representing the plaintiffs. “Nobody can predict when an earthquake strikes so we want the operation of the plant suspended in advance.”

Shikoku Electric said in a written statement that sufficient safety measures are in place at the Ikata plant so there is no need to suspend operations there.

**Kyodo Press**, December 9, 2011

<http://mdn.mainichi.jp/mdnnews/national/archive/news/2011/12/09/20111209p2g00m0dm105000c.html>

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### **Antinuclear-plant protesters rally in Fukuoka**

FUKUOKA (Kyodo) — A series of large antinuclear rallies took place in Fukuoka on Sunday with the organizer saying more than 15,000 people, including from South Korea, took part calling for dismantlement of all nuclear power plants in Japan.

Yukinobu Aoyagi, a leading member of the events, told a gathering in a park in the southwestern city, “We’ll work together so as not to see our soil contaminated with radiation.”

Lee Dae Su, an antinuclear activist from South Korea, said, “An accident could affect South Korea, so we can’t tolerate nuclear plants anymore.”

Saeko Uno, 40, who evacuated to Fukuoka Prefecture from Fukushima Prefecture, told the event she hopes to see “a world free of nuclear plants” following the nuclear crisis at the Fukushima Daiichi plant crippled by the March 11 earthquake and tsunami.

The participants then took to the streets marching through downtown Fukuoka, holding placards and signs including those that read “We don’t want nuclear plants” and “No nuclear plants.”

**Kyodo Press**, November 14, 2011

<http://mdn.mainichi.jp/mdnnews/national/archive/news/2011/11/14/20111114p2g00m0dm002000c.html>

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### **Japan Catholic Group Calls for End to Nuclear Plants**

Sendai, Miyagi Pref., Nov. 10 (Jiji Press)—The Catholic Bishops' Conference of Japan on Thursday announced a statement calling for the immediate abolition of all nuclear plants in Japan given the ongoing nuclear crisis at Tokyo Electric Power Co.'s <9501> Fukushima No. 1 plant.

It is the first time that the group has officially declared its stance on nuclear power generation, according to the Tokyo-based religious organization. The TEPCO plant was severely damaged by the March 11 earthquake and tsunami.

Nuclear power plants can never be entirely safe and therefore should be abolished as soon as possible in order to protect human lives and the dignity of children, Jun Ikenaga, chief of the group, said at a press conference in Sendai, the capital city of Miyagi Prefecture, which was hit hard by the disaster.

The statement, which was adopted unanimously by the group's 17 bishops on Tuesday, also calls on Japanese people to opt for a simple lifestyle.

**Jiji Press**, November 10, 2011

<http://jen.jiji.com/jc/eng?g=eco&k=2011111000526>

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