



SOS from Minami Soma City

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南相馬市よりSOS

The mayor of Minami Soma, one of the cities closest to the Fukushima Daiichi plant, has posted videos appealing to the Japanese government and international community for supplies and evacuation assistance. This video, recorded on March 24, describes the plight of locals and criticizes the Japanese government's confusing "voluntary evacuation" order.

The area between 20 and 30 kilometers away from Fukushima Daiichi is in desperate need of material assistance. Food and basic necessities such as medicine are not getting through. This was the area in which authorities originally asked residents to stay indoors to protect themselves from radiation exposure. On March 25, the government called for "voluntary evacuation". While central authorities, as well as local governments as far away as Tokyo, have provided ambulances and other vehicles to assist with evacuation, residents have worried that "voluntary" withdrawal may make them ineligible for immediate aid or eventual compensation. As the "voluntary" distinction is widely decried, the IAEA (International Atomic Energy Agency) has recommended that the evacuation radius be widened. The [Yomiuri](#) reports that the gap between the government and IAEA lines has sowed confusion and unease in the region around the plant. In this context, Minami Soma mayor Sakurai Katsunobu's video appeal takes on a unique power.