

## South Korea Warns Firm Response to Japan's Dokdo Territorial Claims



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SEOUL, March 13— South Korea has warned it will respond firmly to renewed territorial claims by Japan over the disputed islets of Dokdo, according to a statement from Seoul's foreign ministry.

The ministry said Friday it would take “firm and stern” action against repeated claims by Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi regarding the islets, which Japan refers to as Takeshima.

Seoul emphasized that Dokdo clearly belongs to South Korea “historically, geographically and under international law,” reiterating its long-standing position on the sovereignty of the rocky outcrops located in the East Sea.

The warning followed remarks by Takaichi during a ceremony marking the annual “Takeshima Day,” in which she said Japan would continue informing the international community that the islands are Japanese territory.

The event, organized each year by Shimane Prefecture, has been used by Japanese officials to assert administrative claims over the disputed islets since the prefecture designated February 22 as “Takeshima Day” in 2005.

South Korea maintains effective control over Dokdo and has stationed a small police detachment on the islets.

Seoul also notes it restored sovereignty over the islands after the liberation of the Korean Peninsula from Japan’s colonial rule between 1910 and 1945.

For many South Koreans, Japan's continued territorial claims are seen as a denial of historical realities stemming from the colonial era, keeping the dispute a sensitive diplomatic issue between the two neighboring countries.