

More than 100 people take part in anti-nuclear demonstration in Hong Kong on the first anniversary of Japan's Fukushima disaster

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More than 100 people took part in an anti-nuclear rally in the heart of Hong Kong's busiest shopping district on Sunday (March 11) to mark the anniversary of the earthquake and tsunami in Japan that killed thousands and caused the worst nuclear crisis since the 1986 Chernobyl nuclear reactor meltdown in Ukraine.

Participants of the protest organised by the Hong Kong Alliance Against Nukes called for an end to the use of nuclear energy, expressing particular concern about the Daya Bay and Ling Ao nuclear power plants in neighbouring Guangdong province in mainland China that is located within 60 km of Hong Kong's bustling metropolis.

"The Daya Bay, Ling Ao nuclear power plant complex is the fifth biggest plant on Earth, and it's so nearby Hong Kong and also this densely populated area in the Pearl River Delta," said spokesperson for the Hong Kong Alliance Against Nukes, Man Si-Wai.

The magnitude 9.0 earthquake unleashed a wall of water that hit Japan's northeast coast, killing nearly 16,000 and leaving nearly 3,300 unaccounted for and damaging Fukushima nuclear plant, where reactor meltdowns triggered the world's worst nuclear crisis since Chernobyl.

More than 30 nuclear plants are in operation or under construction in China, Taiwan, India and several other countries in Asia.

President of the Canadian Coalition for Nuclear Responsibility Dr. Gordon Edwards said that the idea of the "global nuclear renaissance" is a myth.

"Asian people are being encouraged to invest in this technology that is not going to provide them energy security really, because when these plants shut down they're going to have to spend more billions of dollars taking them apart, then they're going to have to spend more billions of dollars guarding the waste and getting no benefit from it whatsoever. So they're not investing in energy security, they're investing in an inflexible commitment to more and more billions of dollars being spent on managing the problems that this technology has created, instead of investing in alternative futures," Edwards said at the rally.

Robert Gould, the president of San Francisco chapter of Physicians for Social Responsibility, who also took part in the protest, stressed the importance of paying attention to health issues associated with radiation.

"We are very concerned about taking preventative action to avoid the cancers and genetic damage and all the other chronic health conditions that are attributable to radiation and certainly ought to

be expected in the wake of the Fukushima accident much as we already know the toll from Chernobyl," Gould said.

To mark the first anniversary of Japan's earthquake Greenpeace held a special art exhibition in Hong Kong with the participation of artists from Japan and Ukraine.

"Although no one died right now, but everyone can forecast the impact of Fukushima will last for over a decade or even a century. So for Japan this kind of well-developed country can't even... even they can't handle nuclear disasters, so it's really a strong message for everyone to know that when nuclear reactors go wrong, no one can control it," said Greenpeace Hong Kong campaigner Prentice Koo.

Koo added that Greenpeace did not organise mass events for the anniversary out of respect for its Japanese colleagues.

Reuters, March 12 2012

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