

Govt. rezones Namie Town near Fukushima No.1 plant

The Japanese government has rezoned a town near the damaged Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant based on the amount of its exposure to radiation.

Namie Town was reclassified into 3 zones on Monday. Its 21,000 residents have been living outside the town since it was declared a no-entry zone.

The coastal, central area as well as western parts of the town, are areas where residents are now allowed to visit their homes during the daytime. A police checkpoint there was dismantled.



About 83 percent of the town's residents lived in those areas before the nuclear disaster in March of 2011.

The remaining 17 percent of the residents lived in mountainous areas where entry is still banned. Those areas have been declared unsuitable for living indefinitely.

Namie is the 9th municipality in Fukushima Prefecture to be rezoned. The government plans to rebuild infrastructure and decontaminate the areas so that residents can return within 3 or 4 years.

The mayor of Namie Town said that he has mixed feelings about the town being divided, but said the lifting of the no-entry ban is a step forward.

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