

Voices of Foreign Sufferers

Kumamoto Earthquakes and My family

Two big earthquakes hit Kumamoto twice on the night of April 14, and before the dawn of April 16. My family were all safe and my house also didn't have any damage. I stored water in the bathtub to the full and went shopping for drinking water and food on April 15. And after the main shock, we slept in the car.

Grandfather, who does not understand any Japanese, has dementia. After the earthquakes, he could not use the day service nor have the home-helpers come because we had no gas or water service at home. I looked for evacuation sites in the area and found out there are only Japanese style toilets there. I thought it would be quite difficult for my grandfather who has dementia to live in the evacuation site where there are many people. So, we stayed in the car while aftershocks continuously occurred. Grandfather became agitated on the third day. We went home even though the aftershocks continued.

Mrs. Yang Jun
(Chinese consultant, KIF)



Filipino Citizens and the Kumamoto Earthquake

There are more than 450 Filipinos living in Kumamoto City. Most of them are the spouses of Japanese citizens, but when naturalized citizens and those with either a Japanese father or mother are included, the number of people with Filipino heritage is even higher. Those Filipinos helped and supported each other through two big communities: the Filipino Association and the Catholic Church.

Many Filipino people had no other choice than to sleep in their cars after having narrowly escaped death in the Kumamoto Earthquake. The passport renewal and consultation meeting held on April 24th by the Philippine Consulate General Osaka as well as the Maria Festival on May 5th were places where we encouraged each other. Even a group of Filipinos in Fukuoka hurried down to give us renewed energy and courage.

Others were helping the KUMUSTAKA the Association for Living Together with Migrants to distribute warm meals. We want to continue the exchange of culture and information and continue helping each other.

Mrs. Marina Hidaka
(Tagalog consultant, KIF)



Disaster relief activities during Kumamoto Earthquake April 2016 Muslim living in Kumamoto city

Kumamoto city is located in Kyushu Island Japan. It is one of the favorite tourist destination for domestic and international visitors. There are more about 350 Muslim people currently residing in Kumamoto prefecture. Most of them are international students, researchers, and workers.

The 2016 Kumamoto Earthquakes

It made us feel very shock and devastating. Some people had big trauma, especially children and women. They did not want to come back to their houses and had difficulty with food and water. So, they decided to take a shelter at Kumamoto University and Kumamoto International Foundation.

The second hit with long duration also made few damages inside The KIC building. Luckily, nobody got injured during the earthquake. Everybody could manage evacuated outside the building soon.

Relief goods distribution

Almost every day donation and relief goods came from Muslim in all over the Japan to KIC. Since Kumamoto University shelter did not provide enough halal food for Muslim, KIC also made emergency kitchen for Muslim at KIC building. We cooked halal food and brought it to the shelter. We shared our food to some Non Muslim evacuees at shelter too. They are welcome to come to our place to take shelter too.

To distribute relief goods it took so much effort to contact and find needed people. It was not easy for us to contact local authority and responsible person to get permission distributing the goods. In the beginning we got rejected from them because of our Islamic name. Maybe, Japanese people still afraid and do not trust us as Muslim. We understand and accept this situation because of the recent news on TV showed about terrorism.

To solve this problem, KIC tried to collaborate with local organization and authorities to get all the information for distributing relief goods smoothly. So, we tried to contact KIF and local police. Since that, we could manage distributing it to the shelters and directly to needed people in Mashiki town, Mifune town, Ozu town and North Kumamoto areas. We distributed some water, milk, instant foods and private goods (napkins, diapers, tissues) according to what they needed. We made some item list for every each shelter and distributed it daily. Some of them we distributed directly to local people at surrounding shelter and parking area nearby.

We just need to imagine the situation of the society when we help each other and fulfill the needs of others. We will end up being a better society, with less needy people, and stronger social ties that will lead to the strength of the Muslim and Non Muslim in Japan.

Mr. Mario Siswahu
(Kumamoto Islamic Center, Indonesia)

My experience of Kumamoto Earthquake

The Kumamoto earthquakes were experiences I never expected to have, and everybody who experienced them will never forget what happened on those April days. To ensure the foreign residents of Kumamoto could exchange their experiences of what happened, I helped to organise a workshop in July 2016 for people to share them. Around thirty people gathered to discuss what they had been through and to listen to the experience of others. One thing that every person in attendance mentioned was how the Japanese residents helped foreigners, shared food with them, helped them to understand what was going on. Despite the divide some people imagine between the Japanese and foreign community in Kumamoto, during this time of disaster everybody came together. If there is one thing I would want to share about my experiences of the earthquake it is this: we are all only human, and it is in the worst of times that we realise that we are all humans together and differences are only skin deep.



Mr. Andrew Michell
(Kumamoto University, UK)