

Japan–Philippines Defense Ministerial Joint Press Statement

October 28, 2026

On October 28, 2026, Minister of Defense of Japan Koizumi Shinjiro and Secretary of National Defense of the Republic of the Philippines Gilberto C. Teodoro, Jr. held a Defense Ministerial Meeting in the Philippines.

The two Ministers, in light of the increasingly severe and complex security environment in the Indo-Pacific region, reiterated their strong opposition to any unilateral attempts to change the status quo by force or coercion in the East China Sea and the South China Sea. They also shared serious concerns over the increasing scale and frequency of China's coercive activities in the waters and airspace surrounding Japan, as well as developments in the South China Sea, including the continuation and intensification of dangerous, coercive activities by China against the Philippines.

The two Ministers reaffirmed the importance of further strengthening bilateral relations in order to advance efforts toward a Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP) and ensure peace and stability in the region amidst the increasingly challenging regional security environment. They also welcomed the further advancement of Japan–Philippines defense cooperation under the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership between the two countries, marked by continued progress in both institutionally and operationally.

In particular, the two Ministers confirmed that defense cooperation between the two countries has been further strengthened through the participation of the Japan Self-Defense Forces in field training, such as the live-fire exercise involving the firing of surface-to-ship missiles, during *Balikatan 26* in May 2026 under the application of the Japan–Philippines Reciprocal Access Agreement (RAA), as well as through the establishment of procedures between the defense authorities under the Japan–Philippines Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement (ACSA), which entered into force in July this year, and its first application during the Japan–Philippines bilateral exercise *Doushin-Bayanihan* in October, under which the Japan Air Self-Defense Force received supplies from the Philippine Air Force pursuant

to ACSA.

Against this backdrop, the two Ministers shared the view that, in order to further strengthen operational cooperation, there is an urgent need to secure a foundation for information sharing, including the establishment of relevant institutional frameworks. They confirmed that both defense authorities would extend their fullest cooperation to negotiations between the two governments on an agreement on the protection of classified military information.

The two Ministers welcomed the progress made in substantive discussions within the Working Group established in May this year.

Based on the discussions in the Working Group, the two Ministers confirmed that the defense authorities had concurred in aiming for the transfer of the first *Abukuma*-class destroyer at the earliest possible date following its expected decommissioning in the coming years, providing the Philippine Navy with the necessary education and training prior to the transfer, and cooperating closely on maintenance and sustainment. They also confirmed that the necessary coordination would be undertaken within their respective governments going forward.

Through this transfer, the two Ministers confirmed their intention to deepen comprehensive cooperation encompassing vessel operations, logistics support, human resource development, and information sharing, thereby taking defense cooperation, particularly in the field of maritime security, to a new level. They further confirmed that such cooperation would make a significant contribution to collaboration with allies and like-minded countries, thereby helping to ensuring peace and stability in the region.

Regarding the TC-90 aircraft, the two Ministers concurred that the details of cooperation in operations and maintenance would be discussed within the Working Group, with a view to transferring one aircraft to the Philippines by the end of Japan's FY 2027. They further concurred in accelerating discussions in the Working Group on defense equipment and technology cooperation that would contribute to further strengthening cooperation

between the two defense authorities, including the strengthening of the production base for defense equipment.

In addition to strengthening bilateral cooperation, the two Ministers confirmed that they would enhance defense cooperation in multilateral frameworks, including the Australia-Japan-Philippines-United States framework and ASEAN related frameworks. Specifically, the two Ministers confirmed the great significance of the success of the Joint Cooperative Activity (JCA) in September this year as part of the activities of the 5th Cycle of the ADMM-Plus Experts' Working Group on Maritime Security, co-chaired by Japan and the Philippines.

Building on the outcomes of the tabletop exercise held in Tokyo in March, the activity brought together the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force, the Philippine Navy, and participating ADMM-Plus members, demonstrating the growing contribution of Japan-Philippines cooperation to regional maritime security and resilience.