

Fisherman killed in disputed waters

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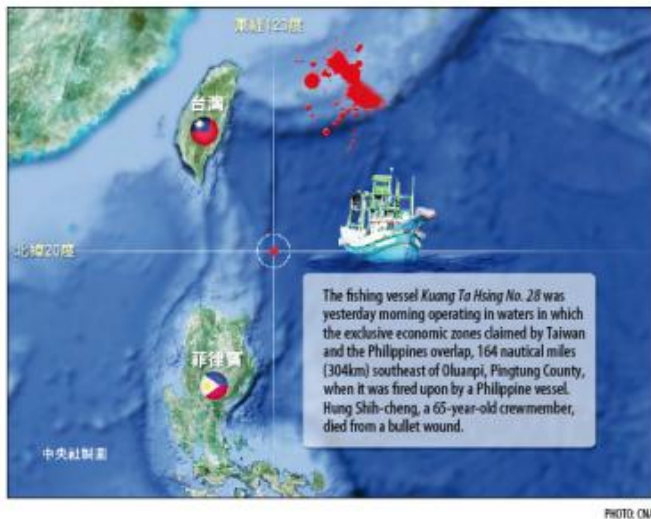


Photo: CNA

A Taiwanese fisherman was shot dead yesterday during a confrontation with a Philippine vessel in waters in which the exclusive economic zones claimed by Taiwan and the Philippines overlap, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs said.

While Fisheries Agency Deputy Director-General Tsay Tzu-yaw (蔡次雄) was quoted by the Central News Agency as confirming that the shots fired at the Pingtung-based fishing boat Kuang Ta Hsing No. 28 that killed 65-year-old Hung Shih-cheng (洪世成) came from a Philippine navy ship, the ministry said last night that the Philippine ship had not yet been identified.

The incident occurred at 10am yesterday, when the Kuang Ta Hsing No. 28 — captained by Hung's son, Hung Yu-chih (洪玉池), and with Hung Shih-cheng, his son-in-law, and one Indonesian national as its crewmembers — was operating at around 164 nautical miles (304km) southeast of Oluanpi (鵝鑾鼻), Pingtung County, the ministry said.

The Coast Guard Administration (CGA) said it received a call for aid from the fishing vessel at 1pm yesterday.

Donggang Fishermen's Association chief executive Lin Han-chou (林漢周) said Hung Shih-cheng's family called in to the local fishery radio station to report an attack on their vessel by Philippine naval forces, saying it had been incapacitated.

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They told the station that Hung Shih-cheng was severely injured and that they needed a helicopter to take him to hospital immediately, Lin said, adding that his family called in again soon after and said he had died from his injuries.

The CGA said a 2,000-tonne ship equipped with an automatic cannon and two 50mm machine guns had been dispatched, which arrived at 7pm last night. It was to accompany the Kuang Ta Hsing No. 28 as it waits for a tow back to port today, the CGA added.

Liouciou Fishermen's Association chief executive Tsai Pao-hsing (蔡寶興) said the incident occurred well within the parameters the Pingtung County Government had set for fishing.

"The fact that our fishermen are being shot at by the Philippines in a temporary law enforcement zone of our designation shows that our fishermen are in danger," Tsai said.

Saying there were other Taiwanese fishing vessels that were operating even closer to the Taiwan-Philippine nautical borders, Tsai said the government should immediately notify these ships to be on the alert.

Tsai also called on the government to protest to the Philippine government and sue for damages.

Ministry spokesperson Anna Kao (高英) said last night that the ministry has called Deputy Representative of the Philippines to Taiwan Carlo Aquino to the ministry to express the nation's strong concern over the matter.

James Chou (周宜賢), deputy director-general of the ministry's Department of East Asian and Pacific Affairs, has told the Philippine government that it must move quickly to investigate what happened and bring the perpetrators to justice, Kao said.

The ministry also instructed the Taipei Economic and Culture Office in the Philippines to keep

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in close contact with the Philippine government to stay on top of its investigation into the incident and urge it to handle the case appropriately, she said.

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