

Looking Closely for Clues

Police officers continue the search for missing persons



▲ March 10th, 2022. Miyagi Prefectural Police Minamisanriku police officers search for missing persons on the beach in the Utatsu district of Minamisanriku.

Photo courtesy of Kahoku Shimpo Corporation

Time has passed and the reconstruction of Minamisanriku has progressed, but one thing continues to be implemented even to this day.

It is the search for missing persons, carried out along the coast at the time of the monthly anniversary of the death of the disaster victims.

In Minamisanriku, 211 people are still missing. Their families are still awaiting their return. No matter how much the appearance of the town changes, there will be no change in people's feelings about family members who suddenly failed to come home that day. How many thousands or millions of times have they repeated the words: "Where are you? We're waiting for you. Please come home soon."

The Miyagi Prefectural Police are still searching for missing persons. In Minamisanriku, on the monthly anniversary of the disaster, Miyagi Prefectural Police Minamisanriku police officers conduct their search in places such as beaches where local residents have reported a large amount of drifting debris. They sift through stones, fishing gear, and driftwood by hand or using a firefighter's hook, carefully checking for the presence of any clues regarding missing persons.

The search continues because of the officers' commitment to finding even just a clue that might alleviate the family's suffering. Seeing officers praying quietly and continuing the earnest search provides emotional support for the people who are still waiting for loved ones to return home.

A total of approximately 148,000 police officers have been involved in searches within the prefecture as of late 2020.