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## U.S. DEPARTMENT of STATE

[Home](#) > ... > [U.S. Support for the Philippines in the South Chin...](#)

# U.S. Support for the Philippines in the South China Sea

## PRESS STATEMENT

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The United States stands with its ally, the Philippines, and condemns the dangerous and escalatory actions by the People's Republic of China (PRC) against lawful Philippine maritime operations in the vicinity of Sabina Shoal in the South China Sea on August 31. A China Coast Guard vessel deliberately collided three times with a Philippine Coast Guard vessel exercising its freedom of navigation in the Philippines' exclusive economic zone (EEZ), causing damage to the vessel and jeopardizing the safety of the crew onboard.

This is the latest in a series of dangerous and escalatory actions by the PRC. On multiple occasions throughout August 2024, the PRC has aggressively disrupted lawful Philippine aerial and maritime operations in the South China Sea, including at Sabina Shoal. The PRC's unlawful claims of "territorial sovereignty" over ocean areas where no land territory exists, and its increasingly aggressive actions to enforce them, threaten the freedoms of navigation and overflight of all nations.

The United States reiterates its call for the PRC to comport its claims and actions with international law and to desist from dangerous and destabilizing conduct.

The United States reaffirms that Article IV of the 1951 United States-Philippines Mutual Defense Treaty extends to armed attacks on Philippine armed forces, public vessels, or aircraft – including those of its Coast Guard – anywhere in the South China Sea.

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