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## **JAPAN 'GRAVELY CONCERNED' ABOUT MARITIME TENSIONS ESCALATING, FOREIGN MINISTER SAYS**

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15.01.2025

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Reuters (15 January 2025)

Mikhail Flores

*Japan is gravely concerned about actions in the South China Sea that are raising tensions, and strongly opposes any unilateral attempt to change the status quo, its foreign minister said on Wednesday.*

Speaking during a visit to the Philippines, Takeshi Iwaya also said Japan would continue to provide development and security assistance to Manila and support for its maritime security, adding a trilateral mechanism that also includes the United States would be strengthened when a new administration takes over in Washington.

Iwaya's visit follows a virtual call between Japanese Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba, Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. and outgoing U.S. President Joe Biden where the three leaders affirmed their "trilateral arrangement" in deepening economic, security and technology cooperation in the face of growing tensions in the region.

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