

# Japan police plan DNA database to identify tsunami dead

May 3 2011

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Soldiers of Japan's Self-Defense Force search for victims buried under debris in the tsunami-devastated town of Otsuchi, Iwate Prefecture in April 2011. Japanese police are to set up a DNA database to help identify the bodies of those killed in the March earthquake and tsunami, reports said Tuesday.

Japanese police are to set up a DNA database to help identify the bodies of those killed in the March earthquake and tsunami, reports said Tuesday.

Police in Iwate, Miyagi and Fukushima prefectures will collect DNA samples from the belongings of people still listed as missing and from their relatives, national broadcaster NHK said.

Thousands of bodies have been retrieved from rubble, swamps and beaches since the massive 9.0-magnitude quake and subsequent [tsunami](#) of March 11 ravaged the country's northeastern coastline.

Some 10,808 people were still listed as missing as of Monday evening, with 14,728 confirmed dead.

Police have already used DNA testing to identify some of the dead, but are to step up their efforts as many of the bodies retrieved are severely damaged, which hampers recognition and can traumatise the families of the missing, NHK said.

They will start to take [DNA samples](#) from relatives of the missing in mid-May, Kyodo News said.

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Citation: Japan police plan DNA database to identify tsunami dead (2011, May 3) retrieved 26 April 2024 from

<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2011-05-japan-police-dna-database-tsunami.html>

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