

Radiation, climate force Bikini Islanders to seek US refuge

March 22 2015



File photo shows a parade of floats on Nuclear Remembrance Day in the Marshall Islands on March 1, 2001, the 47th anniversary of the "Bravo" hydrogen bomb test at Bikini Atoll that exposed thousands of Marshall Islands to radioactive fallout

A tiny central Pacific community, forced to evacuate their homes because of US nuclear testing, are now demanding refuge in the United States as they face a new threat from climate change.

"We want to relocate to the United States," Nishma Jamore, mayor of the atoll of Bikini, said on the weekend as Pacific waters continued to eat away at the small Kili and Ejit islands in the far-flung Marshall Islands archipelago.

Jamore heads a community of about 1,000 islanders who have lived in exile on the islands for decades because their original homeland of Bikini remains too radioactive for resettlement.

There were 24 nuclear tests conducted on the atoll in the 1950s, including "Bravo", the largest hydrogen bomb detonation conducted by the United States.

Unable to return to Bikini, the islanders are now faced with increasingly heavy flooding from high tides and storms hitting Kili and Ejit with waves washing over the [islands](#) and wiping out food crops.

Jamore voiced their concerns to US Assistant Secretary of Interior Esther Kia'aina during her visit to the Marshall's capital of Majuro this month.

"We want to relocate to the United States," Jamore said. "Kili has been repeatedly flooded since 2012 and we've asked the Marshall Islands government for help with no response."

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