**TOKYO** (AP) — Japan and North Korea will announce an agreement on the repatriation of normalization efforts, Tokyo's top security adviser said in a statement that Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi had reached an agreement.

North Korea’s JCND announced on Thursday, September 19, 2002, that it had reached an agreement with Japan on repatriation of Japanese nationals who lived in North Korea before the country’s partition in 1945.

The agreement, which was welcomed by Japan and the United States, comes after months of unsuccessful talks aimed at resolving the issue.

The agreement is expected to be announced on Friday, September 20, 2002, at a news conference in Tokyo.

North Korea has confirmed that it has begun the process of repatriating Japanese nationals who lived in the North before the country’s partition in 1945.

The Japanese government has been seeking the return of some 50,000 Japanese nationals who lived in North Korea before the country’s partition in 1945.

Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi has met with North Korean leader Kim Jong Il in a bid to resolve the issue.

The agreement was reached after several days of negotiations between the two countries.

The agreement is seen as a major breakthrough in the long-running dispute over the issue.

The agreement was announced by the Japanese government on Friday, September 20, 2002, following a meeting between the two leaders.

North Korea has agreed to return some 50,000 Japanese nationals who lived in the country before the country’s partition in 1945.

The agreement is expected to be announced in Tokyo on Friday, September 20, 2002.