**Southwestern Japan Takes Steps to Deal with Flooding, Coronavirus**

**日本西南部同时应对洪水和冠状病毒**

Boxes of face coverings, bottles filled with anti-bacterial agents and a sign saying “Please wear a mask” mark the entrance to a recreation center in Yatsushiro city.

成盒的口罩、许多瓶装的抗菌剂，入口处还贴着一张“请戴口罩”指示牌，这就是日本八代市一个游憩中心的现状。

The building serves as shelter for people who have fled floodwaters in southwestern Japan this week.

这座建筑成了本周日本西南部逃离洪水的人们的避难所。

Inside the building, pieces of cardboard separate sleeping areas for over 200 men, women, and children. Another sign tells those staying there to take their temperature each morning.

在大楼内部，一块块纸板隔出了男男女女老老少少的睡眠区。另一个标志牌上写道这里的人每天早晨都要量体温。

Such measures show the difficulties Japan is facing as it deals with natural disasters in the time of coronavirus.

所有措施尽显日本在冠状病毒疫情时期同时又要应对自然灾害所面临的种种困难。

Japanese officials have been warning local leaders to include coronavirus measures in their disaster preparations. Residents have been urged to seek shelter with friends or family members, if possible, to avoid overcrowding in evacuation centers.

日本官方一直在警告地方领导人在应对灾害的准备工作中加入预防冠状病毒的措施。官方敦促居民们尽可能找朋友或家人寻求避难所，以避免疏散中心人满为患。

Aiko Ishimura, a 78-year-old retiree, learned from neighbors on Monday about evacuation orders. She lives alone and had planned to shelter at home. But she chose to flee with neighbors.

78岁的退休人员石村爱子周一从邻居们那里得知了疏散令。她一个人住，原本打算就在家里避难，但最终她选择了和邻居一起逃离家园。

For Ishimura, spread of the coronavirus is not a top concern.

对石村来说，冠状病毒的传播并不是她首要担心的问题。

“We don’t have many cases here in the first place. We don’t really do the whole mask-wearing thing,” she added. However, Ishimura said she keeps a mask in her pocket.

“首先我们这里的病例不多。我们并会真的去戴口罩。”不过，石村补充说她口袋里装着一个口罩。

Kumomoto prefecture, where she lives, has had only 49 of Japan’s more than 20,000 cases of the disease COVID-19. Those numbers come from the Japanese public broadcaster NHK.

她居住的熊本县仅有49例新冠肺炎感染病例，整个日本则有2万多感染病例。这些数字来自日本公共广播公司日本放送协会（NHK）。

That compares with close to 7,000 in Tokyo, where cases are on the rise again among its 14 million residents.

相比之下，有1400万居民的东京有近7000病例而且病例又在上升。

Misa Matsuda, a 48-year-old medical worker, knows well about the yearly floods in the area. She also had planned to remain at home. But she got a big surprise Monday when she opened her door. She found river water flowing just a few meters from her home.

48岁的医务工作者松田美沙非常了解该地区每年的洪水情况。她也打算留在家里。但当周一她打开门时却仍然感到非常吃惊。她发现河水竟然流到了距离她家仅几米远的地方。

“I thought, there’s no way the water would come up here to our house, where it’s a bit of a hill,” she said.

她说：“我原来想毕竟我们的房子在山上，洪水不可能流到这里来。”

Extreme weather disasters have become increasingly common in Japan recently. Last year, Typhoon Hagibis killed nearly 100 people. That storm struck a year after more than 200 died in western Japan in the worst flooding in many years.

近来极端天气灾害在日本越来越普遍。去年，台风海贝思造成近100人死亡。而那场风暴发生的一年前，日本西部刚刚经历了多年来最严重的造成200多人死亡的洪灾。

Matsuda said she was not too concerned about the new coronavirus because basic safety measures were being taken. But she did worry that residents would gather in the shelter to talk, creating the sort of crowded conditions officials say increase infection risk.

松田说，她不太担心新冠病毒，因为当地采取了基本的安全措施。但她确实担心居民会聚集在避难所里交谈，造成了官方说的那种拥挤的环境，从而增加感染的风险。

City official Takanobu Ono said the evacuation center was limited to 300 people. It can hold up to 500 people.

市政官员小野隆彦说，疏散中心的人数限制在300人以内，虽然它能容纳500人。

“Some of (the residents) have just been saved by the skin of their teeth,” he said. “The reality is that coronavirus is less of a concern for them...So we’re taking the measures we have to but we haven’t been so strict about it.”

他说：“一些(居民)刚刚幸免遇难。事实上，冠状病毒对他们来说不那么重要……所以我们正在采取必要的措施，但我们对他们的要求并没有非常严格。”

Close to 60 people have died from floods and landslides caused by heavy rains across the area since Saturday.

自上周六以来，该地区已有近60人死于暴雨引发的洪水和山体滑坡。

I’m Ashley Thompson.

阿什利·汤普森报道。

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