

## 2011 JAPAN: TOHOKU-KANTO REGION EARTHQUAKE PEACE BOAT EMERGENCY RELIEF OPERATION



### ABOUT PEACE BOAT

Founded in 1983, Peace Boat is an international non-governmental and non-profit organization in Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations that works to promote peace, human rights, equal and sustainable development and respect for the environment through the organization of global educational programs, cooperative projects and advocacy activities on a large passenger ship which travels the world on peace voyages. Activities based in Japan and Northeast Asia are carried out from our seven Peace Centers in Japan. Our associate organization Peace Boat US is a 501(c)3 registered organization based in New York, and we have representatives in Europe, Latin America, South Asia and the Middle East.

### PEACE BOAT'S EXPERIENCE IN DISASTER RELIEF OPERATIONS

Peace Boat has carried out emergency relief operations for the past 15 years, delivering emergency assistance and raising funds, as well as coordinating the dispatch of experienced logisticians, interpreters and volunteer teams to affected areas all over the world.

Peace Boat's first disaster relief efforts took place in 1995, following the Great Hanshin Earthquake in Kobe, Japan when teams of volunteers provided assistance for months, publishing a daily community newsletter for survivors passing on updated information of where to find food, water and other basic supplies as well as providing humanitarian support. Since then, Peace Boat has organized emergency relief operations in disaster-struck locations around the world, including in Turkey (Aug. 1999), Taiwan (Sept. 1999), Algeria (May. 2003), Mid-Niigata, Japan (Nov. 2004), Sri Lanka (Dec. 2004), Pakistan (Oct. 2005), in the US (Hurricane Katrina, Oct. 2005), Indonesia (Jun. 2006) and Korea (Aug. 2007).

### HUMANITARIAN SITUATION IN JAPAN

Following the unprecedented magnitude 9 Earthquake and subsequent tsunami that devastated the north east coast of Japan on March 11, 2011, the country is experiencing its worst humanitarian disaster since the Second World War, with more than 27,000 people dead or missing, and well over 420,000 displaced.

Conditions in many of the over 2,000 evacuation centres are very poor due to overpopulation, food shortage, and lack of electricity, potable water, fuel, blankets, and other basic necessity items. Though some people have already started leaving (either evacuated to centers in other prefectures or taken in by family in other parts of Japan) and others have chosen to stay in cars or in partially destroyed houses despite the lack of water, electricity, gas or food supply, many people have nowhere to return to. Strong aftershocks and bad weather, including below freezing temperatures, continue to hamper relief and recovery efforts.

In addition, the March 11 earthquake and tsunami have seriously damaged a nuclear power plant in Fukushima, leading the Japanese government to declare a state of nuclear emergency, which has forced the evacuation of thousands more residents. The nuclear situation continues to be a cause of great concern, and the resulting disruption including blackouts and transport difficulties has hampered relief activities in the affected regions and across the country.

### PEACE BOAT'S EMERGENCY RELIEF FOR THE 2011 JAPAN: TOHOKU KANTO EARTHQUAKE: CITY OF ISHINOMAKI, MIYAGI

On March 16, Peace Boat sent two advance teams to Miyagi prefecture, one of the most affected areas where the toll of dead and missing exceeds 14,000 and over 290,000 people have been displaced, to collect information about the damage and needs, and to deliver 10 tons of emergency aid including blankets, water, food, masks and other basic supplies.

Upon consultation with local authorities, Peace Boat has established a base camp in the city of Ishinomaki, and is working with the town's Social Welfare Council on overall coordination of relief efforts in the city.



Rubble, trash and puddles of stagnant water abound in crisis-hit Ishinomaki.



The sea which sustains coastal communities like Ishinomaki has now laid waste to them.



A gymnasium provides shelter but precious little privacy for survivors.

## SITUATION AND CHALLENGES IN ISHINOMAKI

The city suffers from a serious lack of manpower, as 30% of the city's civil servants have been killed and many of the survivors remain in a state of shock. As a result, local authorities have been slow in putting a functional local emergency response in place, with reduced capacity to receive and coordinate assistance offered by relief groups and Peace Boat has stepped in to lead the coordination. During its assessment mission, Peace Boat found that only four out of the then 170 evacuation centers in and around Ishinomaki had an organized food distribution system in place. Outside the shelters, thousands of individuals and families remain in their damaged homes or cars without any infrastructure or secure access to food and water. The state of the roads and an acute gasoline shortage is hampering movement and assistance to survivors.



Goods by the pallet-load all bound for Tohoku.

## PEACE BOAT'S EFFORTS

Since March 23, Peace Boat is:

- Coordinating requests from evacuation centers;
- Cooperating with other organizations willing to help provide assistance in Ishinomaki;
- Preparing and distributing at least 500 daily hot meals to survivors outside the evacuation centers, with an immediate goal of 2000 meals per day;
- Helping cater to affected areas where support from authorities has not yet reached;
- Participating in efforts to clean the evacuation centers, clear debris and mud, and make the roads functional.

Despite our efforts, the area is still facing a serious shortage of food. Since March 25, Peace Boat has rotating teams of 50 volunteers in place and will be coordinating more of them in the coming weeks.



Unloading in Ishinomaki – Peaceboat staff member Shingo Kobayashi is joined by members of Japan's Self-Defense Force.

## SUPPORT PEACE BOAT'S EFFORTS:

• **Financial Support:** Peace Boat urgently needs monetary donations to support relief efforts, including buying provisions and gasoline. Providing 2,000 meals per day to people in Ishinomaki costs approximately \$3,000 USD per day. A small proportion of donations may be used to cover organizational costs, such as transport and communications. Donations can be made directly to Japan, or through Paypal via Peace Boat US on our website: [http://bit.ly/peaceboat\\_relief](http://bit.ly/peaceboat_relief)

• **Logistical Support:** Peace Boat is seeking donations of material goods, including tents, camping sheets, propane gas and stoves, portable gas stoves, gas cylinders, water tanks, large saucepans, bowls, cooking knives, and other cooking items. The list of requested materials is available on Peace Boat's website and updated regularly according to evolving needs.

• **Volunteers:** Peace Boat is deploying volunteers to Ishinomaki and coordinating their work in the town, in response to the drastic need for additional human resources to assist with urgent relief activities in the affected areas. There are three main task groups:

- 1) Emergency meals provision (cooking and distribution)
- 2) Emergency shelter care (cleaning and organization, survivor support)
- 3) Sludge clearance from roads and pathways

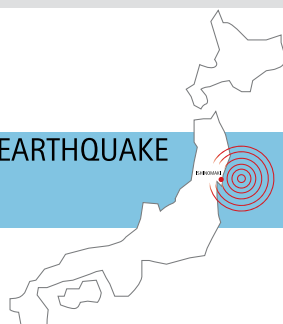
Volunteers are being sent up in groups of 50 for a week at a time, with an active pool of 200 being trained. In order not to deplete scarce local resources, volunteers are expected to bring their own tents, supplies and food.

• **International Coordination:** Peace Boat, with the support of Peace Boat US, is ready to receive offers of international assistance, including volunteers, and direct such assistance to the appropriate groups on the ground.

## LINKS

- Information about Peace Boat's 2011 Japan: Emergency Relief for the Tohoku Kanto Earthquake, including how to donate, enroll as volunteers, and read activity reports: [http://bit.ly/peaceboat\\_relief](http://bit.ly/peaceboat_relief)
- Regular updates including photos can also be found on Facebook at: <https://www.facebook.com/PBsaigai>
- Updates on the humanitarian situation in Japan by the UN Office of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA): <http://ochaonline.un.org>

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