

Supporting Japanese Nationals Overseas

1 Risks and Safety of Japanese Nationals Overseas

(1) Incidents and Accidents in 2018 and Countermeasures

A total of 17.89 million¹ Japanese nationals traveled abroad in 2017 and approximately 1.35 million Japanese nationals live abroad as of October 2017. Securing the safety of Japanese nationals overseas and promoting their interests is one of the most important missions of MOFA.

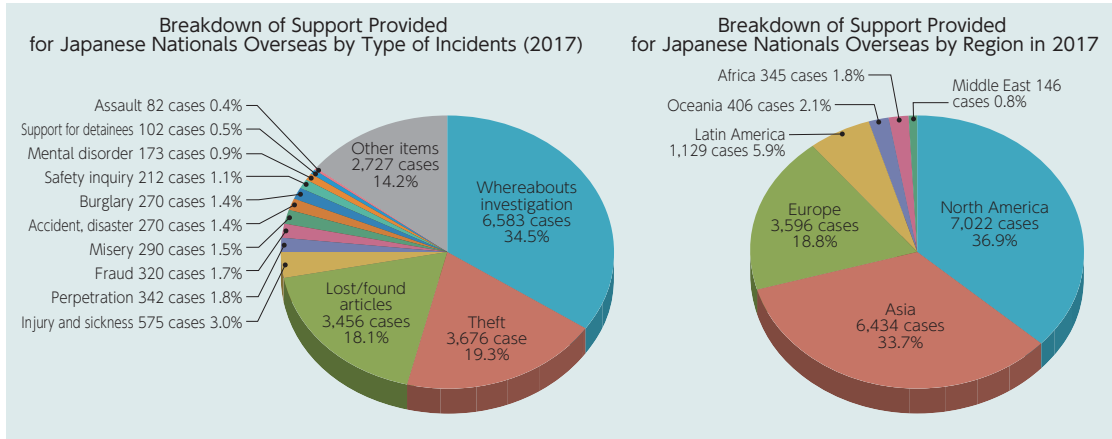
There were no Japanese victims in terrorist attacks in 2018, despite the world seeing a large number of terrorist attacks. The recent tendency of terrorist attacks includes terrorism happening not only in the Middle East and Africa but also in Europe, the U.S. and Asia where many Japanese travel and reside. Both homegrown terrorism perpetrated by people born in Western countries and indoctrinated through websites or other means by foreign Islamic extremists and lone-wolf terrorism perpetrated by people acting solely with little organizational background are found in tremendous numbers. Additionally, terrorist attacks aimed at soft targets where large numbers of the general public gather everyday are on the rise. This tendency has not changed despite the fact that the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant

(ISIL), which in particular has been urging terror attacks outside its region, is losing its territory in Syria and Iraq. Also, foreign fighters of ISIL now are returning to their home countries or moving to third countries. These factors make it more difficult to predict and prevent terror attacks. The following incidents in 2018 demonstrate this tendency: the simultaneous suicide bombings at Christian churches in Surabaya, Indonesia in May; the shooting in Liege, Belgium in May; the terrorist bombing of a music festival venue in Fuheis, Jordan in August; the attack on a bus heading to a Coptic Orthodox Church in Minya Governorate, Egypt in November; the stabbings of pedestrians in Melbourne, Australia in November; the terrorist attack near the Chinese Consulate General in Karachi, Pakistan in November; the shooting at a Christmas market in Strasbourg, France in December, etc.

Incidents involving the death of a Japanese national overseas included: a stabbing in Dublin, Ireland in January; an armed robbery in the province of Manabí, Ecuador in March; a fall from a high place at a tourism spot in Lalibela, Ethiopia in April; an alligator attack in Florida, U.S. in June; a shooting in Cebu, the Philippines in August; an incident being hit by a streetcar in Istanbul, Turkey in September; a fire at a simple lodging in Seoul, Republic of Korea in November;

¹ Source: Ministry of Justice "Statistics on Legal Migrants"

Breakdown of Support Provided for Japanese Nationals Overseas by Type of Incidents and Region (2017)



Chapter 4

Top 20 Diplomatic Missions Overseas in Terms of the Number of Cases of Assistance Provided for Japanese Nationals Overseas

Ranking	Diplomatic missions overseas	Cases
1	Embassy of Japan in Thailand	1,273
2	Embassy of Japan in the Philippines	905
3	Consulate-General of Japan in Los Angeles	816
4	Consulate-General of Japan in Shanghai	799
5	Embassy of Japan in the United Kingdom	625
6	Consulate-General of Japan in New York	557
7	Consulate-General of Japan in San Francisco	542
8	Consulate-General of Japan in Honolulu	531
9	Embassy of Japan in France	478
10	Embassy of Japan in the People's Republic of China	430
11	Consulate-General of Japan in Barcelona	387
12	Embassy of Japan in the Republic of Korea	375
13	Consulate-General of Japan in Hong Kong	355
13	Consulate-General of Japan in Milan	351
15	Consulate-General of Japan in Seattle	333
16	Consulate-General of Japan in Houston	321
17	Consulate-General of Japan in Haganatna	319
18	Consulate-General of Japan in Atlanta	310
19	Consular Office of Japan in Portland	309
20	Consulate-General of Japan in Detroit Consulate-General of Japan in Boston	300

(Based on the Statistics on Assistance for Japanese Involved in Accidents and Other Incidents 2017, these 20 Diplomatic Missions are listed in descending order of the number of cases where the embassies, consulates general, consular offices, etc. provided assistance for Japanese)

a murder in Peten, Guatemala in November; and four mountain climbing deaths in Nepal and one in Pakistan.

Japanese nationals were also affected by various natural disasters in 2018, such as the earthquake in eastern Taiwan in February; the volcanic eruption of Kilauea on the island of Hawaii, U.S. in May; the earthquake on the island of Lombok, Indonesia in July; the earthquake and tsunami on the island of Sulawesi, Indonesia in September; and the flash flood at Petra Sacred Sites in Jordan in November. There were a number of incidents of political instability that could have affected Japanese nationals, such as the declaration of a state of emergency in the Maldives in February;

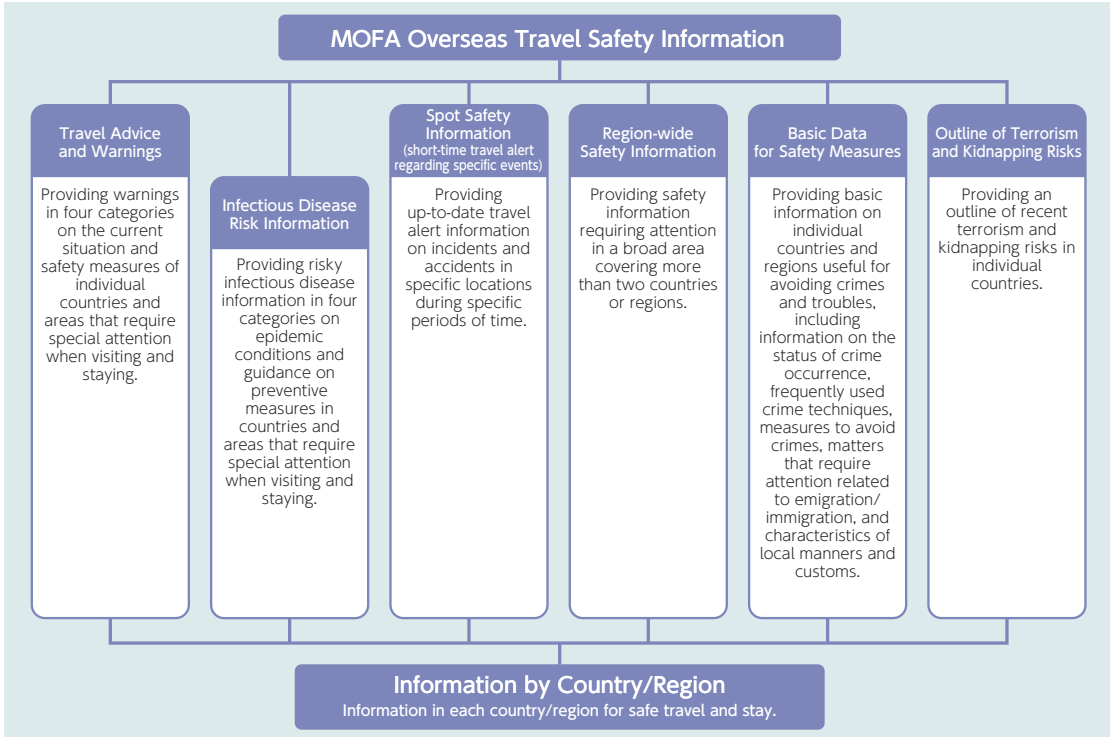
the deteriorating situation in Gaza in November; and the 'yellow vests movement' in France in November.

As was the case in the previous year, there were continued reports of the people falling ill during a trip abroad and dying at the hotel or other accommodations they were staying at.

In some of these accidents and illnesses, victims faced difficulties in dealing with higher medical and transportation costs, and receiving insufficient medical services compared to those in Japan.

As for infectious diseases, cases of Ebola were reported in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and cases of the Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) continue to be reported in the

Major Overseas Travel Safety Information on the Overseas Safety HP (System and Outline)



MOFA Overseas Safety Website
(<https://www.anzen.mofa.go.jp/>)



MOFA Overseas Travel Registration (Tabi-Regi)
<https://www.ezairyu.mofa.go.jp/tabireg/index.html>



MOFA Overseas Safety App Overseas safety website "About the Overseas Safety App Services" can be downloaded from (http://www.anzen.mofa.go.jp/c_info/ooshirase_kaian_app.html)

Middle East. Mosquito-borne diseases, such as the Zika virus, yellow fever, Dengue fever and malaria, also continued to spread throughout the world.

MOFA issues “Overseas Travel Safety Information” on infectious diseases and air pollution in countries and regions where health and medical caution is required, to inform Japanese nationals overseas of the current outbreak situation and prevention measures.

<Tips for Traveling and Living Abroad>

As described above, incidents which threaten the safety of Japanese nationals have constantly occurred all around the world. In addition to registration to Overseas Travel Registration (Tabi-Regi) or submission of Overseas Residential Registration, important measures for Japanese nationals traveling and living abroad to secure their safety include: (1) checking security and other information through the Overseas Safety Website, media and other sources; (2) taking adequate safety measures to avoid risks; and (3) contacting the nearest Japanese diplomatic missions overseas and family in Japan in case of emergency. MOFA uses various tools and opportunities to call attention to this message. MOFA also continues to emphasize that it is very important to take out travel insurance with a sufficient coverage when traveling abroad since the lack of travel insurance will make it difficult to pay the medical expenses or to receive proper medical care in case of diseases and accident injuries due to expensive medical fees abroad.

(2) Safety Measures for Japanese Nationals Overseas

The number of cases where Japanese nationals received support or protection from the diplomatic missions and the Japan-Taiwan Exchange Association has stayed at a high level. In 2017, there were 21,309 by person and 19,078 by case².

In order to avoid accidents and troubles overseas, it is important to collect information beforehand. As such, MOFA works to enhance the safety awareness of Japanese nationals and promote its safety measures by disseminating information.

MOFA issues the latest safety information worldwide on the Overseas Safety Website and emails the latest safety information of travel destinations and places of residence to Japanese nationals staying overseas with Overseas Residential Registrations and short-term travelers with registration in the Overseas Travel Registration (Tabi-Regi). Tabi-Regi is also available to those without travel plans through simple registration. The distributed safety information is widely utilized by Japanese businesspersons in charge of foreign operations. Since Tabi-Regi was launched in July 2014, MOFA has improved its user-friendliness and sponsored many activities to increase registrants. Currently, the cumulative total registration is more than 4 million.

MOFA strives to enhance the knowledge and capability of the Japanese people concerning overseas safety measures and crisis management through seminars and trainings. MOFA has hosted safety measure seminars in and out of Japan and sent lecturers from the Consular Affairs Bureau to seminars nationwide organized by other organizations and associations (around 80 times in 2018). MOFA also hosted Public-Private Joint

² The Statistics on Assistance for Japanese Involved in Accidents and Other Incidents, first published in 1986, is an annual report on the number of cases/people where the diplomatic missions overseas and the Japan-Taiwan Exchange Association provided assistance to Japanese nationals involved in any kind of troubles overseas, such as incidents/accidents, acts of committing crimes and falling victim to crime or disaster.

Aiming for 100% Registration! Message from Comedian Kendo Kobayashi (Kenkoba), Ambassador for Promoting MOFA's Overseas Travel Registration ("Tabi-Regi")

<What is Tabi-Regi?>

Q: First of all, please tell us the benefits and appeals of Tabi-Regi.

Ambassador Kenkoba: Traveling abroad is a great thing and fun. But, for some reason, you feel anxious until right before the departure, don't you? You might also be concerned about what to do if you run into trouble at your destination. You might often see people milling around the overseas travel insurance counter at the airport. Insurance is important, too. But, if you're registered with Tabi-Regi, you'll receive the necessary information by email and safety confirmation from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in an emergency while abroad. With this extra reassurance, you can genuinely let yourself go and enjoy your travel. It makes you feel better.

Q: What kind of information can you receive?

Ambassador Kenkoba: For example, I traveled to New York for my summer vacation and received an email from Tabi-Regi suggesting that I had better not visit a certain area during certain hours due to a planned power outage in the area. That was really helpful. You wouldn't know this information traveling normally without the service.

Q: Is Tabi-Regi useful?

Ambassador Kenkoba: Just by inputting your travel destination and period, you can receive a steady flow of information about "things that are happening now" in Japanese.

Q: Have you ever had a problem while traveling abroad?

Ambassador Kenkoba: Well, I have, and it has to be something I can talk about here, right (laughs)? A typical case is alcoholic drinks not being sold after midnight, or being banned during certain periods in certain countries. Sorry to just be talking about alcohol (laughs).



Q: That's fine (laughs).

Ambassador Kenkoba: More seriously, when I visited Shanghai for work before, I couldn't leave my location and was stuck there for a few hours because authorities were keeping people off the streets due to a visit by the vice president of some country. I also had an experience where I wandered into a very dangerous area in a part of San Francisco without knowing. I shuddered afterwards. If I was

registered with Tabi-Regi at the time of those travels, I might have been aware of those circumstances ahead of time and I could have left earlier or taken a different route.

<Activities as the Ambassador in charge of promoting Tabi-Regi registration>

Q: Currently, only about 10% of overseas travelers register with Tabi-Regi. Foreign Minister Kono requested that you aim to boost the registration rate to 100%. What activities are you planning as the Ambassador in charge of promoting Tabi-Regi registrations?

Ambassador Kenkoba: I hope to promote this service broadly using videos and posters. I also intend to be involved in grass-roots activities. I'm wandering around Haneda and Narita airports, so feel free to say hello to me anytime. Then, I'll tell you about Tabi-Regi too (laughs).

Q: The number of people travelling abroad is steadily growing and could surpass 19 million a year.

Ambassador Kenkoba: While 19 million is a massive number, I hope to promote wider use of Tabi-Regi since I've personally benefited from its convenience.

Q: Finally, please share a message with everyone.

Ambassador Kenkoba: Being well prepared means no worries. Register with Tabi-Regi to feel more reassured and safer, and let's grab a drink together if we run into each other abroad. There I go. Back to talking about drinking again (laughs).



Ambassador Kenkoba receiving a letter of appreciation and a letter of appointment from Foreign Minister Kono



Practical Training for Counter-Terrorism and Anti-Kidnapping Measures with the participation from private companies. These efforts are beneficial not only for taking preventive measures against dangers like crime and terrorism, but also for enhancing response capabilities in case of emergency.

Public and private cooperation is also proceeding overseas. The diplomatic missions overseas host regular meetings of Security Consultation and Liaison Committees with local Japanese nationals to share information, exchange opinions and bolster collaboration in preparation for emergencies.

After the terrorist attack in Dhaka in July 2016, MOFA has worked to enhance the awareness of safety measures and the response capabilities of

international cooperation personnel, small and medium enterprises, students studying abroad, short-term travelers and others who have limited access to information on safety.

First, MOFA launched the Small and Medium Enterprise Overseas Safety Measures Network, with the participation of 29 organizations and agencies related to overseas expansion of Japanese businesses in September 2016, in order to support SMEs, which account for the vast majority of Japanese companies. The collaboration among members in this network has strengthened safety measures of those companies, such as raising safety awareness through seminars and newsletters, establishing horizontal relationships among participating companies, seeking to



©Takao Saito Golgo 13's Security Guidelines for Japanese SMEs Abroad
http://www.anzen.mofa.go.jp/anzen_info/golgo13xgaimusho.html

provide better support services for business, etc. Furthermore, in March 2017, MOFA released Golgo 13's Security Guidelines for Japanese SMEs abroad, which explains the minimal and basic safety measures for the companies in an easy-to-understand manner using famous manga (cartoons). After its release, about 110,000 copies of the fine printed version have been distributed and the special webpage has gotten about 1.7 million views, which shows that the guidelines have been used by Japanese businesses widely and contributed to raising awareness on overseas safety measures.

As for Japanese students studying overseas, MOFA is working to enhance their awareness of safety measures and aid in the establishment of crisis management systems at schools. MOFA sends lecturers to universities and other educational institutions, many of which have insufficient knowhow or experience on safety measures and emergency responses. MOFA is going forward with efforts to connect government agencies with educational institutions, overseas study agencies and students by such means as beginning automatic registration to Overseas

Travel Registration (Tabi-Regi) with some overseas study institutions.

As for safety measures for short-term travelers, MOFA is engaged in PR activities mainly focused on the promotion of registration of Tabi-Regi through appointment of Kendo Kobayashi as Tabi-Regi Registration Promotion Ambassador and cooperation with Yoshimoto Kogyo Co., Ltd. and others (See Column "About Tabi-Regi (Interview with Ambassador Kendo Kobayashi)").

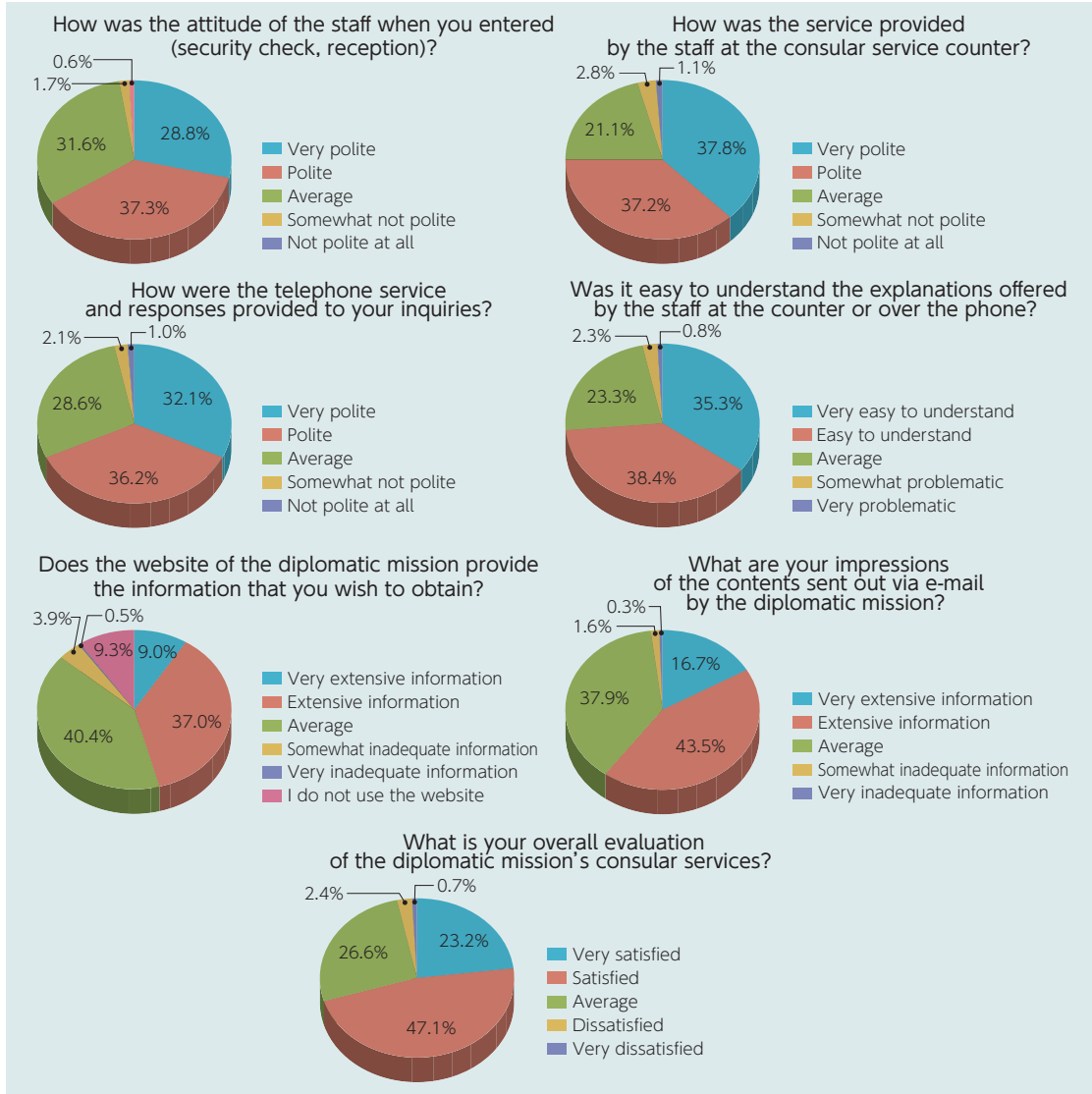
MOFA took out advertisements in various media outlets, hosted a booth at Tourism EXPO Japan, and hosted a seminar on five occasions for tour guides of travel companies who escort travelers in an effort to convey the importance of working on safety measures and to call for cooperation in developing safety measures for travelers.

2 Consular Service and Assistance for Japanese Living Overseas

(1) Improving Consular Service

With the aim of providing high quality consular services to Japanese nationals overseas, MOFA conducts a questionnaire survey every year on services such as consular staffs' attitudes in over-the-counter consular services, telephone responses at diplomatic missions overseas, and information provision. In 2018, the surveys were conducted by 148 diplomatic missions overseas and received 28,874 responses. The results showed a general level of satisfaction with regard to the overall consular services provided by the diplomatic missions overseas, including over-the-counter services and telephone responses. At the same time, there were harsh evaluations about the attitude of consular staffs and opinions calling for improvement. As such, MOFA will continue its efforts for improvements, reflecting user feedback in enhancements and improvements of consular services, so as to provide consular services at the diplomatic missions overseas in line with users' perspective.

Results of Survey on the Consular Service (2018: 148 diplomatic missions overseas)



(2) Issuance of Passports and Prevention of Illicit Acquisition of Passports

Approximately 4.31 million passports were issued in 2018. As of the end of December 2018, approximately 29.98 million ordinary passports are valid, and all of them are ePassports³.

The issuance of ePassports is effective for deterring illicit use of passports such as forged or altered passports. However, there continue to be cases of illicit acquisition of passports by means of impersonation⁴. There were cases where Japanese nationals or illegal foreign residents left and entered Japan using passports acquired illegally

³ An ePassport is a passport embedded with an integrated circuit (IC) chip which contains a digitized facial image (biometric information) and other information of the passport holder to prevent passport forgery and its illicit use by a third party. It was first issued in 2006.

⁴ The number of illegal acquisitions of passports through identity theft discovered: 41 in 2014, 31 in 2015, 22 in 2016, 21 in 2017, and 35 in 2018.

Challenges of a Visa Officer

Consular Office of the Embassy of Japan in China

The number of foreign visitors to Japan reached the highest on record at 31.19 million in 2018. With the further increase of tourists and other visitors from foreign countries, the number of visa issuances is approximately 6.95 million in 2018, and 78% of them were issued to Chinese citizens. The Government of Japan is pursuing initiatives to make Japan a tourism oriented country and the relaxation of visa requirements also boosts the increase of foreign visitors. On the other hand, it is also important to conduct a strict visa examination to prevent the entry of foreigners who might harm Japan's interests. Visa officers in charge of issuing visas at the Embassies and Consulates-General of Japan around the world are struggling daily with many application documents.

In recent years, the number of Chinese people visiting Japan, mainly tourists and business people, has been steadily increasing. The number of visa issuances at the Embassy and Consulates-General of Japan in China is remarkably high, and visa officers are extremely busy every day. For example, the Embassy of Japan in China issues approximately 1.2 million visas a year. This means receiving approximately 5,000 visa applications per day and over 10,000 visas at peak times. The number of visa issuances climbed from 0.51 to 1.35 million in the five years from 2014 to 2018. However, the number of visa officers is not keeping the same pace with the increase in issuance volume. The staff of designated travel companies (proxy application company) come to the visa counter of the Embassy in the morning every day to submit applications and pick up approved visas. Visa officers must carefully examine related documents in a matter of minutes each day in order to correctly and quickly process a high volume of applications within a fixed amount of time with a limited number of people.



Visa reception counter

Given this situation, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) and the Embassy and Consulates-General of Japan in China are constantly seeking to enhance efficiency and streamline the visa examination process. For example, as an initial streamlining attempt, since fall 2018, Japan has been promoting a change in the payment method for visa application fees from cash to bank transfer to the account of the Embassy of Japan in China, which has been applied to all designated travel agencies. This was the first time such a measure had been implemented by a Japanese Embassy, Consulate-General or permanent mission of Japan. Visa officers prepared extensively for this unprecedented change by holding briefings for designated travel agencies, reviewing work procedures, and assigning roles within the Embassy and Consulates-General to ensure that everything would go smoothly. As a result, the change improved work efficiency, especially by removing the tasks of checking whether any counterfeit notes are mixed in with the massive amounts of cash and calculating cash amounts.

As the second streamlining attempt, MOFA is actively promoting a paperless format with electronic applications that replaces the previous method of conducting examinations of visa application documents only after receiving hard copies of them. This will streamline data input work at the Embassy of Japan in China. While Japan plans to launch electronic visas using an electronic procedure for the Embassy and Consulates-General of Japan in China from April 2020, the Embassy of Japan is implementing this format as a pilot site.

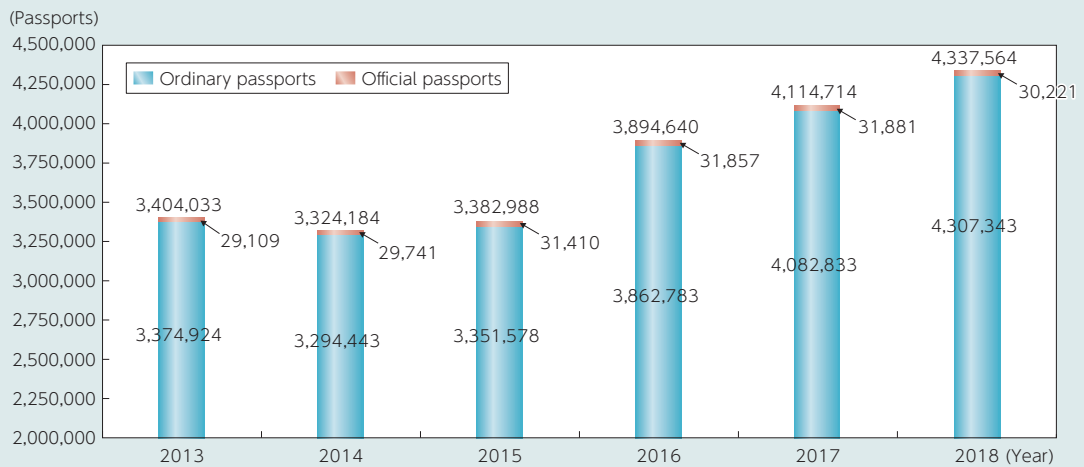


Visa waiting area full of designated travel agencies

Nevertheless, the benefits from enhancing work efficiency and streamlining are limited to data input and visa seal printing and other things handled by local staff. The extremely important examination task, which must be handled by visa officers themselves, continues to require rigorous checks, including from the standpoint of border control.

Visa officers not only at the Embassy of Japan in China, but also around the world carry out their examination tasks in a matter of minutes day and night to promote people-to-people exchanges between respective countries and Japan and facilitate the appropriate flow of people into Japan.

Changes in the Number of Issued Passports of Japan



Note 1: Official passports include diplomatic passports.

Source: The graph was created based on the Passport Statistics 2018 Edition (Passport Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs)

under the name of another person. Also, passports with false identities were used for borrowing money from financial institutions, opening bank accounts for the purpose of selling them to those who plot to commit other crimes, and subscribing to mobile phone services without the real passport holders knowing it. In order to prevent illicit acquisition of passports that may nurture these secondary or tertiary crimes, MOFA has been making further effort to enhance strict identity examination in issuing a passport, for example, by such means as designating a tighten inspection period against illicit acquisition of passports through identity theft at passport offices located in each prefecture. Furthermore, restrictions are placed on the issuance of passports to persons who are undergoing criminal prosecution, persons who have a suspended sentence, persons who violated the Passport Act, etc. Upon a report from relevant institutions, the Minister for Foreign Affairs orders the surrender of passports to persons against whom an arrest warrant has been issued.

While the integrated circuit (IC) chips in Japanese passports record facial images and other information identifying the passport holders, ePassports with improved security against counterfeiting using biometric information

such as fingerprints have become widespread in other countries, and possibilities for more effective use of IC chips are under consideration at the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and the International Organization for Standardization (ISO). In addition, starting October 1, 2018, 'downloadable applications' launched on January 4, 2016 at diplomatic missions overseas are now adopted in Japan as well, improving convenience for applicants.

Consignment of passport-related work such as application and delivery, from the prefectural governments to city/town offices has been permitted since 2006. 837 cities/towns had started passport service by the end of 2018, which make up almost 50% of all the cities/towns in Japan.

(3) Overseas Voting

The overseas voting system allows Japanese voters living overseas to vote in national elections. In the elections after June 2007, it was made possible to vote from overseas for the small electoral district election of the House of Representatives and the electoral district election of the House of Councillors (including by-election and recall election), in addition to voting for the

proportional representation segment of elections of the both Houses. In order to vote from overseas, it is necessary to be registered in advance on the overseas voter directory managed by the election board of the city/town government and to obtain overseas voter identification. Starting in June 2018, in addition to the conventional method of applying through a diplomatic mission overseas after moving overseas, Japanese nationals can now apply at their municipality service counter at the same time as filing their notice of moving overseas. As a result, there is no longer a need to appear in person at a diplomatic mission overseas after moving outside Japan, which simplifies procedures and is expected to lead to an increase in registered voters. Voters with valid overseas voter identification can vote by choosing one of the three methods of voting, a) voting at diplomatic missions overseas, b) voting by mail, or c) voting in Japan.

The diplomatic missions overseas have been making efforts to disseminate the system and to increase the number of registered voters by publicizing this system and carrying out a visiting service for the registration of Japanese nationals living in remote areas. Also, whenever an election is held, diplomatic missions overseas are responsible for voting administration, including PR prior to elections.

(4) Assistance for Japanese Nationals Living and Engaging in Activities Overseas

A Japanese Schools and Supplementary Education Schools

Education for children is one of the major concerns for Japanese nationals living abroad. In cooperation with the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, MOFA carries out assistance for the Japanese Schools (partial assistance for school building rental fees, rewards for locally hired teachers and safety measures expenses) so that the overseas school children at the age of domestic compulsory

education can receive education equivalent to that of Japan. MOFA also provides the same assistance as that for the Japanese Schools to the Supplementary Education Schools (educational institutions established to maintain children's ability, such as Japanese language ability) mainly in areas where the Japanese Schools are not located. In addition, MOFA is further strengthening and expanding assistance related to safety measures in light of the recent changes in the international terrorism situation. MOFA will continue providing these forms of support in the future.

B Medical/Health Measures

MOFA gathers information on infectious diseases being spread overseas and provides this information to a broad audience through the overseas safety website, websites of diplomatic missions overseas, email, etc. Furthermore, in order to provide health advice through consultations to Japanese nationals residing in countries where the medical situation is poor, MOFA dispatches medical teams with the support of domestic medical institutions (to one country, seven cities in FY2018). MOFA also dispatches medical specialists to regions where infectious diseases or air pollution has become serious, and organizes health and safety lectures (12 countries, 13 cities in FY2018).

C Responses to Other Needs

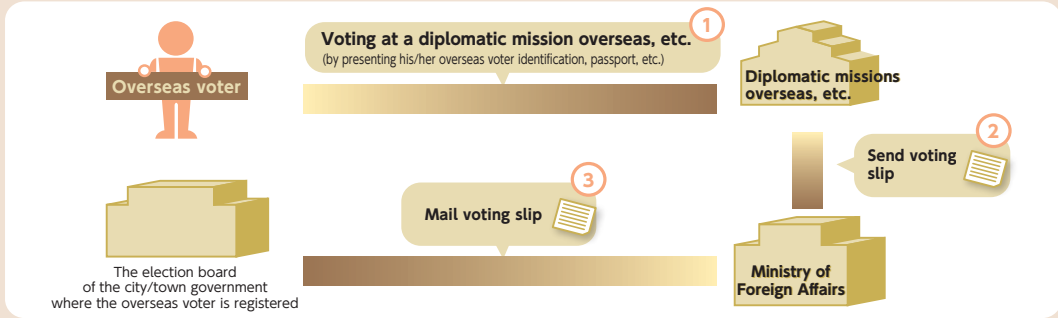
In order to eliminate the complexity of various procedures for Japanese nationals living overseas (such as converting Japanese driving licenses to the country of residence, obtaining stay/work permits) and to make living abroad more comfortable, MOFA continues talks with foreign governments.

For example, when converting driving licenses issued in foreign countries to Japanese driving licenses, all persons with driving licenses issued in a foreign country are exempted from taking certain examinations, when it is confirmed that they have no problems with operating vehicles.

Overseas Voting

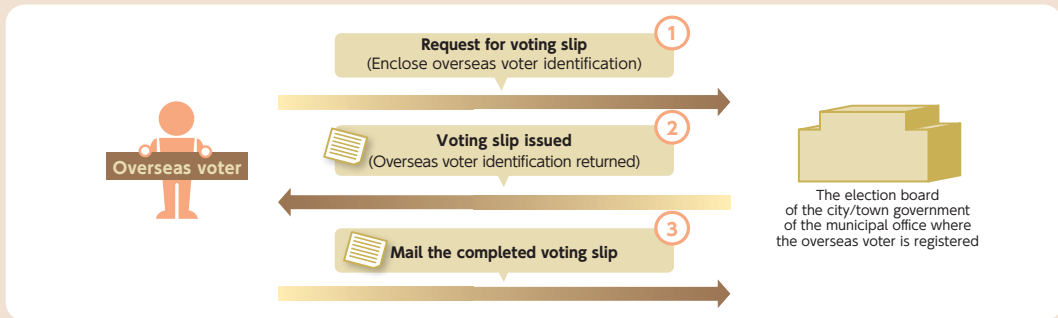
a) Voting at diplomatic missions overseas

Voters registered on an overseas voter directory can vote by presenting their overseas voter identification and ID such as a passport at a diplomatic mission (period and time for voting vary depending on the mission)



b) Voting by mail

A voting slip can be requested by sending his/her overseas voter identification and written request for a voting slip to the chair of the election board of the city/town government where the voter is registered. Completed voting slip needs to arrive at the voting venue before the end of voting time (20:00 Japan time) of the domestic voting day in Japan.



c) Voting in Japan

If overseas voters are temporarily staying in Japan during the election time, or in case voters are not yet registered on a domestic voter directory after their permanent return in Japan, the voter may vote in the same way as other domestic voters with their overseas voter identification for overseas voting (early voting, absentee voting, and voting on the election day).

On the other hand, it is mandatory to take driving tests when converting Japanese licenses to local licenses in some countries and states, such as North and South America. MOFA is calling for those countries to simplify the procedures for license conversion as in Japan.

MOFA also supports victims of atomic bomb attacks living overseas in applying for the authorization of Atomic Bomb Diseases and for the issuance of Health Check Certificates, via diplomatic and consular missions.

3 Cooperation with Emigrants and Japanese Descendants, Nikkei

The migration of Japanese nationals overseas has a history of 150 years as of 2018. There are estimated 3.6 million overseas Japanese and Nikkei, with especially large numbers residing in North, Central and South America. They make positive and great contributions to the development of the countries in various fields, including politics, economy, academics and culture, and at the same

time, they act as a bridge between Japan and these countries in developing close relations.

Together with the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), MOFA provides cooperation in Central and South America, where estimated 2.13 million Japanese descendants live. Various forms of assistance are offered, including welfare support for aging emigrants, training in Japan for Nikkei persons, and dispatch of volunteers to the local Nikkei communities. Also, in May 2017, based on the report submitted to the Minister of Foreign Affairs from the Panel of Experts on Collaborating with Nikkei Communities in Latin America and the Caribbean, MOFA is working to build further relationships with Nikkei communities.

To date, invitation programs for Nikkei leaders in various fields have been carried out in North, Central and South America. Also, efforts are underway to strengthen relations with Japanese descendants in these regions. As part of this, diplomatic missions in each country are working closely to cooperate with Nikkei communities, including actively establishing an occasion to meet with Nikkei persons during visits of Japanese government high-level officials.

In June, a number of commemorative events were held in Hawaii, including the Convention of Nikkei and Japanese Abroad, to mark the 150th anniversary of the first Japanese migration to Hawaii. In August, during Foreign Minister Kono's visit to the U.S., he interacted with Japanese descendants representing various generations and fields, and during his visit to Peru in the same month, Foreign Minister Kono met with the Nikkei community through the Association of Nikkei and Japanese Abroad. Moreover, in December, Prime Minister Abe visited Uruguay and Paraguay, where he held talks with members of the Nikkei community in both countries. Japan intends to provide support for Japanese emigrants and their descendants, promote cooperation with the young generation and strengthen the bond between these people and Japan.

4 The Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction (the Hague Convention) and its Implementation

The Hague Convention is designed as an international mechanism for addressing disputes arising from the wrongful removal or retention of children across borders in the belief that the interests of children are of paramount importance. It requires cooperation between Contracting States to the Convention for returning children to their state of habitual residence and establishing opportunities for transboundary parent-child access.

This convention came into force in Japan on April 1, 2014. Currently, 99 countries including Japan are parties to the Convention as of December 31, 2018.

The convention is implemented through mutual cooperation among the governmental agencies designated as the Central Authority in Contracting States to the Convention. In Japan, MOFA as the Central Authority avails itself of experts in various fields and communicates/cooperates with foreign Central Authorities, and provides assistance to the parties such as locating whereabouts of the child and arranging mediation services aimed at amicable resolutions.

In the four years and nine months between the entry into force of the Convention and the end of December 2018, MOFA received a total number of 328 applications: 197 applications seeking the return of the child and 131 applications seeking access to the child. Of the cases seeking the return of the child from Japan to another country, children were returned in 30 cases and conclusions were reached not to return the child in 32 cases. Of the cases requesting the return of the child from another country to Japan, children were returned in 32 cases and conclusions were reached not to return the child in 19 cases.

In February 2018, MOFA invited a U.S. lawyer with in-depth knowledge of court proceedings for Hague cases in the U.S. so that persons involved in Japan's implementation of the Hague Convention

can learn from his expertise, and lecture meetings and other events were organized for that purpose. Furthermore, in August, as part of PR activities to prevent child abductions, the head of the Central Authority within the Ministry of Justice of Brazil was invited to Japan. MOFA held seminars with her in four cities in Japan intended for Brazilian nationals and their spouses living in Japan. She also had meetings with MOFA and Japanese practitioners.

In addition to this, MOFA works with diplomatic missions overseas to actively hold seminars to raise awareness among Japanese nationals living overseas. Also, efforts are put into PR activities including holding seminars in Japan at local governments and relevant institutions and handing out leaflets in multiple languages.

In August, MOFA set up a Twitter account for the Hague Convention Division, which is being used to inform a broader audience about the Hague Convention using social media.

Number of Applications for Assistance Received by the Minister for Foreign Affairs Based on the Implementation Act of the Hague Convention (as of end-December 2018)

	Application for assistance in child's return	Application for assistance in visitation or contact with child
Application concerning a child (children) in Japan	101	101
Application concerning a child (children) outside Japan	96	30