

Speech by Foreign Minister KAMIKAWA Yoko
At the Cairo Summit for Peace
October 21, 2023

Assalam alaikum jameean.

As the situation surrounding Israel and Palestine is growing tense, it is indeed opportune to hold this conference.

I would like to pay our greatest tribute to President al-Sisi for his strong leadership.

Japan once again unequivocally condemns the terror attacks committed by Hamas and others on October 7th.

The international community should never tolerate such a heinous act.

Japan's position on this issue is consistent. We put great importance to the following three points. Firstly, immediate release of hostages and securing safety of civilians. Secondly, all parties need to act in accordance with international law. And thirdly, calming down the situation as soon as possible.

We need to redouble our diplomatic effort in order to prevent the instability from spilling over in the region, and to calm down the situation as soon as possible.

Japan has had close consultations with regional key players such as Palestine, Israel, Arab States and Iran.

On October 17th, I hosted the G7 Foreign Ministers' teleconference as the Presidency of G7.

Especially, the most imminent challenge now is to minimize the deterioration of the humanitarian situation.

More than 1 million innocent people in the Gaza Strip are in an extremely dire condition.

The supply of food, water and electricity is about to run out.

There are two things we need to work on now. Firstly, we need to deliver necessary assistance to the people in the Gaza Strip as early as possible.

Secondly, it is imperative to realize evacuation of foreign citizens who still remain in the Gaza Strip. Those foreign citizens are all friends of Palestine.

Also, Japan has already announced emergency humanitarian assistance worth 10 million dollars in total for the people in the Gaza Strip.

It is the “first shot” of assistance Japan is planning, and we will keep on considering assistance based on the needs on the ground in a timely manner.

In this context, I would like to stress the importance of actual delivery of humanitarian goods to each person. To this end, Egypt plays a key role.

I hear that trucks carrying humanitarian aid entered the Gaza Strip this morning for the first time since the beginning of the current situation.

Japan welcomes this as a welcome development toward improving the humanitarian situation on the ground, and pays deep respect to those who have worked hard to make it happen.

In close cooperation with Egypt, other countries and international organizations, we will make our utmost effort so that the humanitarian goods will be delivered as soon as possible.

Now, I would like to touch upon the mid to long-term vision.

As I mentioned earlier, the terror attacks by Hamas and others should be categorically denied. At the same time, it is also a sad reality that we hear voices of people in part of the world that praise such an act.

It is a reminder of people's exasperation at the still bleak prospect of the Middle East Peace Process that has been worked for the past 30 years.

We must not let the tragedy we are witnessing now shut the window of opportunity for Middle East Peace. Only through dialogue can we solve this issue.

Japan's position to support a "two-state solution" is unwavering.

For decades, Japan has been supporting confidence-building and economic self-reliance of Palestine, which serve as the foundation of the peace process.

Japan's firm commitment for Palestine will never change, as you can see in our assistance for UNRWA that has surpassed 1 billion dollars in total, as well as the Jerico Agro Industrial Park (JAIP) project under the "Corridor of Peace and Prosperity" initiative.

This is the critical moment. Let us share our grand vision to pursue the world in harmony, not division or confrontation.

Let us put together our capacity and wisdom to ensure safety for civilians, to calm down the situation, and make sure that people in the region can enjoy sustainable peace and security.

Shukran jazzilan wa assalam alaikum.