

Yasukuni Shrine Visits Spark Criticism Across Asia



Published on April 22, 2026

Document Date: Wed, Apr 22 2026 09:47:50 pm

Category: ,English,International - ,Snippets

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Visits by Japanese political leaders to the controversial Yasukuni Shrine during its spring festival have drawn widespread criticism at home and abroad.

More than 100 lawmakers and government officials paid homage at the shrine, which commemorates Japan's war dead, including 14 convicted Class-A war criminals from World War

II. The visits followed a ritual offering sent by Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi, underscoring her longstanding association with the site.

Senior figures from the ruling Liberal Democratic Party, along with cabinet members, also participated. A cross-party group of over 120 lawmakers conducted a collective visit, highlighting broad political involvement.

Critics within Japan said such actions undermine efforts to address the country's wartime legacy.

Former diplomat Magosaki Ukeru called the visits inappropriate, warning they could harm Japan's international credibility and strain ties with neighboring countries.

Analysts and civil society voices cautioned that continued political endorsement of the shrine may hinder reconciliation with nations affected by Japan's wartime actions, including China and South Korea.

Beijing strongly condemned the visits, describing them as a provocation against international justice and an affront to historical memory.

Visits linked to Yasukuni Shrine remain a longstanding source of regional tension, often complicating Japan's diplomatic relations across East Asia.