

# UN: High radiation outside Japan's exclusion zone AP Associated Press

By GEORGE JAHN, Associated Press

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VIENNA – Recent radiation readings outside the exclusion zone around Japan's nuclear disaster show radiation substantially higher than levels at which the U.N. nuclear agency would recommend evacuations, agency officials said.

The comments Wednesday could add to the debate over how far people need to stay away from Japan's Fukushima Dai-ichi nuclear complex, which was crippled in the country's March 11 earthquake and tsunami.

Elena Buglova, an official from the International Atomic Energy Agency, said of the reading: "As a ratio, it was about two times higher" than levels at which the agency recommends evacuations.

litate is about 25 miles (40 kilometers) from the Fukushima complex where emergency crews are battling to keep radioactivity from spreading.

Japanese officials have told residents to evacuate within a 12-mile (20-kilometer) zone and to stay indoors within 18 miles (30 kilometers) of the damaged complex, but U.S. officials have recommended citizens stay at least 50 miles (80 kilometers) away.

The officials emphasized that the readings at the village of litate were sporadic and only at one measuring point.

Denis Flory, a senior IAEA official, demurred when asked whether the agency was recommending that the village be cleared of residents but said it had advised Japanese authorities to "carefully assess the situation."

"The highest values were found in a relatively small area in the northwest from the Fukushima power plant and the first assessment indicates that one of the IAEA operational criteria for evacuation is exceeded in litate village," he told reporters.

Buglova also indicated the readings were preliminary saying "there is a range of uncertainty involved."

About 10 days ago, radiation in the village's tap water spiked, though they remained well below levels that would pose an immediate health risk. The latest reading came between March 18 and March 26, when a series of samples were taken from a wide area, according to a report on the agency's website. Both iodine-131 and cesium-137 were found in the samples.

Richard Morin, a medical physicist with the American College of Radiation, said the agency's evacuation limits are "intended to be extremely conservative," and that none of the levels found would pose a risk to human health. They all fell well below the radiation contained in a heart scan.

Separately, agency officials said Singapore authorities had measured radiation readings from cabbage imported from Japan that were up to nine times above international recommended safety levels — iodine 131 readings of up to 936 becquerels per kilogram.

Earlier, IAEA head Yukiya Amano told reporters that he had issued invitations to government ministers from the agency's 151 member nations to attend a June conference on safety procedures at nuclear plants worldwide in the wake of the Japan disaster.

Amano said the conference will focus on assessments of the Fukushima Dai-ichi disaster and lessons that need to be learned from it.

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Veronika Oleksyn contributed to this report.