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**NORTH KOREA SAYS JAPAN'S PRIME MINISTER OFFERED TO MEET WITH LEADER KIM JONG UN SOON**

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AP News (25 March 2024)

Hyung-jin Kim, Kim Tong-hyung

*North Korea said Monday that Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida offered to meet with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un as soon as possible, but stressed that prospects for their countries first summit in about 20 years would depend on Tokyo tolerating its weapons program and ignoring its past abductions of Japanese nationals.*

In a parliamentary session, Kishida said that a meeting with Kim is crucial to resolve the abduction issue, a major sticking point in bilateral ties, and that his government has been using various channels to hold the summit.

Kims sister and senior official, Kim Yo Jong, said in a statement that Kishida recently used an unspecified channel to convey his position that he wants to meet Kim Jong Un in person as soon as possible.

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