**Covid-19 and Islands**

***Okinawa***

1. What actions are being taken to protect the island community from Covid 19? In particular, how are travel restrictions being put in place and enforced?

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| Respondent | Date | Response |
| Hiroshi Kakazu  Prof. Emeritus, University of the Ryukyus  [makishi.kakazu@gmail.com](mailto:makishi.kakazu@gmail.com) | 20 April 2020 | * The number of Covid-19 cases in Okinawa increased to 109 as of April 19, a jump from 3 within about three weeks. Although the infection is concentrated in Naha-city of Okinawa Island, where I live, the virus has spread to Okinawa’s rural areas and Ishigaki Island, about 400 km from Okinawa Island. The infected are mostly young persons under their fifties with mostly unknown routes of transmission. Three persons died in Okinawa from the infection. All hospitals and PCR testing facilities are experiencing severe shortages of hospital beds, medical personal, ventilators, facemasks, disinfectants, etc. The rapid rise of the infection has been caused mainly by “corona refugees” and returnees from mainland Japan and abroad, particularly from Tokyo and Osaka, where 50% of Japan’s infected cases are reported. Okinawa’s small, remote islands are requesting mainlanders not to visit their islands during this emergency. The Japanese government declared a state of emergency for all Japanese prefectures a few days ago, including Okinawa, with the basic preventive measures following the 3Cs: Closed spaces, close contact settings and crowded places. * These key preventive actions are detailed in its HP (<https://www.mhlw.go.jp/stf/seisakunitsuite/bunya/newpage_00032.html>). 3Cs are based on “social distancing,” and they are implemented on a request basis, instead of mandated lockdown or restrictions as other countries have been implementing. Each prefecture has to take its emergency measures taking into account the characteristics of each area and provide a careful explanation to the residents. Okinawa Prefecture has been requesting self-restraint of going out for a month. Examples of outing that are not covered by such requests would include activities necessary for maintaining daily life such as visiting hospitals, purchasing food, medicine, and daily necessities, going to work as necessary, exercising outdoors, or taking a walk. There is a report that only 50-60% of peoples followed the guidelines in the past week. |

1. What actions will be taken should people on the island have Covid 19?

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| Hiroshi Kakazu  Prof. Emeritus, University of the Ryukyus  [makishi.kakazu@gmail.com](mailto:makishi.kakazu@gmail.com) | 20 April 2020 | * On Okinawa Island, medical facilities are already overwhelmed by the increasing number of infected patients. The local governments rented hotel rooms to accommodate mild patients or requesting stay-at-home without medical care. |

1. What actions are being taken to ensure that essential goods and services are provided to the island community?

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| Respondent | Date | Response |
| Hiroshi Kakazu  Prof. Emeritus, University of the Ryukyus  [makishi.kakazu@gmail.com](mailto:makishi.kakazu@gmail.com) | 20 April 2020 | * All transportation systems, grocery stores, and essential services are still working at a reduced pace. Some islanders are using home-delivery services for daily necessities, and use telehealth services for medical consultations |

1. What actions are being taken to ensure that people working on the islands, not only in the tourism sector, are sustained financially in the short term and in the long term?

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| Hiroshi Kakazu  Prof. Emeritus, University of the Ryukyus  [makishi.kakazu@gmail.com](mailto:makishi.kakazu@gmail.com) | 20 April 2020 | * Okinawa has established traditional “moai,” or mutual help system, which is practiced even in normal time. They help each other, particularly during emergencies such as pandemic, typhoon, and tsunami. This system works particularly well in small island communities. The agriculture and fishery sectors are still very important sources of basic foods for many island communities. The Covid-19 has taught them that high dependency on inbound tourists accompanies high living risk. The Japanese government has just announced to distribute about $1000 per person with a total budget of about $100 bn to alleviate the impact of the pandemic as quickly as possible. All industrial sectors are hit badly by the Covid. Particularly the service workers in the informal tourism sector and elder homeless people are suffering the most. Those vulnerable people also have underlying health problems with no health insurance. |

1. What actions are being taken to ensure the mental well-being of people on the islands?

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| Hiroshi Kakazu  Prof. Emeritus, University of the Ryukyus  [makishi.kakazu@gmail.com](mailto:makishi.kakazu@gmail.com) | 20 April 2020 | * There is a huge chunk of the informal sector in Japanese island societies, particularly in the tourism-related service sector, where non-regular and single-mother workers are concentrated. The Covid-19, in particular, hit the hardest these households economically as well as mentally, causing considerable distress and impaired ability, leading to a social anxiety disorder or mental illness. They need a professional diagnosis, but all healthcare professionals are entirely tied up with treating virus victims. Psychologists or licensed mental therapists are conducting a stress test and advising these distressed people through a website. Mental care of school children, who are living in social isolation for about two months, is a particular concern. Although there is a lot of TV and online programs to help mitigate atresia and encourage them to catch up with their learning, some remote islands are not even connected with the Internet system. |

1. If you consider it appropriate, feel free to share any data about people who have Covid 19 on your island and of people who, sadly, have passed away because of Covid 19.

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| Respondent | Date | Response |
| Hiroshi Kakazu  Prof. Emeritus, University of the Ryukyus  [makishi.kakazu@gmail.com](mailto:makishi.kakazu@gmail.com) | 20 April 2020 | As of 20 April 2020   * Okinawa's 40 inhabited islands are now virtually free of the Corvid-19. There is no need to lockdown island communities. One big problem, however, is how to secure imported basic food products under the domestic flight cancellations and a fear of imported Covid-19. |

1. Is there anything else you want to share?

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| Respondent | Date | Response |
| Hiroshi Kakazu  Prof. Emeritus, University of the Ryukyus  [makishi.kakazu@gmail.com](mailto:makishi.kakazu@gmail.com) | 20 April 2020 | * Islands of Okinawa are known for their ancestor worship. The funeral is a big social affair. But because of the nature of virus, the funeral must be held secretary by close family members without even without contact with the deceased. * The stay-at-home policy is generating domestic violence and abuse of children. Prejudice and discrimination against the corona-infected families and persons are on the rise in some parts of Japan. The special care system for these people needs to be established. The Covid-19 is also accelerating Internet scams and underground criminal activities such as drug dealings. One big problem for small, remote islands is how to maintain imported basic food products under the possible domestic flight cancellations and fear of imported Covid-19. |

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*This information has been collated by the Strathclyde Centre for Environmental Law and Governance in collaboration with Island Innovation and can be found at* [*https://www.strath.ac.uk/research/strathclydecentreenvironmentallawgovernance/ourwork/research/labsincubators/eilean/islandsandcovid-19/*](https://www.strath.ac.uk/research/strathclydecentreenvironmentallawgovernance/ourwork/research/labsincubators/eilean/islandsandcovid-19/)*.*