

More countries send rescue teams to China

by UPI

BEIJING -- Rescue teams from Russia, South Korea and Singapore will join a Japanese team to help China in its massive relief work in earthquake-hit Sichuan province. The Chinese foreign ministry said Friday the government -- which has already approved the Japanese team's visit -- had accepted similar offers from Russia, South Korea and Singapore. The 31-member Japanese team, the first foreign rescuers approved by the government, arrived Friday in the southwest province, where the death toll is expected to top 50,000, the state-run Xinhua news agency reported. Another 29 Japanese rescuers were expected later in the day. Xinhua reported 102,103 people were injured in the quake. The Sichuan provincial government said it would receive professional rescue teams from Hong Kong and Taiwan. Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Qin Gang said the offers from those countries were accepted because of their proximity and contiguity to China, which would help speed up the relief process. The report said as of Thursday, 151 countries and 14 regional or international organizations had offered support in various forms. Qin expressed China's gratitude.

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