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Réseau Sortir du nucléaire > Archives > Revue de presse > **Tokyo court orders Tepco to pay \$10 million in damages over 2011 disaster : media**

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Tokyo court orders Tepco to pay \$10 million in damages over 2011 disaster : media

Reuters Staff

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TOKYO (Reuters) - A Tokyo court on Wednesday ordered Tokyo Electric Power (Tepco) to pay around 1.1 billion yen (\$10 million) to a group of Fukushima residents, local media reported, nearly seven years after the company's reactor meltdowns in northeastern Japan.

An aerial view shows the tsunami-crippled Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant in Fukushima Prefecture, from over the Pacific off Minamisoma, in this photo taken by Kyodo September 11, 2012, to mark the one and a half years anniversary of the March 11, 2011 earthquake and tsunami. Mandatory Credit. REUTERS/Kyodo

A group of 321 people residents from Minami-soma in Fukushima prefecture had sought around 11 billion yen in damages in a class action suit, according to the reports.

Minami-soma is a city about 30 km (19 miles) from Tepco's Fukushima Dai-ichi nuclear power plant, where reactors melted down after being hit by a massive tsunami in March 2011. After the disaster, some areas near the plant became no-gone zones, forcing many residents to flee their homes.

A Tepco spokesman said a ruling was made by the Tokyo court today, but declined to comment further.

Tepco has long been criticized for ignoring the threat posed by natural disasters to the Fukushima plant, and the company and government were lambasted for their handling of the crisis.

Last year, a district court in Fukushima ruled in the largest class action lawsuit brought over the 2011 nuclear disaster that the company and the Japanese government were liable for damages totaling about 500 million yen.

A group of about 3,800 people, mostly in Fukushima prefecture, filed the earlier class action suit, the biggest number of plaintiffs out of about 30 similar class action lawsuits filed across the nation.

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