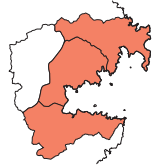


## From a Great Distance Rescue Operations started the next morning



▲ Kyoto Fire Department's emergency firefighting aid team searches for survivors in the Shizugawa area the morning after the tsunami.

Photo courtesy of Kyoto Fire Department

The coastal areas of Minamisanriku were completely destroyed by the tsunami. The next morning, the sight of the tragically transformed town was illuminated by the light of the rising sun. For the town's residents it seemed like a strange land.

In the light of the morning dawn, a group in fire brigade uniforms was combing through the rubble searching for survivors. Fire brigades and emergency aid came from within the prefecture from places as distant as Kyoto. They had driven through the night on dangerous roads that had been cracked and torn by the earthquake to Minamisanriku. Where they immediately began searching for survivors under a major tsunami warning.

A town hall official who went to assist in the rescue could not believe his eyes. As tears of gratitude welled up in his eyes, he wondered if they had traveled 1,000km overnight without sleeping. The rescue teams showed no signs of fatigue after travelling long distances over rough terrain, and continued to search vigorously for survivors and carry out rescue operations in dangerous conditions.

Domestically 508 fire brigade aid team numbering 1,939 personnel from four prefectures, including Tottori, Hyogo, and Akita Prefectures were dispatched to Minamisanriku. Moreover, rescue teams from overseas arrived one after another to search for missing persons.