

News release

GREENPEACE

Lost health and homes: the legacies of Chernobyl and Fukushima

9 March 2016 (Toronto) - Survivors of Chernobyl are still eating food with radioactive contamination above permissible limits thirty years after the nuclear catastrophe forced hundreds of thousands of people from their homes.

The Greenpeace International report, *Nuclear Scars: The lasting legacy of Chernobyl and Fukushima* exposes the impact that nuclear accidents in Fukushima and Chernobyl continue to have on the day-to-day lives of millions of people. The report compiles scientific research, survivor profiles and radiation monitoring work carried out by Greenpeace in Japan, Ukraine and Russia.

“For communities in Fukushima there’s no end in sight - nearly 100,000 people haven’t returned home and many won’t be able to,” said Junichi Sato, Executive Director of Greenpeace Japan. “The nuclear industry and governments around the world have perpetuated the myth that people’s lives can return to normal after a nuclear accident. But the evidence exposes this as political rhetoric, not scientific fact.”

Greenpeace findings indicate that governments are reducing radiation protection in both Japan and in countries contaminated by Chernobyl. Environmental and food monitoring programs have been cut around Chernobyl while Japan wants the majority of evacuees to return home by 2017 even if their communities are still contaminated. Greenpeace is calling on governments to continue to provide proper financial support to survivors of Chernobyl and Fukushima.

Radiation monitoring found that forests around Chernobyl and Fukushima have become repositories of radioactive contamination. Greenpeace says these radioactive forests put near-by communities at risk of radiation exposure or recontamination.

Extensive health effects have been observed in communities impacted by both Fukushima and Chernobyl. In contaminated areas around Chernobyl, death rates are higher, birth rates are lower, incidence of cancer has increased and mental health effects are widespread. [1] In Fukushima, a rise in thyroid cancer incidence amongst children has been observed that can not be fully

explained by the widespread screening, and almost a third of mothers living close to the damaged reactors show symptoms of depression. [2]

“Millions of lives changed after Fukushima and Chernobyl. We shouldn’t forget the immense suffering these disasters continue to cause. We need to urgently phase out nuclear and move towards 100% renewable energy - the only safe, clean energy that can meet the world’s energy need,” said Greenpeace senior energy analyst, Shawn-Patrick Stensil.

Five years after Fukushima about 100,000 people still haven’t returned home. Thirty years after Chernobyl about 5 million people live in contaminated areas.

-30-

Notes to editors:

[1] Greenpeace International report, 2016. Nuclear Scars: The lasting legacy of Chernobyl and Fukushima, Chapter 3.

[2] Greenpeace International report, 2016. Nuclear Scars: The lasting legacy of Chernobyl and Fukushima, pg 26-27.

The report:

http://www.greenpeace.org/canada/Global/canada/report/2016/03/Nuclear_scars_report.pdf

Media brief: <http://www.greenpeace.org/canada/Global/canada/pr/2016/03/Nuclear-Scars-Briefing-Greenpeace-20150304.pdf>

Photo & Video:

[1] Photos of monitoring work carried out by Greenpeace can be accessed here:

<http://photo.greenpeace.org/shoot/27MZIFJ6FH89N>

and a full collection of images of Greenpeace work in Japan are here:

<http://photo.greenpeace.org/collection/27MZIFJ6FW8FN>

[2] Video can be accessed here:

<http://photo.greenpeace.org/shoot/27MZIFJ6XHUZB>

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