

# All disaster information on the table

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anything, Japanese  
ambassador says



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Japanese Ambassador Kaoru Ishikawa says his government is not hiding information from the public in the wake of the disruptive earthquake and devastating tsunami of March 11.

"We are not," Ishikawa said bluntly in an interview late Monday. "We are not in a situation to hide or not hide. Our lessons from the past tell us to put everything on the table. That is to avoid sensation and panic."

Ishikawa's family survived the disaster, but he said he has many friends who are still hoping to find their family members alive. "I am praying for them," he said.

Finding survivors is the one good news story from a barrage of bad. "It's been a challenge," Ishikawa said. "We have no choice but to overcome it so we're concentrating our efforts to still try to rescue survivors."

The ambassador referred to this week's story of the 80-year-old grandmother who was found alive along with her 16-year-old grandson. He recounted how the grandson, when offered a heating pad and some sweets by rescuers, told them the comforts must go first to his grandma.

"This kind of story encourages us a lot," Ishikawa said. "Morale is still high when you hear stories of a boy (and a grandmother) who lived for nine days in the rubble."

Ishikawa said the distribution networks are slowly improving so that fuel tankers can move around the country. He also noted that a section of the railroad was reopened Monday.

The ambassador said the current priorities are to stabilize the reactor at Fukushima-Daiichi and help the evacuated people rebuild their communities. "The big challenge in those sinister zones ... is that there's nothing: No water, sanitation, shelter, food. Every rescue team needs to be (self-contained.)" He said the lessons learned have yet to be assessed by the experts but noted that the country was ready for the earthquake; it was the tsunami that caused the catastrophes.

"Our small good news is that (Fukushima) reactors 5 and 6 have been stabilized while we have brought in new cables for some of 1 through 4. That is where we are."