# Chinese and Philippine Ships Collide Near Disputed Shoal in South China Sea



A Chinese vessel and a Philippine supply ship collided near the disputed Spratly Islands in the South China Sea on Monday, according to China's coast guard. The incident occurred near the Second Thomas Shoal, a submerged reef claimed by several nations, including China and the Philippines.

The Chinese coast guard stated on WeChat that the Philippine ship had dangerously approached a Chinese vessel despite repeated warnings, leading to the collision they blamed on the Philippines. The Philippines maintains that the shoal lies within its exclusive economic zone, citing a 2016 international arbitration ruling that invalidated China's expansive claims based on historical grounds.

The area has seen several confrontations in recent months, with the Philippines operating a post aboard the BRP Sierra Madre ship. These territorial disputes have heightened tensions in the region, raising concerns about potential military confrontations that could involve China and the United States, a treaty ally of the Philippines.

Apart from China and the Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia, Brunei, and Taiwan also have claims in the disputed waters, making the South China Sea a significant flashpoint in Asia and a delicate aspect of U.S.-China relations.