

Japan: Quake-tsunami aftermath: 50 percent of people in quake-stricken region have no prospects for rebuilding homes

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Nearly 50 percent of people in disaster-hit northeastern Japan, who have been regularly surveyed by the *Mainichi*, said they have no prospects for repairing or rebuilding their homes in the future, and 20 percent of them still do not have jobs, according to the latest poll.

The *Mainichi* has surveyed 100 people in the region on a regular basis one, two, three and six months after the Great East Japan Earthquake and ensuing tsunami. Of them, 73 people — 27 from Iwate Prefecture, 23 from Miyagi Prefecture, and 23 from Fukushima Prefecture (including those who took shelter outside of the prefecture) — responded to the latest survey conducted from late November to mid-December, nine months after the disasters.

On the prospects for rebuilding local communities, 60 percent of the respondents from Iwate Prefecture and 70 percent of those from Miyagi Prefecture said they will be able to do so. But slightly less than 30 percent of people from Fukushima Prefecture said they can restore their communities there, underscoring the fact that many people in Fukushima have little hope for the future due to the ongoing crisis at the Fukushima No. 1 Nuclear Power Plant.

On housing, 20 out of the 73 people surveyed said they have already repaired or rebuilt their homes at the sites of their old houses or nearby or they plan to do so in the future. However, 32 other respondents said they want to repair or rebuild their homes but there are no prospects for doing so. Furthermore, five out of the 73 people surveyed said it is impossible for them to repair or rebuild their homes.

The survey shows that 13 out of the 73 people said they had jobs immediately after the disasters and 32 others said they have already resumed their work. On the other hand, there are still many people who cannot earn a stable income, with six people being suspended from work and eight others being out of a job.

The survey shows 39 people believe they can reconstruct their local communities, while 31 people said it is “difficult” to do so. The number of people who have pessimistic views about the future of their local communities dropped from September — six months after the outbreak of the disasters — when a majority of the people said it was “difficult” to rebuild their local communities. But by prefecture, only six out of the 23 people from Fukushima Prefecture said they will be able to rebuild their local communities as compared to 16 out the 27 people from Iwate Prefecture and 17 out of the 23 people from Miyagi Prefecture.

Slightly less than 20 percent of the people from Iwate Prefecture, a little less than 30 percent of the people from the Miyagi Prefecture and nearly 50 percent of the people from Fukushima Prefecture said they have no prospects for making a living.

On the question of what they want local governments and the central government and politicians to

do for them most, 20 of the 73 people who responded to the latest survey said they wanted them to help build housing. Measures against the cold weather topped the list of their biggest worries ahead of the turn of the year with 14 people voicing that particular concern.

Mainichi Shimbun

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* Mainichi Shimbun, December 21, 2011

<http://mdn.mainichi.jp/mdnnews/national/archive/news/2011/12/21/20111221p2a00m0na013000c.html>