

Topic VI Response to Kumamoto Earthquake in 2016

(1) Damage Situation and Police System

1 Outline of Earthquake and Damage Situation

An earthquake of magnitude 6.5 (provisional value) occurred with an epicenter in the Kumamoto region of Kumamoto Prefecture on April 14, 2016 at 9:26 pm. A seismic intensity of 7 was observed in Mashiki-machi, Kamimashiki-gun, Kumamoto Prefecture. Also, two days later, another earthquake of magnitude 7.3 (provisional value) occurred with an epicenter in the Kumamoto region of Kumamoto prefecture on April 16, 2016 at 1:25 am. In that quake, a seismic intensity of 7 was observed in Mashiki-machi, Kamimashiki-gun and Nishihara-mura, Aso-gun, Kumamoto Prefecture, and a seismic intensity of upper 6 was observed in Minamiaso-mura, Aso-gun, Kikuchi City, Uto City, Ozu-machi, Kikuchi-gun, Kashima-machi, Kamimashiki-gun, Uki City, Koshi City and Kumamoto City respectively. Aftershocks continued, and a total of 18 earthquakes with a seismic intensity of lower 5 and greater occurred by the end of May, including the two earthquakes that observed a seismic intensity of 7.

The number of casualties caused by this earthquake were 49 fatalities and 1,659 injured, and with regard to the property damage, 7,366 homes were completely or half destroyed and 30,374 were partially destroyed (as of May 13, 2016).



The Aso-ohashi bridge collapses from landslide



Search activities in affected areas

2 Mobilization of Police

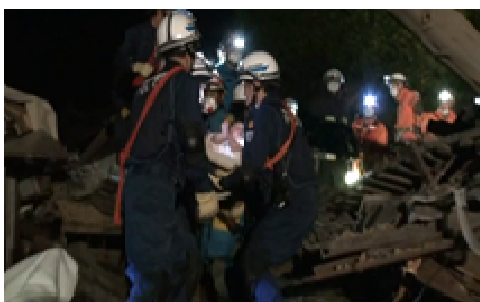
The police established a team of up to about 2,200 people per day at Kumamoto Prefectural Police and sent the Police Disaster Dispatch Units with a total number of approximately 23,000 police officers from 41 prefectural police and a total of 150 police aircraft (helicopters) from 19 prefectural police (as of May 13, 2016) to Kumamoto Prefectural Police and Oita Prefectural Police. They conducted security activities in the disaster areas including evacuation guidance and rescue of victims, search for missing persons, information collection on the disaster situation, traffic control, emergency communication support and other measures to ensure safety and security.

(2) Rescue of Victims

The Inter-Prefectural Emergency Rescue Units dispatched from all parts of Japan carried out search and rescue activities of the victims and searches for missing persons with Kumamoto Prefectural Police. Through these activities, the police rescued approximately 160 victims.

[Case] At around 1:45 am on April 15, 2016, Kyushu Regional Riot Police and Inter-Prefectural Emergency Rescue Unit of Fukuoka Prefectural Police, based on information that an 8 month old baby was

buried alive, started to rescue the baby from the collapsed house in Mashiki-machi, Kamimashiki-gun, Kumamoto Prefecture. At the site, the first floor of the wooden two-story house was crushed, and there was a possibility of further collapse due to repeated aftershocks. However, due to hard work in cooperation with fire fighters, the baby, trapped in a slight gap of the first floor section of the house, was rescued safely.



Police officers carrying out a rescued infant

[Case] At around 2:00 am on April 16, 2016, in Mashiki-machi, Kamimashiki-gun, Kumamoto Prefecture, a man standing in front of a collapsed house said, “My family is buried alive,” and asked for rescue assistance. The Inter-Prefectural Emergency Rescue Unit of Saga Prefectural Police started rescue activities immediately. At the site, the first floor of the wooden two-story house had collapsed and the second floor was leaning greatly; however, a man and a



Inter-Prefectural Emergency Rescue Units (IERU) to conduct rescue activities

woman trapped in a slight gap of the first floor of the house were successfully rescued.

(3) Traffic Control

Police motorcycle units checked detours on roads that had collapsed and could not be used, and police officers stood at intersections where traffic lights were out and carried out traffic control and traffic guidance.

In addition, due to traffic congestion caused by road closures of multiple routes of the damaged highway, the police manually controlled traffic lights for alleviation of congestion in order to facilitate the transportation of emergency supplies, and notified people of the detours.

Furthermore, as the disaster caused by the Kumamoto earthquake in 2016 was designated as a specified disaster, the police took measures such as extending the validity period of victim’s driver’s license that would expire on or after April 14, 2016.



Traffic control at the intersection where a traffic light went out

(4) Ensuring Safety and Security in Damaged Areas

In order to deter criminal charges such as burglary in the disaster areas and ensure the safety and security of the areas, Kumamoto Prefectural Police carried out vigilance activities and patrolling around damaged areas and evacuation centers with special mobile patrol forces (up to 116 police officers, up to 36 police cars per day) dispatched from all parts of

Japan. The police also alerted victims by e-mail and twitter for damage prevention.

In addition, Kumamoto Prefectural Police and the special community safety forces from all parts of Japan visited evacuation centers and provided crime prevention guidance and consultation with victims.



Activities by female police officers

[Column] Visit to Evacuation Centers by the Special Community Safety Units

Victims consulted with the Special Community Safety Force, comprising of mainly female police officers who visited evacuation centers on various matters. For example, responding to a consultation by a victim who said, “I am worried about my empty home during evacuation”, the police took various measures such as strengthening patrolling in residential areas.

Especially from female victims, comments were received such as “We feel comfortable to consult with female police officers”.