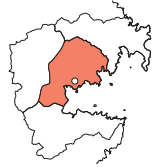


Searching for family members

“Where are you? Come back soon.”



▲Residents at Bayside Arena reading postings about the deceased with a sense of prayer.

Photo courtesy of Minamisanriku Social Welfare Council

The day started like any other day, people left their homes as usual, only to never meet again. People searched shelters each day for family members, hoping the missing were alive somewhere. The Cultural Exchange Hall in Bayside Arena was transformed into a morgue; individuals looking for family members visited daily.

Firefighters, police officers, and members of the Self Defense Forces, gathered the bodies of the deceased. Information was posted at the entrance of the building describing the location and characteristics of the bodies found. Residents looked intently at the postings, hoping their loved ones were still alive. Deep sorrow was evident in survivors who found family member's names on lists of the deceased. “I'm glad your back,” someone murmured.

Only the bereaved understand the pain of continuing to search and wait for missing family members. At present, 210 people are still missing.