

Japan may scrap nuclear plant over seismic fault

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A police boat patrols around the nuclear reactor Monju in Tsuruga, Fukui prefecture on May 6, 2010. Geologists said Monday that the nuclear plant may be sited over an active seismic fault, indicating that it will probably be scrapped.

Geologists said Monday a Japanese nuclear plant may be sited over an active seismic fault, indicating that it will probably be scrapped.

All five experts tasked by the Nuclear Regulation Authority (NRA) with investigating the tectonic situation underneath Tsuruga plant in Fukui prefecture said it showed signs of geologically recent movement.

Under government guidelines atomic installations cannot be sited on a [fault](#)—the meeting place of two or more of the plates that make up the earth's crust—if it is still classed as active.

"Active" faults are those that, amongst other things, have moved within the last 120,000-130,000 years.

All but two of Japan's nuclear reactors remain offline after they were shuttered for regular safety checks in the aftermath of the 2011 crisis at [Fukushima](#), when a huge tsunami generated by an earthquake caused meltdowns.

They must now get the go-ahead from the newly-formed NRA before they can be restarted.

Shunichi Tanaka, head of the regulatory body, said: "I have the impression that we will never be able to go ahead with a safety review (of Tsuruga) for resumption."

If the body formally decides that the plant, which houses two reactors on the [Sea of Japan](#) (East Sea) coast, is sitting above active faults, it is likely to be decommissioned.

The body is separately considering whether the Oi nuclear plant, Japan's only working [atomic power plant](#) which has two reactors and is also in western Japan, sits on an active fault.

Hundreds of thousands of people were made homeless by the Fukushima accident and tracts of prime agricultural land were left unfarmable.

Anti-nuclear sentiment is running high in Japan, which used to rely on the technology for around a third of its electricity needs.

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