

Thousands protest against nuclear power in Japan

January 15 2012



Anti-nuclear activists hold placards during a rally against nuclear energy in Yokohama. About 2,000 demonstrators hit the streets of Yokohama on Saturday calling for an end to nuclear energy in Japan after the March 11 disaster that sparked the worst atomic crisis since Chernobyl.

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They marched in the port city southwest of Tokyo chanting in chorus: "We don't need nuclear power. Give back our hometown. Protect our children."

The protest, organised by several anti-nuclear and environmental groups,

also saw residents evacuated from areas outside the [Fukushima](#) Daiichi plant take part.

Japan had previously aimed to use nuclear power to generate around 50 percent of its energy needs by 2030 in a bid to reduce [greenhouse gas emissions](#) and enhance the energy independence of the resource-poor archipelago.

But sentiment has shifted since the quake and tsunami crippled the plant's cooling systems, sparking reactor meltdowns that spewed radiation into the environment forcing tens of thousands to evacuate from a 20-kilometre radius.

Radiation fears have become part of daily life in Japan after cases of [contaminated water](#), beef, vegetables, tea and seafood. The government has been at pains to stress the lack of an "immediate" health risk.

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