

# Family meets Japanese man ahead of execution in China

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China has told Japan it plans to execute a convicted Japanese drug smuggler on Tuesday, a source involved in Japan-China relations said Monday. Mitsunobu Akano, 65, was convicted of attempting to smuggle 2.5 kilograms of stimulant drugs from China to Japan with an accomplice in 2006, on Monday.

Earlier Monday, Akano's family members met him at a detention facility in the northeastern city of Dalian. A Japanese diplomatic vehicle carrying them was seen leaving the facility.

If Akano is executed, it will be the first execution by China of a Japanese national since the two countries normalized diplomatic relations in 1972.

Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao on Saturday asked Japanese Deputy Prime Minister Naoto Kan to accept Beijing's decision to execute the four convicts, saying stimulant drug smuggling is a "serious crime" and the measure is "based on Chinese law."

But Kan voiced concern over the planned executions, saying many people in Japan feel the penalty is severer than Japanese standards.

