Nearly three years after a major earthquake, tsunami and nuclear radiation leak devastated coastal and inland areas of Japan's Fukushima prefecture, 175 miles north-east of Tokyo, Namie has become a silent town of ghosts and absent lives.

Namie's 21,000 residents remain evacuated because of continuing high radiation levels, the product of the March 2011 disaster at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power station, six miles to the south. Homes, shops and streets are deserted except for the occasional police patrol or checkpoint.

Like the setting for a Hollywood post-apocalypse movie, grass and weeds poke up through cracked pavements. At an abandoned garage, a rusting car sits on a raised ramp, waiting for a repair that will never be completed. A feral dog peers from a wild, untended garden.

Namie is nobody's town now. Nobody lives here, and nobody visits for long. Even the looters have stopped bothering, and no one knows exactly when the inhabitants may be allowed to return permanently – or whether they will want to.

More...