Risks and Safety of Japanese Nationals Overseas

1 Incidents and Accidents in 2022 and Responses to them

As of 2022, approximately 2.77 million Japanese nationals travelled overseas over the course of the year, and approximately 1.31 million Japanese nationals live abroad (as of October 2022). Protecting the lives of Japanese nationals traveling and residing abroad, as well as promoting their interests, is one of the most important missions of MOFA.

There has been no Japanese victim of terrorism incidents since 2020. However, 2022 was another year in which a large number of terrorist attacks occurred in various regions. The main terrorism incidents included shootings at subway stations in New York, the U.S., in April, shootings at a grocery store in New York, the U.S., in May, shootings in Oslo, Norway, in June, and bombings in Istanbul, Turkey, in November. Moreover, terrorism incidents occurred frequently in the Middle East, such as in Iraq, Syria, and Afghanistan, while extremist organizations also attacked in Pakistan. Furthermore, many terrorism incidents occurred in Africa, such as in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Somalia, Nigeria, Niger, Burkina Faso, Mali, and Mozambique.

In recent years, terrorist attacks have been occurring not only in the Middle East and Africa but also in Europe, North America, and Asia where many Japanese nationals travel and reside. There continues to be a large number of homegrown terrorist attacks perpetrated by those born in Western countries and indoctrinated through websites or other means by foreign extremists, terrorist attacks perpetrated by those acting on their own with little organizational background, and terrorist attacks in locations where unspecified large numbers of the general public gather every day. In particular, in North America and Europe violent acts by far-left and far-right actors, such as hate crimes motivated by animosity for a particular race or ethnic group, have been intensifying in frequency against the backdrop of increasing social anxiety and online activity stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic. Moreover, as Islamic extremists expand their scope of activities around the globe, the threat of terrorism is increasing worldwide in the COVID era.

The impacts of COVID-19 continued in 2022, but as restrictions on travel were eased in Japan and around the world, the number of people traveling overseas increased significantly compared to 2021 (approximately 510,000 people). While the number of incidents in which Japanese nationals fell victim to crimes was low compared to before the pandemic, such incidents continued to occur worldwide.

Natural disasters also occurred around the world and caused great damage. These included the volcanic eruption in Tonga (January) and flooding in Pakistan (August).

In Ukraine, in light of the increased tensions derived from the Russian military buildup in the border regions, MOFA raised the risk level to evacuate for the entire country and warned Japanese nationals to avoid all travel there. For those already in Ukraine, in February MOFA urged them to ensure their safety and evacuate immediately. In Russia, considering the severe restrictions placed on means for leaving the country such as the suspension of flights and the impact on everyday life such as the suspension of credit card settlement operations, in March MOFA raised the risk level to “Avoid all travel” or “Evacuate and Avoid all travel” for the entire country. In Africa, MOFA raised the risk level for Mali in August due to the worsening political situation driven by the rising threat of terrorism, raised the risk level for Burkina Faso in October due to the political instability caused by a group of army officers taking power in a coup d’état and increased threat of

1 Source: Japan National Tourism Organization (JNTO)
terrorism, and also raised the risk level in Abuja, the capital of Nigeria, in October due to the increasing danger of terrorism. In Haiti in October, MOFA raised the risk level to “Evacuate and Avoid all travel” due to political instability, intermittent demonstrations and strikes, and frequent criminal acts by armed groups.

In October, two Japanese women were killed in the crowd crush which occurred in Itaewon, Seoul, the Republic of Korea (ROK). In Ukraine, a Japanese male who was engaged in fighting against the Russian military was killed in November. Moreover, a male Japanese national detained by the Myanmar authorities was found guilty in court and sentenced to a 10-year term of imprisonment in July, but in November he was pardoned by the Myanmar authorities, freed, and returned to Japan after continued requests for early release from the Government of Japan.

Whenever necessary, MOFA issues overseas travel safety information on infectious diseases in countries and regions where health and medical caution is required, in order to communicate the current outbreak situation and prevention measures, and highlight matters worth paying attention to when travelling and staying in the affected regions.

In terms of COVID-19, while the global pandemic situation generally improved in 2022, the outbreak situation rapidly deteriorated in China in December. MOFA reviews the level of Travel Advice and Warning on Infectious Diseases and issues region-wide safety information in a timely manner, and provides information to Japanese nationals residing or traveling abroad via its websites and consular e-mails in a timely and appropriate manner.

In terms of other infectious diseases, cases of Ebola were reported in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Uganda, with Mpox and cholera prevalent in various parts of the world. Furthermore, cases of the Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) have been reported in the Middle East. Mosquito-borne diseases such as dengue fever have also spread throughout Southeast Asia.
Overseas

The number of Japanese nationals receiving support or protection from Japanese diplomatic missions overseas and the Japan-Taiwan Exchange Association fell in 2021 to a total of 8,252 as the number of people traveling overseas significantly decreased due to the impact of COVID-19, and the number of cases of support or protection also decreased to 17,669. Amid the pandemic, Japanese embassies and consulates-general worldwide provided assistance in many ways such as support to Japanese nationals who contracted COVID-19 as well as disseminating information about entry/exit limitations and restrictions on movement.

The safety of Japanese nationals is threatened constantly in various regions throughout the world. With border restrictions in response to the pandemic being relaxed in Japan and around the world, the number of Japanese nationals residing or traveling abroad is increasing. However, due to the continuing impact of COVID-19, Japanese nationals traveling abroad must be prepared for multiple risks such as terrorist attacks and infectious disease striking at the same time and it is more difficult than ever to respond if Japanese travelers encounter a terrorist attack or another incident or accident while traveling overseas. Therefore there is increasing need to take every possible overseas safety measure.

Based on this perspective, MOFA works to enhance the safety awareness of Japanese nationals and promote its safety measures by disseminating information widely to the general public. Specifically, MOFA added panels to its Overseas Safety website page for easy access to the necessary information, and issues the latest safety information for each country and region on the website. Furthermore, MOFA send emails on the latest safety information of travel destinations to Japanese residents and travelers who have registered.
with Overseas Residential Registrations or overseas travel registration service (Tabi-Regi). Moreover, the website’s map functions was renovated to make them easier to read.

MOFA strives to enhance the knowledge and capability of the Japanese people concerning overseas safety measures and crisis management through seminars and training. In 2022, MOFA held virtual and in-person seminars on safety measures inside and outside Japan to address the need for safety measures, taking into account increased mobility of people with the easing of COVID-19 border restrictions (15 times at diplomatic missions overseas and seven times within Japan). Furthermore, Consular Affairs Bureau staff delivered lectures at seminars held throughout Japan by domestic organizations, associations and other groups.

Furthermore, MOFA held “Public-Private Joint Practical Training for Counter-Terrorism and Anti-Kidnapping Measures” in collaboration with the business sector. These initiatives are useful in preventing harm from regular crimes and terrorism, but also in improving response capabilities in the event of encountering such an incident. Furthermore, the public and private sectors are cooperating to advance safety measures even overseas, and the diplomatic missions in each country host regular meetings of Security Consultation and Liaison Committees. Even amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, the diplomatic missions overseas are continuing to share information, exchange opinions and bolster collaboration in preparation for emergencies with local Japanese nationals in their respective countries, including by hosting such events online.

Following the terrorist attack in Dhaka in July 2016, MOFA developed “Golgo 13’s Security Guidelines for Japanese SMEs Abroad,” with the aim of raising the awareness of international cooperation personnel, as well as small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), students studying abroad and short-term travelers, who have limited access to information on safety. MOFA continued to promote awareness utilizing the expanded edition of the Security Guidelines with an added episode and commentary videos regarding measures to address the combined risk of an infectious disease pandemic, terrorist attacks and other composite risks. Moreover, from October 2022, MOFA has been using the LINE messaging platform, through “Messages from Duke Togo” by the medium of “Golgo 13’s Security Guidelines for Japanese SMEs Abroad,” to distribute educational messages about security measures and useful knowledge for people to protect themselves.

With regard to Japanese students studying overseas, MOFA personnel hold lectures at universities and other educational institutions, on the grounds that many such institutions have not accumulated sufficient expertise or experience in safety measures and dealing with emergency situations, and requested their cooperation in raising the submission rate of Overseas Residential Registrations and the registration rate of Tabi-Regi. With the easing of COVID-19 border restrictions, MOFA receives gradually increasing numbers of requests from educational institutions, and conducted lectures on safety measures online and in other formats in 2022. MOFA will continue to strive to help institutions to raise awareness of safety measures among their students and build in-house crisis management structures. MOFA is moving ahead with efforts to connect government agencies with
educational institutions, overseas study agencies and students studying abroad, by beginning an automatic Tabi-Regi registration system together with some overseas study institutions.

In terms of safety measures for short-term travelers, MOFA is engaged in PR activities mainly focused on promoting registration to the above-mentioned Tabi-Regi, including by distributing the *Kaigai Anzen Tora no Maki* (handbook for overseas travelers) as well as information cards aimed at increasing awareness of Overseas Residential Registrations and Tabi-Regi, and thus raising their registration rate. Furthermore, the Consular Affairs Bureau provided a booth at Tourism Expo Japan held in September at the Tokyo Big Sight convention center, providing information and raising attention for the safety of Japanese nationals residing or traveling abroad, including about Overseas Residential Registrations and Tabi-Regi. As of January 2023, the number of travelers who had registered on Tabi-Regi since its launch in July 2014 exceeded 7.25 million, reflecting initiatives for enhancing the system’s convenience and activities that aim at promoting registration.

### Consular Service and Assistance for Japanese Living Overseas

#### (1) Improving Consular Service and Promoting Digitalization

**A Improving Consular Service**

With the aim of providing quality consular services to Japanese nationals overseas, MOFA conducts every year a questionnaire survey on services such as consular staff’s attitudes in over-the-counter and telephone responses as well as work implementation status at diplomatic missions overseas. The survey conducted in January 2023 covered 142 diplomatic missions overseas and received valid responses from 16,857 people. The survey results suggested that respondents were for the most part satisfied with the level of consular services provided by diplomatic missions overseas. Nevertheless, some respondents also submitted views that consular staff showed insufficient concern and understanding for users’ situations, including that staff seem to adopt matter-of-fact attitudes and terms of speech. MOFA takes such user feedback seriously, and will continue its efforts to enhance services and make improvements so as to provide better consular services that are oriented to the perspective of its users.

**B Promoting Digitalization**

Furthermore, based on the Priority Policy Program for Realizing Digital Society (Cabinet decision of June 2022), MOFA will further digitalize consular procedures, such as online application for passports, visas and certificates, as well as cashless payment for fees in order to increase user convenience. Specific actions have included revising the Passport Act in April 2022 and starting the online application system on March 27, 2023. On the same day, some diplomatic missions overseas also began accepting online application for certificates as well as online application for and issuance of one type of visas in electronic form, as well as online credit card payments for these consular and visa fees. In addition, on April 1, 2023, the Consular Digital Transformation Division was established within the Consular Affairs Bureau.

#### (2) Passports: Maintaining trust, enhancing convenience and making administrative tasks more efficient

The number of Japanese passports issued declined from February 2020, due to the global decline in overseas travel as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, but is showing signs of recovery as of the end of 2022. The number of passports issued in 2022 was 1.37 million, an increase of approximately 2.2 times compared to 2021. There were approximately 21.75 million valid passports in circulation as of the end of December 2022, falling by approximately 11% compared to 2021.

The online application system for passports, which began on March 27, 2023, is available in principle when applying to renew passports in Japan. Application can be done via the Individual Number Portal website (a government-run online administrative service), therefore it will no longer be necessary for applicants to appear at a service counter in person.
Applicants are able to take a photo of their face and signature and submit them via smartphone or other digital devices. Moreover, referring to electronic family register certificates will be possible from FY2024 through linkage with the Ministry of Justice’s Family Register Information Linkage System. This will enable online application for new passports that currently require submission of a copy of a family register at the counter in person.

Measures taken in 2020 such as upgrading the functions to prevent unauthorized reading of personal information contained in passport IC chips as well as adding the designs of the “Thirty-six Views of Mount Fuji” by Katsushika Hokusai to the visa pages have made unauthorized usage of passports such as forgery and alteration more difficult. However, unauthorized obtaining of passports by impersonating others continues to occur². Looking ahead, MOFA will consider ways to further increase the trust of Japanese passports - such as introducing next-generation passports with laser printing on thermoplastic material - based on the criteria considered at the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO).

In the passport index (number of travel destination countries not requiring visas) that was announced by a private-sector UK company in January 2023, Japanese passports ranked first out of 109 countries and areas. MOFA will continue to engage in maintaining the trust of Japanese passports while enhancing convenience for applicants and making passport administration more efficient.

(3) Overseas Voting

The overseas voting system allows Japanese voters living overseas to vote in national elections. In order to vote through the overseas voting system, it is necessary to be registered in advance on the overseas voter directory managed by the election board of the city or 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 there, Japanese nationals can now apply at their municipal 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. Voters 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 spread the overseas voting system and to increase the number of registered voters by publicizing the overseas voting system to the territories under their jurisdiction and carrying out a visiting service for the registration of Japanese nationals living in remote areas. In 2022, for the 26th regular election of the House of Councillors, voting at diplomatic missions overseas was conducted for the 16th time involving 234 diplomatic missions and offices. In 2023, MOFA will continue its PR and other activities to increase the number of registered voters and promote voting at diplomatic missions overseas.

Moreover, a May 2022 judgment of the Grand Bench of the Supreme Court ruled that Japanese nationals overseas not being permitted to vote in national review of judges of the Supreme Court is unconstitutional. Based on this ruling, the Act on National Review of Judges of the Supreme Court was partially revised (taking effect on February 17, 2023) and an Overseas Nationals Review System established, enabling Japanese nationals residing overseas to exercise their right to review in the national review.

(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 (MEXT), MOFA provides assistance to Japanese Schools (partial assistance for school building rental fees, remuneration for locally hired teachers, and safety measures expenses) so that the overseas school children at the age of compulsory education in Japan can receive a level of education equivalent to that in Japan. MOFA also provides

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² Known cases of unauthorized obtaining of passports were as follows: 35 cases in 2018, 42 in 2019, 15 in 2020, 12 in 2021, and 34 in 2022.
Results of questionnaire survey on consular services (FY2022: 142 diplomatic missions)

How satisfied are you with the overall consular services you have received?

- Satisfied: 56.9%
- Somewhat satisfied: 22.5%
- Not satisfied: 4.8%
- Not very satisfied: 7.2%
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied: 8.6%

Was your problem (application, notification, consultations, etc.) resolved by consular services?

- Resolved: 81.9%
- Somewhat resolved: 10.7%
- Cannot say: 2.9%
- Not really resolved: 1.9%
- Not resolved: 2.6%
- Not satisfied: 4.8%
- Not very satisfied: 7.2%
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied: 8.6%

How satisfied are you with the knowledge and processing speed of the consular services?

- Satisfied: 56.0%
- Somewhat satisfied: 25.2%
- Not satisfied: 3.2%
- Not very satisfied: 5.3%
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied: 10.3%

How satisfied are you with the customer service manners of staff?

- Satisfied: 61.3%
- Somewhat satisfied: 21.3%
- Not satisfied: 3.3%
- Not very satisfied: 4.1%
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied: 10.0%

Please select any of the following items that you found to be “good” about the staff at the consular service counter or on the phone. (Multiple answers are allowed.)

- Easy to understand guidance and explanations: 36.3%
- Safe and trustworthy service: 41.7%
- Friendly and warm service: 29.4%
- Easy to consult with: 21.3%
- Quick and efficient explanations and guidance: 30.1%
- Abundant knowledge: 13.4%
- Actively reach out when I am having difficulties: 5.7%
- Polite: 33.9%
- Neat and tidy appearance: 18.8%
- Give a Japanese-style impression: 23.1%
- Other: 2.3%
- Nothing in particular: 20.8%

Please select all that apply if you feel that improvement needs to be made for the knowledge and processing speed of consular services. (Multiple answers are allowed.)

- Difficult to understand explanations/information, materials, and formats of documents for submission: 13.8%
- Incomplete or wrong information or answers: 4.4%
- There is a lack of knowledge about administrative procedures: 4.0%
- I do not know when I will receive answers to my consultations or questions: 4.2%
- I feel the paperwork is not handled well: 6.5%
- There are lines at the counter and long wait times to receive services: 11.0%
- Cannot get a clear answer when consulting or inquiring by telephone: 6.4%
- They do not answer the telephone: 6.5%
- Procedures are not completed on the same day, so I have to go there several times: 14.5%
- Other: 15.0%
- Nothing in particular: 51.7%
Please select all that apply if you feel that improvement needs to be made for the knowledge and processing speed of consular services. (Multiple answers are allowed.)

Please select all that apply if you feel that improvement needs to be made for the customer service manners of staff providing consular services. (Multiple answers are allowed.)

Please select any of the following items that you found to be “good” about the staff at the consular service counter or on the phone. (Multiple answers are allowed.)

- Easy to understand guidance and explanations
- Safe and trustworthy service
- Friendly and warm service
- Easy to consult with
- Flexible response to the situation
- Quick and efficient explanations and guidance
- Abundant knowledge
- Actively reach out when I am experiencing difficulties
- Polite
- Neat and tidy appearance
- Give a Japanese-style impression
- Other
- Nothing in particular

Changes in the number of passports issued

Note: Official passports include diplomatic passports.

Source: Prepared based on passport statistics for 2022 (MOFA’s Passport Division)

The same level of assistance for Japanese Schools to Supplementary Education Schools (educational institutions established to maintain children’s academic ability, such as Japanese language proficiency) mainly in areas where overseas Japanese educational facilities are not located.

The Act Concerning the Promotion of Education at Overseas Japanese Educational Facilities was approved and promulgated in June 2022, stipulating the basic principles for promoting education at overseas Japanese educational facilities and clarifying the responsibilities of the Government of Japan in this respect. Furthermore, MOFA is working together with MEXT to develop a basic policy for advancing measures related to overseas Japanese educational facilities based on the above Act.

B Medical/Health Measures

MOFA gathers information on outbreaks of infectious diseases overseas and provides information to a broad audience through the overseas safety website, websites of diplomatic missions overseas, emails and other means. 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 cooperation of domestic medical institutions. MOFA also organizes health and safety lectures by medical specialists for
regions where infectious diseases or air pollution are becoming serious issues.

**Support for Japanese Nationals Living Overseas and Japanese Descendants (Nikkei)**

From August 2021, the Government of Japan operated a COVID-19 vaccination initiative at Haneda and Narita Airports for Japanese nationals living overseas who do not have a resident registry in Japan and others, vaccinating 51,000 people to date (as of January 2023).

Between March and December 2021, in order to support Japanese nationals living overseas and Japanese descendants (Nikkei) whose lives are being disrupted by the spread of COVID-19, MOFA carried out the Program to Strengthen Livelihood and Business Foundations for Japanese Nationals Overseas and People of Japanese Descent (Nikkei), which supported projects implemented by Japan societies, Japanese chambers of commerce and industry, and Nikkei groups overseas. The projects included PCR testing, distribution of masks and disinfectants, and other awareness raising in order to halt the spread of infections, as well as legal and tax consultation services.

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**Voting in elections for overseas voters**

**a. Voting at a diplomatic mission overseas**

Voters who are registered on the overseas electoral roll may vote by presenting their overseas voter certificates, passports and other necessary documents to a diplomatic mission overseas set up as a polling station. (The period and time of voting differs depending on the diplomatic mission.)

1. Voting in person at a diplomatic mission overseas, etc. (Present the overseas voter certificate, passport, etc.)
2. Sending of ballot paper
3. Electoral Administration Committee of the municipality where the overseas voter is registered

**b. Postal voting**

Send the overseas voter certificate and request form for ballot paper to the chairperson of the Electoral Administration Committee of the municipality that you are registered with to request a ballot paper. Complete and return the ballot paper to the chairperson of the Electoral Administration Committee of the municipality, ensuring that the ballot paper reaches the polling station by the time the voting ends on the date of the election in Japan (8:00 p.m. Japan time). (Voting is carried out from the day after the date of public notice.)

1. Request for ballot paper (Enclose overseas voter certificate)
2. Issuance of ballot paper (The overseas voter certificate will be enclosed and returned to the voter)
3. Sending of completed ballot paper by post

**c. Voting in Japan**

In the case where the overseas voter returns temporarily to Japan at the time of the elections, or where the overseas voter is not yet registered on the electoral roll in Japan after returning to Japan, he or she may vote through the same voting methods as voters in Japan (early voting, absentee voting, voting on election day).
to nurture business environments. Until March 2022, MOFA carried out a program that provided medical and psychological counseling to Japanese nationals living overseas.

D Responses to Other Needs

In order to eliminate the complexity of various procedures for Japanese nationals living overseas (such as converting Japanese driver’s licenses, obtaining residence/work permits) and to make living abroad more comfortable, MOFA continues to engage with the authorities in the respective countries where Japanese nationals reside.

For example, when converting driver’s licenses issued in foreign countries to Japanese driver’s licenses, all persons with driver’s licenses issued in a foreign country are exempted from taking certain sections of the Japanese driver’s license examination (theory/practical), when it has been confirmed that they have no problems with driving vehicles. On the other hand, as it is mandatory for Japanese nationals to take driving tests when converting Japanese driver’s licenses to local licenses in some countries and states, MOFA is calling for those countries to simplify the procedures for license conversion to the same degree as in Japan.

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

Furthermore, MOFA is working to address issues of loneliness and social isolation among Japanese nationals residing overseas. MOFA liaises with NPOs in Japan to provide detailed assistance for individual cases overseas, and works to increase international understanding related to this issue such as by co-hosting with the Cabinet Office meetings related to loneliness and social isolation for overseas ambassadors to Japan.

3 Cooperation with Emigrants and Japanese Descendants (Nikkei)

The migration of Japanese nationals overseas has a history of 154 years, as of 2022. There are over 3.8 million overseas Japanese and Japanese descendants (Nikkei) around the world, with especially large numbers residing in North, Central, and South America. They make a significant contribution to the development of their countries of residence in various fields, including politics, economy, education and culture, and at the same time, they act as a bridge between Japan and those countries in developing close relations.

Together with the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), MOFA provides cooperation in Central and South America, where over two million Nikkei live. Various forms of assistance are offered, including welfare support for aging emigrants, training in Japan for Nikkei people, and dispatch of volunteers to the local Nikkei communities. MOFA is also working to further strengthen relationships with Nikkei communities based on the report submitted to the Minister for Foreign Affairs from the Panel of Experts on Collaborating with Communities of Japanese Immigrants and their Descendants (“Nikkei”) in Central and South America in May 2017.

Thus far, invitation programs to Japan for Nikkei leaders in various fields, and from various countries and regions, have been carried out in North, Central and South America. Furthermore, efforts are underway to strengthen relations with Nikkei people in these regions through close cooperation between the diplomatic missions in each country and Nikkei communities, including actively creating opportunities for senior officials from Japan to meet with Nikkei persons during their visits to these countries.

Following 2021, the 62nd Convention of Nikkei and Japanese Abroad in 2022 was held virtually due to the impact of COVID-19, and a video message from Foreign Minister Hayashi was played. Going forward, along with providing support to Japanese abroad and Nikkei, MOFA will promote cooperation with the younger generation and strengthen their bonds with Japan.
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 entered into force in Japan on April 1, 2014, with 103 countries including Japan parties to the Convention as of the end of December 2022.

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 provides assistance to both the parent whose child was removed and the parent who removed the child for the resolution of child removal cases, in communication and cooperation with foreign Central Authorities.

In the eight years and nine months since the entry into force of the Convention, MOFA received a total number of 505 applications by the end of December 2022: 331 applications seeking the return of the child and 174 applications seeking access to the child. Of the cases seeking the return of the child from Japan to another country, children were returned in 61 cases and conclusions were reached not to return the child in 46 cases. Of the cases requesting the return of the child from another country to Japan, children were returned in 58 cases and conclusions were reached not to return the child in 35 cases.

In order to build awareness of the Hague Convention among a broad public, MOFA holds online seminars and contributes articles to relevant local community press to raise awareness among Japanese nationals living overseas, as well as running seminars in Japan for local governments and relevant institutions such as bar associations. MOFA also puts efforts into PR activities by creating awareness-raising videos on the Hague Convention and posting them on MOFA’s website and video-sharing platforms.

### Number of applications for assistance received by MOFA based on the Implementation Act of the Hague Convention (as of the end of December 2022)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Applications related to child located in Japan</th>
<th>Application for assistance in child’s return</th>
<th>Application for assistance in visitation or contact with child</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Applications related to child located overseas</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>42</td>
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3 See the MOFA website regarding the 1980 Hague Convention and Japan’s efforts [https://www.mofa.go.jp/it/p/hr_ha/page22e_000249.html](https://www.mofa.go.jp/it/p/hr_ha/page22e_000249.html)