

# IAEA team in Japan for final review before planned discharge of Fukushima nuclear plant water

May 29 2023, by Mari Yamaguchi

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This photo shows some of about 1,000 huge tanks holding treated but still radioactive wastewater at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant, operated by Tokyo Electric Power Company Holdings (TEPCO), in Okuma town, northeastern Japan, on Feb. 22, 2023. An International Atomic Energy Agency team arrived in Tokyo on Monday, May 29, 2023, for a final review before Japan begins releasing massive amounts of treated radioactive water into the sea

from the wrecked Fukushima nuclear plant, a plan that has been strongly opposed by local fishing communities and neighboring countries. Credit: AP Photo/Mari Yamaguchi, File

An International Atomic Energy Agency team arrived in Tokyo on Monday for a final review before Japan begins releasing massive amounts of treated radioactive water into the sea from the wrecked Fukushima nuclear plant, a plan that has been strongly opposed by local fishing communities and neighboring countries.

The team, which includes experts from 11 countries, will meet with officials from the government and the plant operator, Tokyo Electric Power Company Holdings, and visit the Fukushima Daiichi [nuclear power plant](#) during their five-day visit, the economy and industry ministry said.

Japan announced plans in April 2021 to gradually release the wastewater following further treatment and dilution to what it says are safe levels. The release is expected to begin within a few months after safety checks by Japanese nuclear regulators of the newly constructed water discharge facility and a [final report](#) by IAEA expected in late June.

The plan has faced fierce protests from local fishing communities concerned about safety and reputational damage. Nearby countries, including South Korea, China and Pacific Island nations, have also raised safety concerns.

Japan sought IAEA's assistance in ensuring the release meets international safety standards and to gain the understanding of other countries.

Japanese officials say the water will be treated to legally releasable levels and further diluted with large amounts of seawater. It will be gradually released into the ocean over decades through an undersea tunnel, making it harmless to people and marine life, they say.

Some scientists say the impact of long-term, low-dose exposure to radionuclides is unknown and the release should be delayed.

Japan's government has stepped up campaigns in Japanese media and at food fairs to promote the safety of seafood from Fukushima, while providing regular briefings to [foreign governments](#) including South Korea and members of the Pacific Islands Forum.

A massive March 11, 2011, earthquake and tsunami destroyed the Fukushima Daiichi [nuclear plant](#)'s cooling systems, causing three reactors to melt and releasing large amounts of radiation. Water used to cool the reactor cores accumulated in about 1,000 tanks at the plant which will reach their capacity in early 2024.

Japanese officials say the water stored in the tanks needs to be removed to prevent accidental leaks in case of another disaster and to make room for the plant's decommissioning.

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