

Taiwan says China told Taiwan's coast guard to not interfere in the detention of Taiwanese boat crew

AP – Taiwan said Wednesday that China ordered Taiwan's coast guard against interfering in the detention of a Taiwanese fishing boat in what is seen as an increasing Chinese attempt to encroach on Taiwanese territory.

Taiwan's coast guard also repeated its call for the release of the boat and its crew members who were taken from waters off the Taiwanese-controlled island of Kinmen just off the Chinese coast on Tuesday night. That call is complicated by China's refusal to communicate with Taiwan's government.

Spokesman for Taiwan's coast guard Hsieh Ching-chin said the boat was not in Chinese waters when it was boarded by Chinese agents and steered to a port in the Chinese province of Fujian.

The Dajinman 88 was intercepted by two Chinese vessels, and Taiwan dispatched three vessels to help but the one that got close to the fishing boat was blocked by three Chinese boats and told not to interfere, the coast guard's initial statement said. The pursuit was called off to avoid escalating the conflict after Taiwan's maritime authorities detected that four more Chinese vessels were moving closer, the statement added.

Advertisement

The boat had a captain and five other crew members, according to Taiwan's official Central News Agency. The crew are

Taiwanese and Indonesian.

The vessel was just over 20 kilometers (12 miles) from Jinjiang in mainland China when it was boarded, Taiwanese authorities said.

China claims self-governing Taiwan as its territory and says the island must come under its control.

Fishermen from both Taiwan and China regularly sail the stretch of water near Kinmen, and tensions have risen as the number of Chinese vessels has increased.

In February, two Chinese fishermen drowned while being chased by Taiwan's coast guard off the coast of Kinmen, prompting Beijing to step up patrols.

AP NEWS