

Russian Crowd Defends Ownership of Kurils Before Abe Visit

By [Reuters](#)

January 20, 2019



Sergey Savostyanov / TASS

A crowd gathered in Moscow on Sunday to defend Russia's ownership of a chain of islands captured by Soviet troops from Japan during the final days of World War II.

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, due to meet Russian President Vladimir Putin in Moscow on Tuesday, is pushing for a treaty for the islands, known as the Southern Kurils in Russia and the Northern Territories in Japan. Russia said on Monday that its sovereignty over them was not up for discussion.

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"Any mention of handing over the Kuriles ... is nothing other than an act of treason," Igor Skurlatov, a speaker at the rally, said. "Today we give away the Kuriles, tomorrow we will give

away Crimea."

Organizers said around 2,000 people attended. The city's security department put the number at 500, Interfax reported.

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