

Japan starts biometric data collection

by UPI

TOKYO -- Japanese immigration officials began collecting biometric data Tuesday from visitors arriving at airports and seaports as part of anti-terror legislation. Under the new system, non-citizens at the 27 international airports and 126 coastal ports must show their passports, be photographed and have their fingerprints taken, the Kyodo news agency reported. The Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Law was enacted last year in May in a bid to block entry of people designated by the Justice Department as terrorists. Monday, a group of 67 rights groups released a statement condemning the screening, saying it was a highly political decision taken after almost no public discussion or policy reviews, the report said. Japanese Justice Minister Kunio Hatoyama said the government's key concern was national security as well as respect for data security. "We want people to bear with it for the great aim of preventing terrorism," Hatoyama said. "We will provide thorough protection of personal information." Japan is the second country after the United States to collect biometric data from incoming non-citizens.

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