

Section 2

Supporting Japanese Nationals Overseas

1 Risks and Safety of Japanese Nationals Overseas

(1) Incidents and Accidents in 2024 and Responses to them

As of 2024, approximately 13.0 million⁽¹⁾ 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 had been no Japanese victim of terrorism incidents since 2020; however, in April 2024 one Japanese national was injured in a terrorist attack in Karachi, Pakistan. 2024 was another year in which a large number of terrorist attacks occurred in various regions. The main terrorism incidents included a bombing in Kerman, Iran (January), a mass shooting in Moscow, Russia (March), a bombing near the international airport in Karachi, Pakistan (October), and a mass shooting in Tel Aviv, Israel (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. Many incidents also occurred in Africa, such as in Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Somalia, and Mozambique.

In recent years, Islamic extremists have expanded their scope of activities around the globe, meaning that terrorist attacks have also been occurring in Europe, North America, and Asia, where many Japanese nationals travel and reside. There is a persistent and significant threat of terrorism in Western countries, characterized by a high incidence of attacks perpetrated by: homegrown terrorists radicalized online or through

other means; lone offenders with limited or no discernible organizational links; and attacks targeting soft targets, i.e., locations with large numbers of civilians. 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 also been intensifying in frequency.

Incidents in which Japanese nationals fell victim to crimes (including indiscriminate harm incidents), traffic accidents, and mountain-climbing accidents continued to occur in many locations around the world in 2024, to which MOFA provided support.

Natural disasters also occurred around the world with great damage in such cases as the earthquake off the eastern coast of Taiwan (April), as well as typhoons, hurricanes, heavy rains, and wildfires in different regions.

After the public security rapidly deteriorated in Haiti, in the Caribbean, the Government of Japan cooperated with the Government of France in supporting Japanese nationals to leave the country (March). Large-scale riots broke out in New Caledonia, a territory of France in the Pacific, for which the Government of Japan accordingly raised the risk level, and, in cooperation with the Governments of Australia and France, supported Japanese nationals to leave New Caledonia (May). When the exchanges of fire between Israel and Hezbollah in Lebanon, in the Middle East, intensified, the Government of Japan raised the risk levels for Israel and Lebanon, supporting Japanese nationals to leave Lebanon using a Self-Defense Forces' (SDF) aircraft and government-chartered vessels (October).

In addition, whenever necessary depending on the regional situation, MOFA issued overseas travel safety information related to countries and regions where

⁽¹⁾ Source: Japan National Tourism Organization (JNTO)

particular caution is considered necessary for traveling and residing.

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 2024, a new clade of Mpox began spreading, particularly in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) in central Africa. Based on the World Health Organization (WHO) declaring a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC), MOFA issued Travel Advice and Warning on Infectious Diseases for seven countries in Africa including DRC. Furthermore, as dengue fever, one of the mosquito-borne diseases has spread, particularly in tropical regions, MOFA has issued Region-wide Infectious Disease Safety Information for the entire world, highlighting matters worth paying attention to when travelling and staying abroad.

(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 14,454. Within these overall numbers, Japanese embassies and consulates general worldwide provided attentive assistance in many ways 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. Those traveling abroad must be prepared for multiple risks such as terrorist attacks and infectious disease, and it is more difficult than ever to respond if Japanese nationals 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.

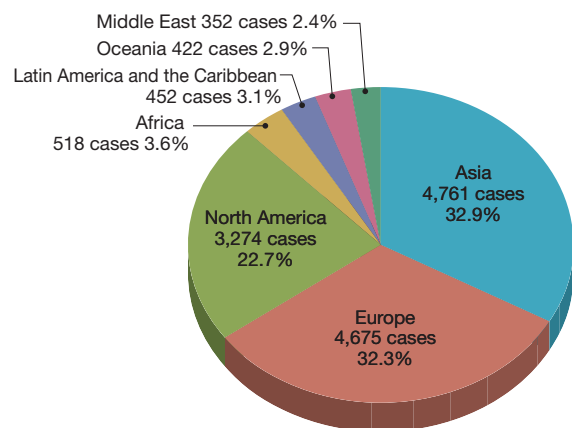
Based on this perspective, MOFA works to enhance the safety awareness of Japanese nationals and promote its safety measures by disseminating information widely to the general public. Specifically, MOFA issues

the latest safety information for each country and region on its Overseas Safety website. Furthermore, MOFA sends emails on the latest safety information of travel destinations to those Japanese nationals residing or traveling abroad who have submitted Overseas Residential Registration or registered overseas travel registration service (Tabi-Regi).

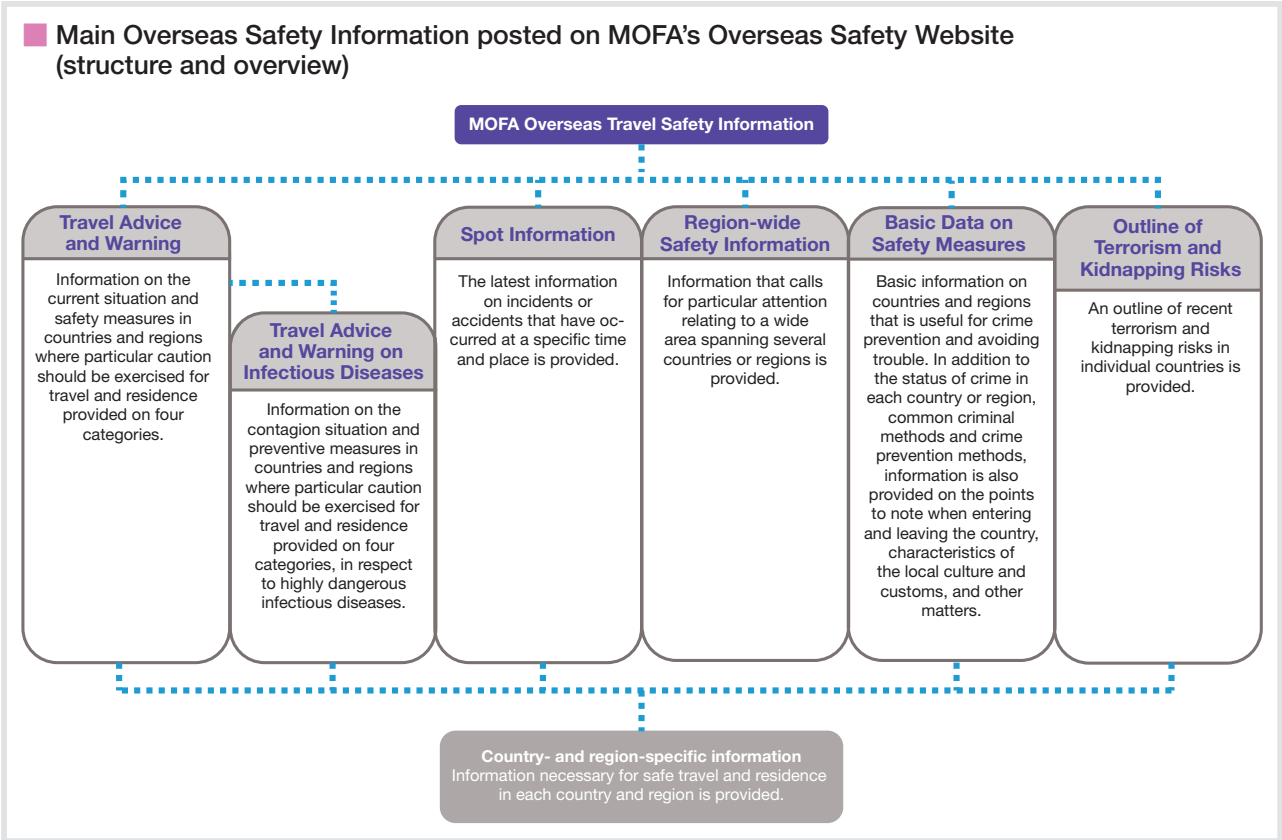
MOFA is actively engaged in PR activities in order to promote registration on Tabi-Regi and submission of Overseas Residential Registration, such as distributing information cards at all passport centers and releasing promotional videos on the official MOFA YouTube channel. MOFA provides a Tabi-Regi linkage interface to travel industry operators, allowing them to batch register their passengers traveling abroad, and encourages companies to use it. MOFA set up a booth at Tourism Expo Japan in Tokyo in September, providing information and raising attention about the safety of Japanese nationals residing or traveling abroad. As of February 2025, the number of travelers who had registered on Tabi-Regi since its launch in July 2014 exceeded 10.7 million, reflecting initiatives for enhancing the system's convenience and activities that aim at promoting registration.

Previously, Overseas Residential Registration was only possible after arriving in the country of residence and confirming the overseas address. However, from May 1, 2024, registration became possible up to 90 days before departure from Japan, even if the overseas

■ 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



address was not yet confirmed. This change enabled receiving overseas travel safety information as well as useful information about living abroad provided by diplomatic missions overseas before departing Japan.

MOFA strives to enhance the knowledge and capability of the Japanese people concerning overseas safety measures and crisis management through seminars and training. In 2024, MOFA held virtual and in-person seminars on safety measures (11 times at diplomatic missions overseas and 5 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 organizations. The Joint Practical Training outside Japan had been on hold since September 2019 due to COVID-19, but restarted in 2023 after an approximately 3.5 year hiatus, and in January 2024 it was held in Türkiye. These initiatives are useful in preventing harm from regular crimes and terrorism, but also in improving



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

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. 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.

Following the terrorist attack in Dhaka in July 2016, MOFA developed and has utilized in educational activities “Golgo 13’s Security Guidelines for Japanese small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) Abroad,” with the aim of raising the awareness of SMEs, etc.



Overseas safety measures flyer (front)



Overseas safety measures flyer (back)

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.

MOFA has also created a leaflet titled “Overseas Travel Safety Measures” for Japanese traveling abroad. It compiles precautions to avoid a terrorist attack and kidnapping, responses in case of involvement, and emergency contact information. The leaflet was distributed to company representatives etc.

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 officials deliver lectures and provide safety measures courses, including online sessions, at educational institutions such as universities. MOFA also requested cooperation to increase the submission of Overseas Residential Registration and the rate of registration on Tabi-Regi. MOFA will continue to strive to help institutions to raise students’ safety awareness 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 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 January 2025 covered 151 diplomatic missions overseas. MOFA takes such user feedback received via surveys 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

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. MOFA has been expanding the scope of digitalization, and visible results include a reduced number of counter visits. Building on the outcomes so far, MOFA is promoting the digitalization of consular procedures with the aim of further increasing convenience. From April 1, linkage with the Ministry of Justice’s Family Register Information Linkage System starts, which allows applicants in principle to make submissions to Japanese diplomatic missions overseas involving a family register, without attaching a copy

of their family register obtained from the local government office of their registered legal domicile. 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.

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

Border restrictions have been removed in many countries with the easing impact of the COVID-19, leading to growing numbers of Japanese nationals traveling overseas. While the number of passport applications continued to show a clear trend of recover from the previous year to follow, it has not yet reached pre-pandemic levels (The number of passports issued in 2024 was approximately 3.82 million, a 108.3% increase compared to 2023. In 2019, before the pandemic, around 4.49 million passports were issued).⁽²⁾

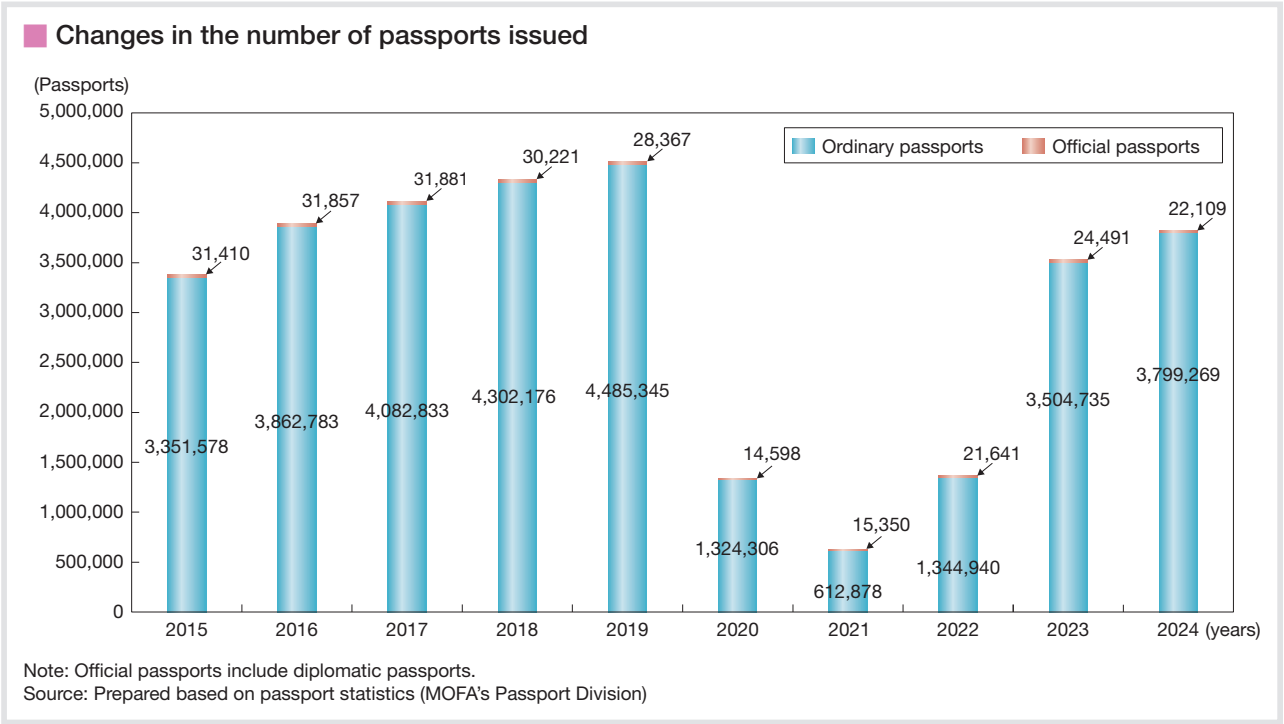
In terms of passport issuance, MOFA has gradually expanded the use of the online application for passports since its launch on March 27, 2023. Furthermore, since

March 24, 2025, online application and payment have been available for both first time and renewal applications in all prefectures. At the same time, family register information has become automatically linked in the system, removing the burden of submitting an original certified copy of the family register and improving the convenience. Online passport application is also available abroad through the Overseas Residential Registration (ORR) online application system (ORR net).

In addition, from March 24, the National Printing Bureau has begun printing the 2025 Passport (with the face photo page being made of polycarbonate on which photos and text are laser engraved), which is much more resistant to counterfeiting and alteration. (See the Column on page 354.)

Unauthorized obtaining of passports by impersonating others continues to occur,⁽³⁾ so MOFA has been working on further upgrading measures to prevent unauthorized obtaining of passports such as confirming a person's identity through in-person delivery or photographic comparison by facial verification technology.

Based on the criteria considered at the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), which sets



⁽²⁾ Source: Japan National Tourism Organization (JNTO)
⁽³⁾ Known cases of unauthorized obtaining of passports by impersonation were as follows: eight in 2019, three in 2020, three in 2021, three in 2022, five in 2023 and two in 2024.

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.

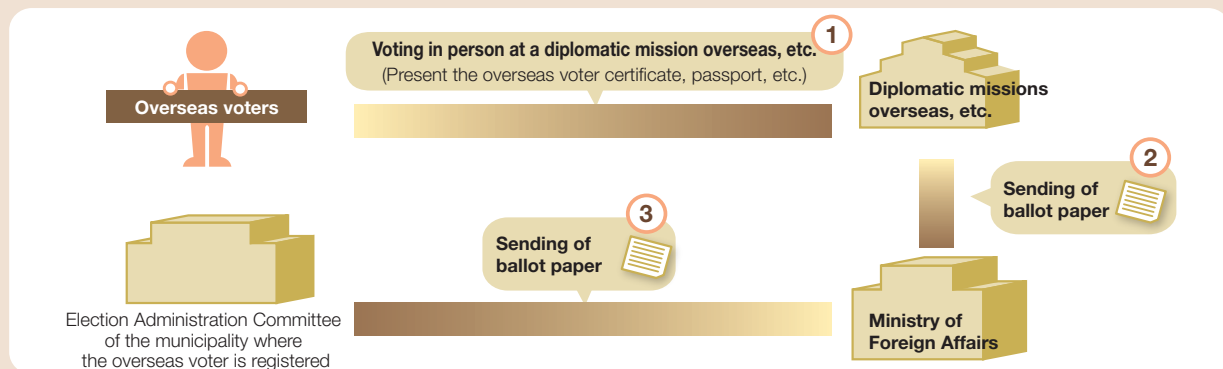
Starting in June 2018, the procedures were simplified by enabling application for registration on the overseas voter directory at the counter for the election board of the city or town government at the same time as filing a notice of moving overseas. Since July 2024, an initiative has begun to directly transmit application data between Japanese diplomatic missions overseas and election boards of the city or town governments, significantly accelerating the procedures for issuance of overseas voter identification.

The diplomatic missions overseas have been making efforts to spread the overseas voting system and to

Voting in elections for overseas voters

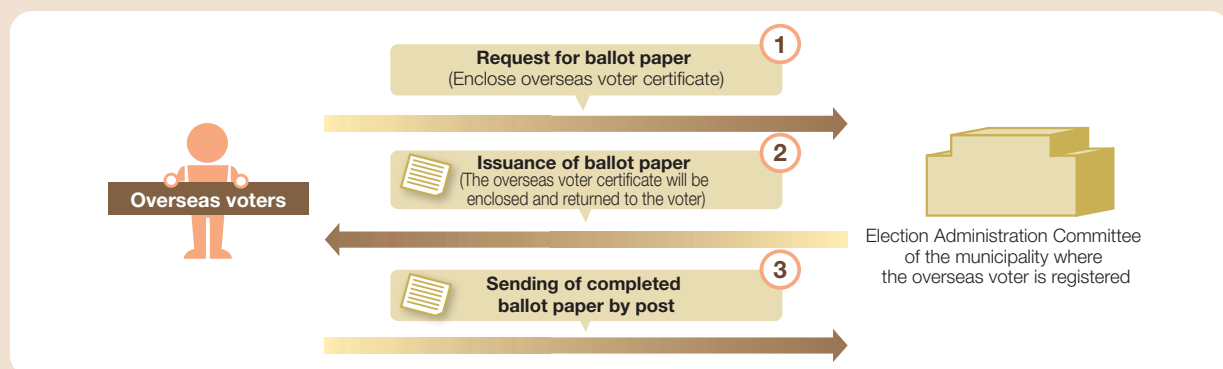
a. Voting at a diplomatic mission overseas

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).

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. When elections are held, diplomatic missions overseas also handle overseas voting procedures, including advance PR activities. In 2024, for the 50th general election of the House of Representatives in October, voting at diplomatic missions overseas was conducted for the 17th time involving 231 diplomatic missions and offices. In addition, a special election to the House of Councillors was held on the same day, as well as a national review of Supreme Court justices, which for the first time was open to overseas voters.

In 2025, MOFA will continue its PR and other activities to increase the number of registered voters and promote voting at diplomatic missions overseas.

(4) Application and Issuance of Individual Number Cards for People Moving Overseas

In order to promote the spread and usage of Individual Number Cards in accordance with the advance of digitalization, from May 27 the Cards can continue to be used while overseas by carrying out procedures at city or town government offices when moving overseas. In addition, if Japanese nationals moves overseas without carrying out the procedures, the Cards can now be received at diplomatic missions overseas by applying by post to the city or town governments or diplomatic missions overseas. MOFA will work in collaboration with related ministries and agencies and continue to consider measures toward further promoting usage of the Cards.

(5) 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 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 particular, it is the most important aspect to ensure an environment so that Japanese school children can learn with peace of mind, even overseas. In China, there have been cases of casualties and injuries of Japanese school children and others in Suzhou and Shenzhen, in June and September 2024, respectively. In response, MOFA took the necessary supplementary budget in order to support strengthening safety measures for Japanese schools around China, such as increased security guards, including those who ride on school buses. Through such initiatives, MOFA will continue to take every possible measure to ensure safety at overseas Japanese educational facilities such as Japanese schools and supplementary education schools.

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, consular emails, and other means. In addition, the websites of diplomatic missions overseas provide information about local medical institutions where patients can communicate in Japanese, and information gathered on the ground by medical officers working at diplomatic missions is listed on the MOFA website under "Global Medical Information." 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.

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, MOFA is calling for the simplification of procedures in countries, states or provinces where it is mandatory for Japanese nationals to take a test to obtain a local driver's license.

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.

Moreover, MOFA takes measures against loneliness and social isolation among Japanese nationals overseas, such as conducting the “Basic Survey on Staying and Living Overseas,” the results of which was announced in June 2024. MOFA also liaises with NPOs in Japan to provide attentive assistance to them for their individual cases.

3 Cooperation with Emigrants and Japanese Descendants (Nikkei)

The migration of Japanese nationals overseas began with the first voyage to Hawaii in 1868. 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. In such ways, MOFA is working

to further strengthen connections with Nikkei communities.

In addition, 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 2024, the 64th Convention of Nikkei and Japanese Abroad was held in person in Japan. Foreign Minister Iwata 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 for returning children to

their state of habitual residence and establishing opportunities for transboundary parent-child access.

This Convention entered into force for Japan on April 1, 2014, with 103 countries, including Japan, parties to the Convention as of the end of December 2024.

The Convention is implemented through mutual cooperation among the governmental agencies designated as the Central Authority in Contracting States. 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 their cases, in communication and cooperation with foreign Central Authorities.

In the ten years and nine months from the entry into force of the Convention until the end of December 2024, MOFA received a total of 613 applications for assistance: 411 applications seeking the return of the child and 202 applications seeking access to the child. Of the cases seeking the return of the child from Japan to another country, children were returned in 75 cases and conclusions were reached not to return the child in 59 cases. Of the cases requesting the return of the child from another country to Japan, children were returned in 76 cases and conclusions were reached not to return the child in 46 cases.

In November 2024, together with the Hague Conference on Private International Law (HCCH), MOFA co-hosted the “2024 Webinar on the HCCH 1980 Child Abduction Convention in Asia and the

Pacific.” The webinar was organized to strengthen the implementation structure of the Convention in the Contracting States in the Asia-Pacific region, to promote cooperation between Contracting States, and to encourage non-Contracting States to join the Convention.

In order to build awareness of the Hague Convention among a broad public, MOFA holds seminars and contributes articles to relevant local community press targeting Japanese nationals living overseas, while 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 publishing them on MOFA’s website and video-sharing platforms.⁽⁴⁾

■ Number of applications for assistance received by MOFA based on the Implementation Act of the Hague Convention (as of the end of December 2024)

	Application for assistance in child's return	Application for assistance in visitation or contact with child
Applications related to child located in Japan	216	151
Applications related to child located overseas	195	51

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



COLUMN

No Preparation, No Overseas Travel — Protecting Yourself Abroad

What is the first thing that comes to mind when you plan to travel abroad? Perhaps it is delicious food or beautiful scenery. People travel abroad for many reasons, such as business trips and study abroad experiences, but the most important premise for spending quality time overseas is not getting involved in dangerous situations. Many terrorist attacks continue to occur worldwide, and Japanese nationals have been harmed in places such as Algeria, Bangladesh, Afghanistan, and Pakistan.

What specific actions should you take to avoid being involved in a terrorist attack at your travel destination, and how can you minimize the harm if by any chance you encounter one?

First, keep in mind that you are responsible for protecting yourself. Avoid countries, places, and times with unstable security conditions. In addition, exercise heightened caution during religious events and holidays when more people gather and travel, such as Ramadan and Christmas, as well as during election periods. During these times and at these places, it is important to avoid actions that make you stand out, and it is also critical to gather information in advance.

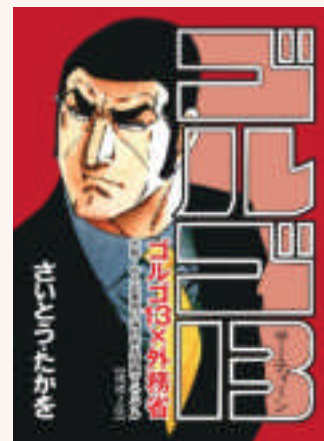
The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) provides Travel Advice and Warnings, and region-specific information through its overseas travel registration service (Tabi-Regi) and Overseas Safety website. In particular, by registering your travel destination with Tabi-Regi, you can receive the latest safety information about the area by email. Gathering information in advance makes it possible to take specific actions at the appropriate time, such as avoiding dangerous locations, limiting the length of your stay, and refraining from traveling on foot.

In recent years, there have been many cases of terrorist attacks aimed at so-called “soft targets” — places with weak security and surveillance, such as shopping malls, public transportation, and event venues. In addition, a growing number of crimes have been perpetrated by lone offenders with little to no clear connection to terrorist organizations. As a result, detecting and preventing terrorist attacks in advance has become even more difficult than before.

So, what should you do if an attack actually occurs near you? The most important thing is to remain calm. If you hear gunfire or explosions, the basic actions are to immediately drop to the ground, run away, or, if you cannot escape, hide. If you are at the scene of an attack, check your surroundings, stay low, and evacuate to a safe place. If possible, use your mobile phone to send messages and request external help. If circumstances allow, also contact the Japanese Embassy or Consulate General. Be sure to anticipate possible risks and mentally prepare for them before traveling abroad so that you can respond appropriately no matter what happens at any time.

MOFA strives to enhance the knowledge and capabilities of the Japanese people concerning overseas safety measures and crisis management through seminars and training. MOFA has also created a manga safety manual in which Golgo 13 shows safety measures for traveling and/or living overseas, which is available (including video content) on the MOFA website.

To protect yourself abroad, MOFA would like you to make all possible preparations before your trip using the information presented here, with an attitude of “No preparation, No overseas travel.”



Golgo 13's Security Guidelines for Japanese SMEs Abroad

COLUMN

Making Passports More Resistant to counterfeiting and Alteration as well as Enhancing Convenience — Toward the Next Future with the New Passport

The first Japanese passport was issued in 1866, around 160 years ago. It was initially a single sheet of paper, and has changed with the times to improve safety and convenience: In 1926 passports became booklets including a face photo; since 2006, IC chips were embedded in the booklets; and from 2020, the visa pages feature the designs of the “Thirty-six Views of Mount Fuji” by KATSUSHIKA Hokusai. Most recently from March 2025, production of the “2025 Passport” — with a polycarbonate face photo page — has begun at the National Printing Bureau.



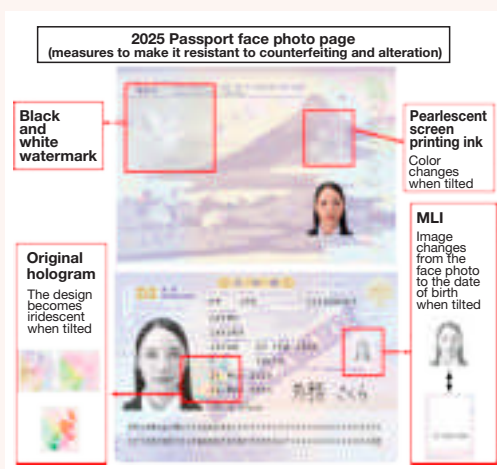
Securities Production Management Group, Banknote Department, National Printing Bureau

General Manager URAOKA Akihiro

The major change to the 2025 Passport is the base material of the face photo page. Previous passports had paper base material, onto which the prefectural passport offices printed the face photo using a thermal transfer printer. However, passports using paper base material can easily become targets for counterfeiting and alteration, and the international trend is shifting to plastic base materials, which make counterfeiting and alteration more difficult. Considering this trend, Japan has decided to introduce polycarbonate for the face photo page.

Personalization of the 2025 Passports is centralized to just two locations within Japan. The three face photos are each printed with different techniques, two of which use laser engraving technology. When the smallest face photo is tilted, the bearer's date of birth appears, and the third photo is inkjet printed in color on a paper page. A large number of other technologies which are not publicly disclosed also make the new passports more resistant to counterfeiting and alteration.

The design of the 2025 Passports continues to feature the “Thirty-six Views of Mount Fuji” adopted in 2020, with different pictures used on each page. Attention has been paid to the order, with the first page featuring “*Koshu Inume-Toge* (The Inume Pass in Kai Province),” which evokes setting out on a journey, and the final page using “*Fukagawa Mannen-bashi Shita* (Under Mannen Bridge in Fukagawa),” an image which symbolizes returning from travels. In addition, the reverse side of the face photo page features an embossed cherry blossom design, which appears to move three-dimensionally when tilted. Additionally, the layout has been carefully designed to make it appear as a single painting surrounded by a frame, with an image of Mount Fuji overlapping the cherry blossom.



Continuing to manufacture booklets with stable quality is another effective route to making them resistant to counterfeiting and alteration, so we have established quality management standards and are conducting rigorous checking. Furthermore, in order to ensure quality and information security, the National Printing Bureau is working to improve risk management knowledge and making efforts to gain ISO accreditation.¹ We will continue to strive to maintain the highest international standards in quality and security.

From March 24, 2025, applications for both the first-time and renewal of passports are available online nationwide via MynaPortal. As MynaPortal is now linked to family register information, applicants no longer need to obtain a copy of their family register at a city hall counter, etc.

¹ International specifications formulated by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO)