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Supporting Japanese Nationals Overseas

1 Risks and Safety of Japanese Nationals Overseas

(1) Incidents and Accidents in 2023 and Responses to them

As of 2023, approximately 9.62 million¹ Japanese nationals traveled overseas over the course of the year, and as of October that year approximately 1.29 million Japanese nationals live abroad. Protecting the lives of Japanese nationals traveling and residing abroad, as well as promoting their interests, is one of the most important missions of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA).

There has been no Japanese victim of terrorism incidents since 2020. However, 2023 was another year in which a large number of terrorist attacks occurred in various regions. The main terrorism incidents included a suicide bombing in Ankara, Türkiye (September), a mass stabbing in Arras, France (October), shootings in Brussels, Belgium (October), and an attack on foreign tourists at a national park in Uganda (October). Moreover, terrorism incidents occurred frequently in the Middle East, such as in Iraq, Syria, Israel, and Afghanistan, as well as in Pakistan in Southwest Asia. Furthermore, many terrorism incidents occurred in Africa, such as in Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Somalia, 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 with extremist ideologies through websites or other means, 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 on a daily basis. In North America and Europe, violent acts by far-left and far-right radicals, such as hate crimes motivated by animosity toward a particular race or ethnic group, have been intensifying in frequency. Moreover, the threat of terrorism is increasing due to reasons such as Islamic extremists expanding their scope of activities around the globe.

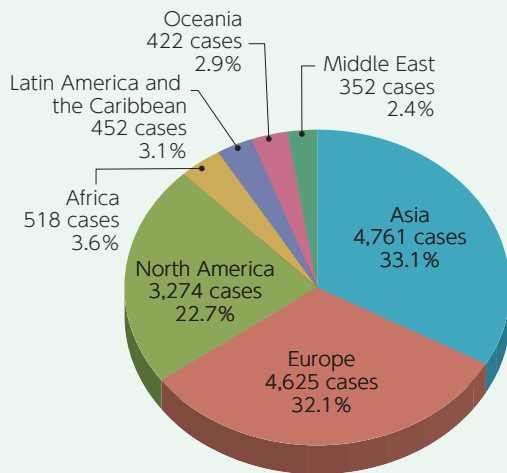
International travel rebounded rapidly in 2023 as the global impact of the COVID-19 pandemic showed signs of easing. The number of people traveling overseas accordingly showed an increasing trend compared to 2022 (approximately 2.77 million people). While the number of incidents in which Japanese nationals fell victim to crimes was low compared to before the pandemic, such incidents as well as traffic and mountain-climbing accidents continued to occur worldwide.

Natural disasters also occurred around the world and caused great damage. These included earthquakes in Türkiye (February), Morocco (September), and Afghanistan (October); wildfires in Hawaii, U.S. (August); and flooding in Libya (September).

In Africa, political turmoil occurred one after another in Niger (July) and in Gabon (August). In addition, clashes occurred in Sudan between government troops and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF), principally around the capital, Khartoum. The Government of Japan accordingly raised the risk level for these countries, supporting the evacuation of Japanese nationals in April using Self-Defense Forces (SDF) and government-chartered aircrafts. In the Middle East, terrorist attacks on Israel by Palestinian insurgents have grown into a large-scale conflict. In response, the Government of Japan raised the risk level for Israel, supporting Japanese nationals to leave the country using government-chartered and SDF aircrafts (October to November).

¹ Source: Japan National Tourism Organization (JNTO)

Breakdown of statistics for support to overseas Japanese nationals in 2022 by region



Source: 2022 Statistics on Assistance Provided by MOFA to Japanese Nationals Overseas

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.

Regarding COVID-19 Travel Advice and Warning on Infectious Diseases, based on the situation including the broad improvement in the global infection situation and the World Health Organization (WHO) decision on May 5, 2023 that COVID-19 no longer constitutes a public health emergency of international concern (PHEIC), MOFA lifted Level 1 (Exercise Caution) on May 8 for the entire world. MOFA will continue to provide information to Japanese nationals residing or traveling abroad via its websites and consular e-mails in a timely and appropriate manner. In 2023, cases of Marburg virus disease infection were confirmed in Equatorial Guinea and Tanzania, in response to which MOFA issued region-specific information. Mosquito-borne diseases such as dengue fever have spread widely throughout Central and South America, as well as spreading in Asia and Africa.

(2) Safety Measures for Japanese Nationals Overseas

The number of Japanese nationals receiving support or protection in 2022 from Japanese diplomatic missions

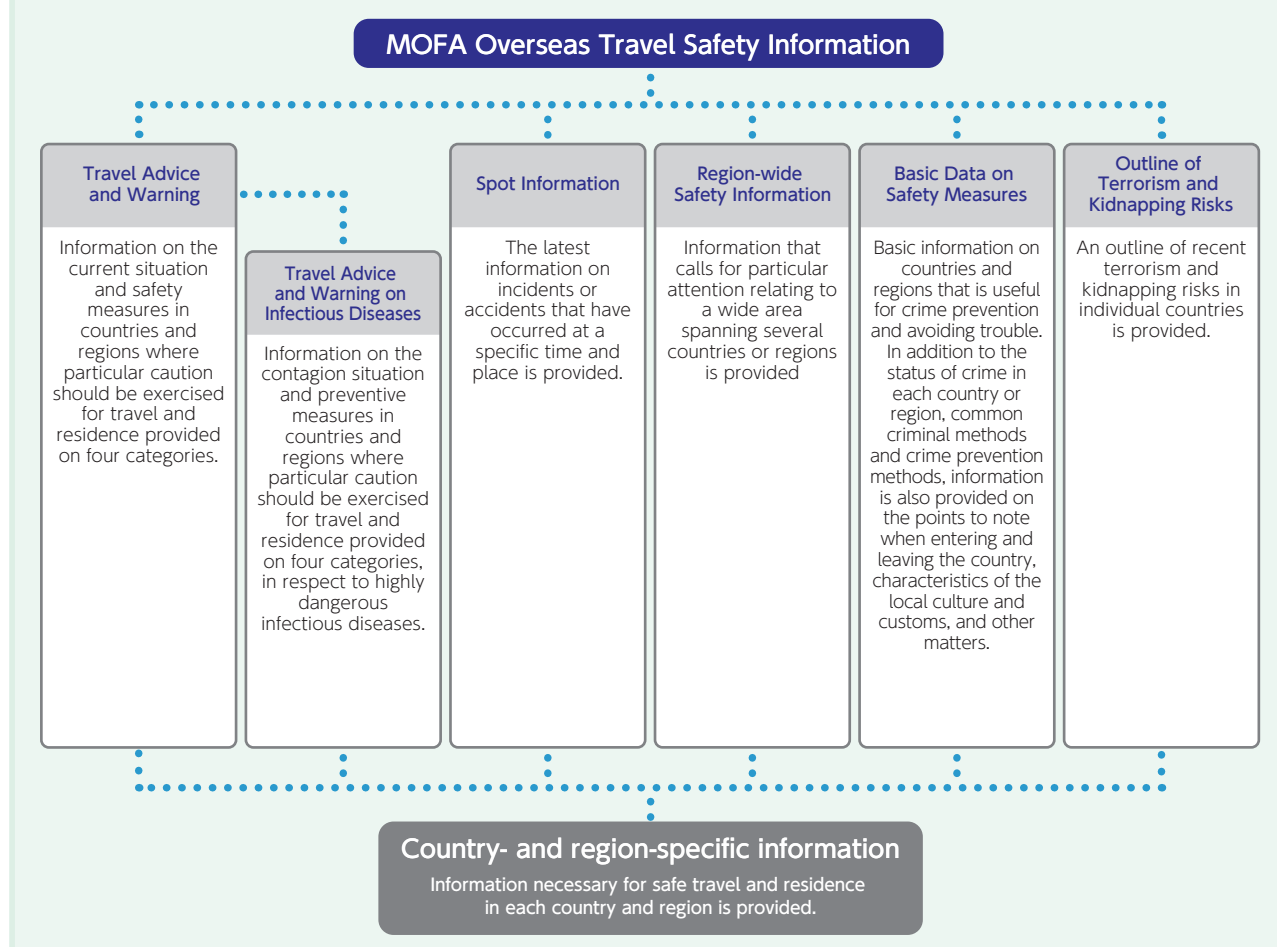
overseas and the Japan-Taiwan Exchange Association was a total of 16,895, and the number of cases of support or protection was 14,404. Within these overall numbers, Japanese embassies and consulates-general worldwide provided detailed assistance in many ways such as support to Japanese nationals as well as disseminating information about entry/exit limitations and public safety.

The safety of Japanese nationals is threatened constantly in various regions throughout the world. 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 an 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 sends 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).

MOFA is actively engaged in PR activities in order to promote registration on Tabi-Regi and submission of Overseas Residential Registrations. Examples of these initiatives include distributing information cards at all passport centers aimed at increasing awareness of Overseas Residential Registrations and Tabi-Regi, and thus raising their registration rate. In addition, in August, MOFA released a new promotional video on its official YouTube channel, in which the actors ISHIDA Hikari and MORITAKA Ai encourage registration on Tabi-Regi and submission of Overseas Residential Registrations. MOFA provides a Tabi-Regi linkage interface to travel industry operators, allowing them to batch register their passengers traveling abroad, and encourages companies to use it. Furthermore, MOFA contributed a booth to Tourism Expo Japan (Osaka) in October, providing information and raising attention to the safety of Japanese nationals residing or

Main Overseas Safety Information posted on MOFA's Overseas Safety Website (structure and overview)



traveling abroad, including about Overseas Residential Registrations and Tabi-Regi. As of December 2023, the number of travelers who had registered on Tabi-Regi since its launch in July 2014 exceeded 8.58 million, reflecting initiatives for enhancing the system's convenience and activities that aim at promoting registration.

MOFA strives to enhance the knowledge and capability of the Japanese people concerning overseas safety measures and crisis management through seminars and training. In 2023, MOFA held virtual and in-person seminars on safety measures inside and outside Japan (11 times at diplomatic missions overseas and 10 times within Japan). Furthermore, Consular Affairs Bureau staff delivered lectures at seminars held throughout Japan by domestic organizations, associations, and other groups. In addition, MOFA also provided regular overseas safety information through voice platforms.

Furthermore, MOFA held “Public-Private Joint Practical Training for Counter-Terrorism and Anti-Kidnapping Measures,” both within Japan and abroad, with the participation of Japanese businesses and



The actors ISHIDA Hikari and MORITAKA Ai introduce Tabi-Regi (for people traveling overseas for less than three months) and Overseas Residential Registrations (for people living overseas for three months or more)

organizations. The Joint Practical Training outside Japan had been on hold since September 2019 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but restarted in 2023 after an approximately 3.5-year hiatus. 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



Overseas safety measures flyer (front)

regular meetings of Security Consultation and Liaison Committees. Diplomatic missions are continuing to share information, exchange opinions, and bolster collaboration in preparation for emergencies with local Japanese nationals in their respective countries.

Following the terrorist attack in Dhaka in July 2016, MOFA developed and has utilized in educational activities “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. Moreover, MOFA has continued to use 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.

For Japanese nationals traveling abroad for the first time such as people on business trips, travelers, and students studying abroad, MOFA has created posters and flyers with 2D codes (QR codes) for access to Tabi-Regi, the Overseas Safety website, and “Golgo 13’s Security Guidelines for Japanese SMEs Abroad,” distributing them to Japanese companies and the public.

Many educational institutions do not have a sufficient base of knowledge and experience regarding safety measures and emergency response procedures. Due to this, for Japanese students heading abroad to study, MOFA staff deliver lectures and provide safety measures courses, including online sessions, at educational institutions such as universities, and also request cooperation to increase the submission of Overseas



Overseas safety measures flyer (back)

Residential Registrations and the rate of registration on Tabi-Regi. 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 launching an automatic Tabi-Regi registration system together with some overseas study institutions.

2 Consular Service and Assistance for Japanese Living Overseas

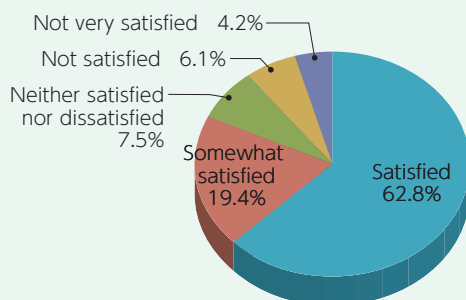
(1) Improving Consular Service and Promoting Digitalization

A Improving Consular Service

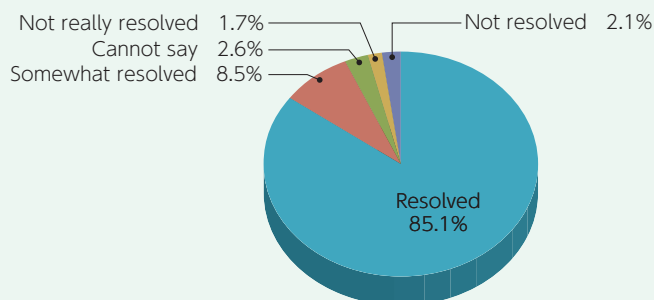
With the aim of providing quality consular services to Japanese nationals overseas, MOFA conducts a yearly questionnaire survey on services such as consular staff’s attitudes in over-the-counter and telephone Responses, as well as work implementation status at diplomatic missions overseas. The survey conducted in December 2023 covered 138 diplomatic missions overseas and received valid responses from 15,970 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

Results of questionnaire survey on users of consular services (FY2023: 138 diplomatic missions)

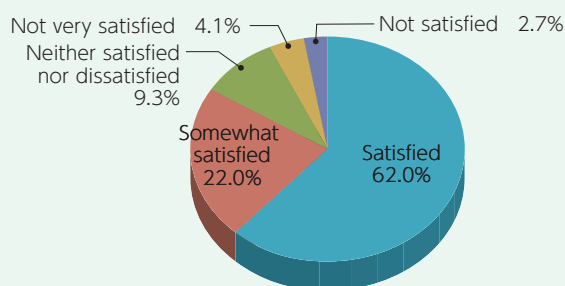
Overall, how satisfied are you with the consular services you have received?



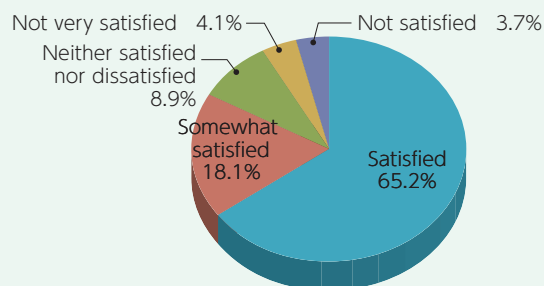
Has your problem (application, notification, consultations, etc.) been resolved through the use of consular services?



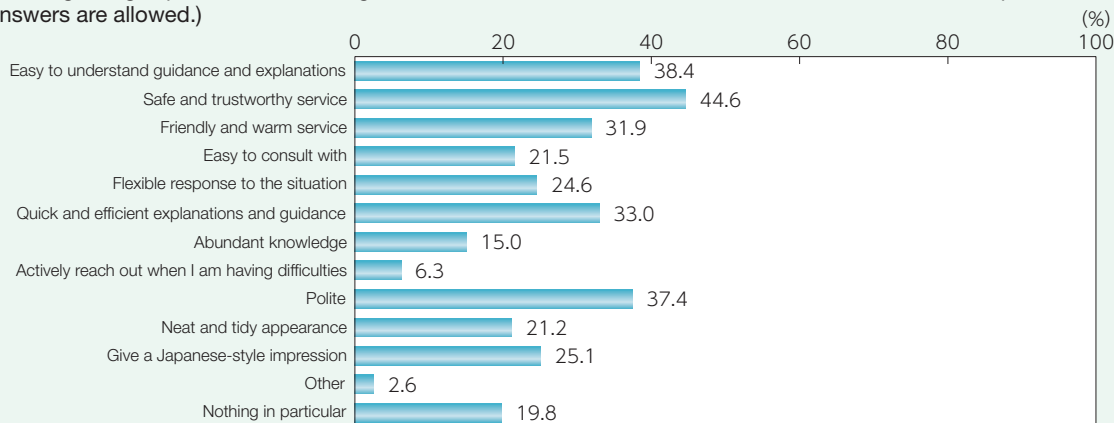
How satisfied are you with the knowledge of duties and processing speed of the consular services?



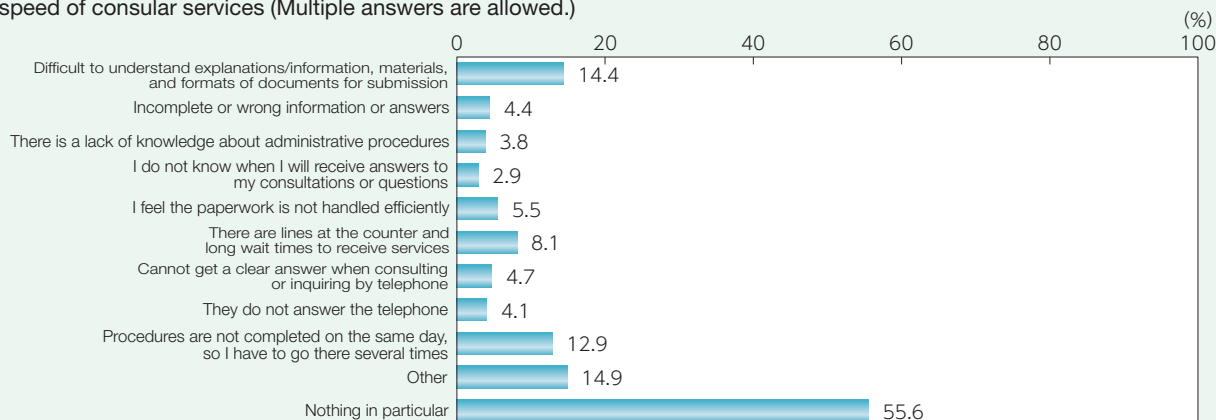
How satisfied are you with the customer service manners of staff while receiving consular services?



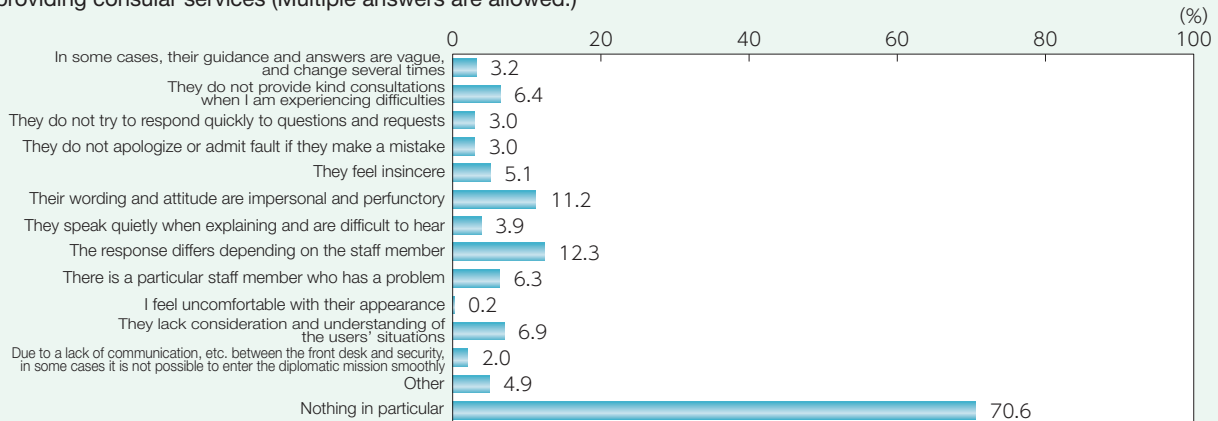
Survey results regarding aspects found to be "good" about the consular service, either at the counter or on the phone (Multiple answers are allowed.)



Survey results regarding aspects where improvement needs to be made about the knowledge and processing speed of consular services (Multiple answers are allowed.)



Survey results regarding aspects where improvement needs to be made about the customer service manners of staff providing consular services (Multiple answers are allowed.)



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

In order to improve user convenience and streamline consular work processes, MOFA has been working to digitalize consular procedures such as expanding online application for consular services and online payment for consular fees. Specifically, the Ministry began accepting online application for passports, certificates, and visas, and online payment for these consular fees by credit card from March 27 (See the Column on this page). The number of Japanese diplomatic

missions overseas and procedures for which online application is available have been gradually expanded, and on July 10, 2023, online credit card payment for online application has been enabled in principle at all Japanese diplomatic missions overseas. In addition, the Consular Digital Transformation Division was established on April 1 within the Consular Affairs Bureau of MOFA in order to accelerate these initiatives. MOFA intends to strengthen the consular policy implementation structure by creating an environment in which consular officers can focus on work in which human response is critical, such as protecting Japanese nationals, by means of digitalizing consular work.

COLUMN

Digitalization of Consular Services: Implementing Online Application and Payment for Passports, Certificates, and Visas

As well as providing protection for Japanese nationals overseas, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) is in charge of consular services such as issuing passports, certificates, and visas. The importance of those services has only grown with revitalization of cross-border travel since the COVID-19 pandemic subsided. Given this situation, MOFA has been working to digitalize consular services from the perspective of improving their convenience and streamlining work processes.

On March 27, MOFA launched an online application for passports, certificates, and visas, as well as credit card payment for these consular fees. Online application removes the need to visit an office, alleviating the burden for those living in remote areas. The application is also available at any time, making procedures more suited to each applicant's circumstances. At the same time, credit card payment is now also available when applying online, saving the trouble of bringing cash. The applicable procedures, as well as the prefectures and diplomatic missions overseas where online applications are available, are still limited, but will be gradually expanded.

This column introduces the application process, taking the example of online passport application. A staff member of the Passport Division, Consular Affairs Bureau of MOFA actually renewed his passport online, with help from Passpo-kun, Japan's passport mascot character.

* * * * *

This summer vacation, Passpo-kun and I are going to Palau, to see the beautiful ocean there.

I got my swim ring and swimsuit ready, and was reading a guidebook I just bought. It said that you would need at least six months' validity on your passport to enter Palau. I thought I'd better check my passport just in case - but I found it only has about three months left.

Oh no! I wouldn't be allowed to get on the plane due to my passport validity! If that happened, all my preparation would be for nothing. I quickly looked into the procedures on the MOFA and passport office websites. It looks like I can now renew my passport online.

Passpo-kun's passport had nearly expired too. I got in touch with him online to plan our trip, and we applied for renewal together. If you have your valid passport, Individual Number Card (when applying in Japan), and a smartphone, you can apply anywhere, anytime.

I activated the MynaPortal app, and selected apply for or renew passport. I checked what I needed and the application process, and answered each of the questions.

The app uses the smartphone's selfie camera to take your passport photo, and the built-in guide made it easy to get the face size right. You can also upload your own digital photo, but apparently there are limits to file formats and sizes. I was glad that online application saved me the hassle and cost of going to get my passport photo taken.

Next, I uploaded my signature image, and read in the data from my current passport. I inputted the necessary information, checked where I would pick up my new passport and when it would be issued, and it was done. Usually, you can pick up your passport in four to six days.

I was a little nervous as it was my first time using the online application, but it was so easy that I didn't have to take time off work during the weekday and queue up at the passport office! I was really relieved when all the procedures were completed.

I got a notification on MynaPortal five days later. After entering my credit card information online in advance, the card payment was finalized at the passport office¹, and I got my passport! I made my airplane ticket and hotel bookings, and I was good to go to Palau without any problems. I had a great time on holiday, while taking care not to lose my passport.

I'll keep my passport nice and safe, and look forward to my next trip.



¹ This service is gradually being rolled out by prefecture (as of December).

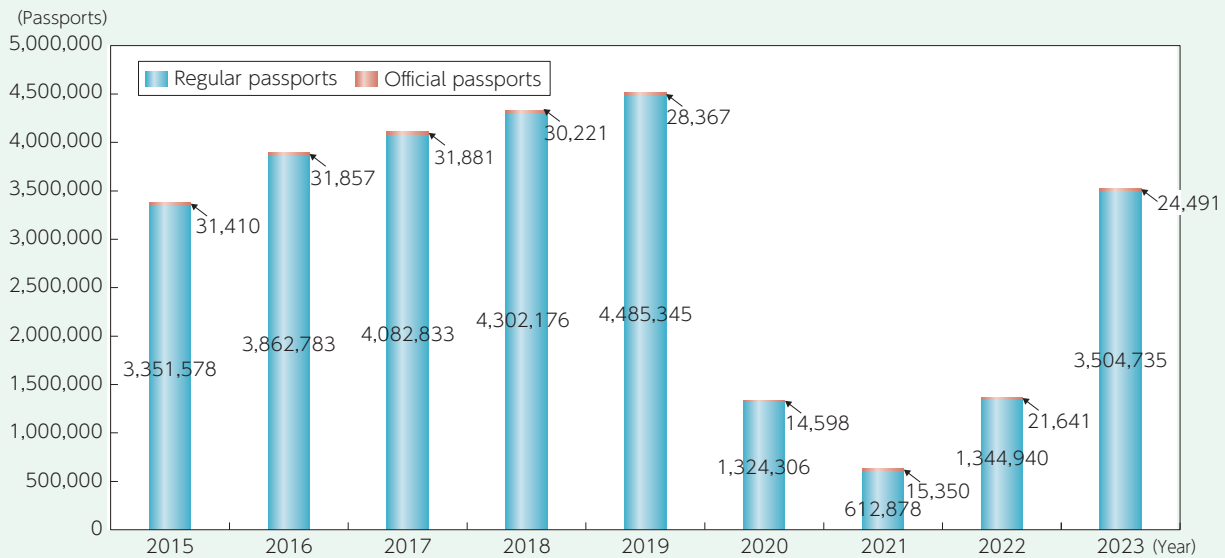
(2) Passports: Maintaining trust, enhancing convenience and making administrative tasks more efficient

In 2023, border and movement restrictions which had been imposed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, were eased in many countries, and the number of travelers and students overseas gradually recovered. At the end of 2023, the number of passport applications was returning to pre-pandemic levels. The number of passports issued in 2023 was 3.53 million, a 158.3% increase compared to 2022.

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. Overseas, application is available from the ORR (Overseas Residential Registration) net online application system. Online application removes the burden for applicants to appear at a service counter in person. They can take the photos of their face and signature and upload them via a smartphone or other digital device. As of the end of 2023, approximately 31% of applicants for passport renewals in Japan used the online application. In addition, credit card payment for passport fees is now available in principle at all diplomatic missions overseas via online application, and is also being gradually implemented at prefectural passport centers. Moreover, MOFA is working on preparations to make referring to electronic family register

Changes in the number of passports issued



Note: Official passports include diplomatic passports.

Source: Prepared based on passport statistics (MOFA's Passport Division)

certificates 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 or by post.

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 passports more resistant to forgery and alteration. However, unauthorized obtaining of passports by impersonating others continues to occur.² MOFA is upgrading measures to prevent unauthorized obtaining of passports by impersonation and obtaining multiple passports by introducing facial verification systems and verifying people's identities such as through in-person issuing. Looking ahead, MOFA will consider ways to further increase the trust of Japanese passports by making them more resistant to forgery and alteration based on the criteria considered at the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), which sets international standards for passports.

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

² Known cases of unauthorized obtaining of passports by impersonation were as follows: eight in 2019, three in 2020, three in 2021, three in 2022, and five in 2023.

registration of Japanese nationals living in remote areas. When elections are held, diplomatic missions overseas also handle overseas voting procedures, including advance PR activities. 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 addition, 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 was established, enabling Japanese nationals residing overseas to exercise their right to review in the national review. In 2024, MOFA will continue its PR

and other activities to increase the number of registered voters and promote voting at diplomatic missions overseas.

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

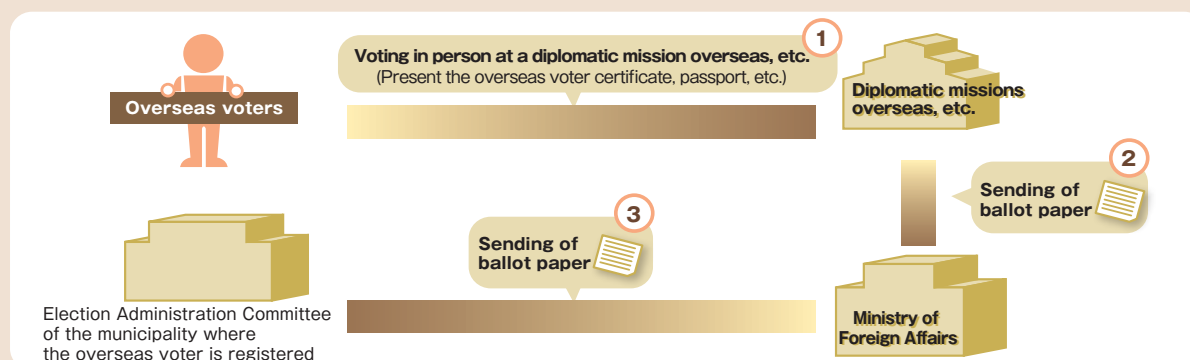
A Japanese Schools and Supplementary Education Schools

Education for children is one of the major concerns for Japanese nationals living abroad. Based on the Act Concerning the Promotion of Education at Overseas Japanese Educational Facilities, which was approved

Voting in elections for overseas voters

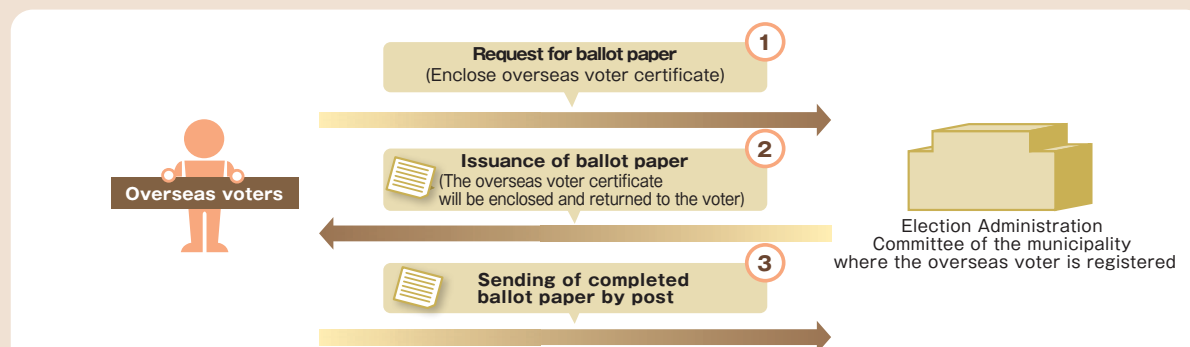
a. Voting at a diplomatic mission overseas

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.)



b. Postal voting

Send the overseas voter certificate and request form for ballot paper to the chairperson of the Election 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 Election 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.)



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)

and took effect in 2022, as well as the spirit of the Constitution of Japan, MOFA cooperates with the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) etc. to provide assistance to Japanese Schools (assistance for school building rental fees, remuneration for locally-hired teachers and instructors, safety measures expenses, etc.) 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 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.

In collaboration with MEXT, in April 2023 MOFA formulated the Basic Policy for Comprehensive and Effectively Advancing Measures Related to the Promotion of Education at Overseas Japanese Educational Facilities based on the Act Concerning the Promotion of Education at Overseas Japanese Educational Facilities.

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.

C 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 by liaising with NPOs in Japan to provide detailed assistance for individual cases.

3 Cooperation with Emigrants and Japanese Descendants (Nikkei)

The migration of Japanese nationals overseas has a history of 155 years, as of 2023. There are approximately five 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 approximately 3.1 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 current Nikkei leaders and young Nikkei who will be future 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 Japanese dignitaries from Japan to meet with Nikkei persons during their visits to these countries.

In October 2023, the 63rd Convention of Nikkei and Japanese Abroad was held in person for the first time in four years. Foreign Minister Kamikawa hosted the welcome reception, engaging with the Nikkei attendees of many generations. MOFA intends to further strengthen collaboration with Nikkei communities in the future.

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

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 2023.

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 nine years and nine months since the entry into force of the Convention, MOFA received a total number of 556 applications by the end of December 2023: 371 applications seeking the return of the child and 185 applications seeking access to the child. Of the cases seeking the return of the child from Japan to another country, children were returned in 69 cases and conclusions were reached not to return the child in 52 cases. Of the cases requesting the return of the child from another country to Japan, children were returned in 68 cases and conclusions were reached not to return the child in 39 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.³

(Reference) Number of applications for assistance received by MOFA based on the Implementation Act of the Hague Convention (as of the end of December 2023)

	Application for assistance in child's return	Application for assistance in visitation or contact with child
Applications related to child located in Japan	203	139
Applications related to child located overseas	168	46

3 See the MOFA website concerning the 1980 Hague Convention and Japan's efforts: https://www.mofa.go.jp/fp/hr_ha/page22e_000249.html

