

Taiwan Suspects Chinese Ship Severed Undersea Cable off Its Coast

The ship headed toward South Korea following the alleged damage, Taiwanese media reported.

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A Taiwan coast guard ship travels past the coast of China, in the waters off Nangan island of Matsu archipelago in Taiwan on Aug. 16, 2022. Ann Wang /Reuters



Taiwan's coast guard said on Sunday that a Chinese vessel has allegedly severed an undersea cable located off the coast of the Taiwanese port Keelung Harbor.

The coast guard reported spotting the Shunxin-39, a Cameroon-registered vessel, 7 nautical miles off the north coast of Taiwan's Yehliu at 4:40 p.m. (local time) on Jan. 3, prompting it to dispatch a ship in response, according to [local reports](#).

While the coast guard could not verify if the ship belongs to China, Taiwanese officials believe it was owned by a Hong Kong-registered company with ties to the mainland.

Taiwanese coast guard officials ordered the ship to return to waters near Keelung Harbor for investigation, but rough seas prevented them from boarding. The ship subsequently headed toward South Korea.

Chunghwa Telecom, the largest telecommunication service provider in Taiwan, said it rerouted traffic via backup submarine cables and that the incident did not result in any disruptions, local media [reported](#).

The coast guard stated that it has forwarded evidence to local prosecutors, who will determine the next steps.

In November 2024, two undersea fiber-optic cables were severed in the Baltic Sea, with the Chinese bulk carrier Yi Peng 3 under investigation for the damage.

Swedish Foreign Minister Maria Malmer Stenergard [said](#) on Dec. 22 that the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) had denied its prosecutors access to the vessel for investigation. The Chinese Foreign Ministry claimed it had provided information and documents to the joint investigation.

Part of China's Strategy

Ho Cheng-hui, CEO of civil defense group Kuma Academy, said the incident was part of China's efforts to test the international community's response level as it seeks to escalate its gray zone tactics against Taiwan.

Ho told reporters that China has targeted Taiwan's infrastructure using maritime tactics in the past, prompting the self-ruling island to build its telecommunications resilience.

In recent years, the CCP has used a variety of gray zone tactics to put pressure on Taiwan, from holding large-scale military drills, dispatching fighter jets and warships to areas near the island nation, and flying balloons directly over it, to enticing Taiwan's allies to switch their diplomatic recognition to China.

The CCP views Taiwan as part of its territory and has never renounced the use of force to seize the island. CCP leader Xi Jinping said in his New Year's speech that "no one can ever stop China's reunification" with Taiwan.

Taiwanese President Lai Ching-te has [pledged](#) to increase the island's defense spending and join forces with other democracies to confront threats posed by the CCP.

Frank Fang contributed to this report.

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