



News

Philippines removes South China Sea 'floating barrier' installed by China

Manila says President Marcos issued the order in defiance of Beijing's position that the disputed area belongs to China.



Chinese coastguard personnel monitor a passage to Scarborough Shoal in disputed waters of the South China Sea [Ted Aljibe/AFP]

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The Philippine coastguard has removed a “floating barrier” installed by China in a disputed area in the South China Sea, calling it a “decisive action” in “upholding international law”.

Authorities carried out “a special operation” that was “in compliance” with the instructions given by President Ferdinand Marcos Jr, Philippine coastguard spokesperson Jay Tarriela posted on X, formerly Twitter, on Monday evening.

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“The barrier posed a hazard to navigation, a clear violation of international law. It also hinders the conduct of fishing and livelihood activities of Filipino fisherfolk in BDM, which is an integral part of the Philippine national territory.”

Tarriela referred to the Bajo de Masinloc, also known as the Scarborough Shoal.

A video and a still image posted by Tarriela showed a diver carrying a knife and cutting the cable linking the buoys. Another photo showed personnel removing an anchor of the “floating barrier”.

Earlier on Monday, Marcos's national security adviser, Eduardo Ano, had indicated that Manila will take “all appropriate actions to cause the removal” of the buoys estimated to be 300 metres (1,000ft) long.



This photo taken on September 22, 2023, shows a Chinese coastguard ship blocking a Philippine Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources ship, foreground, as it nears the Chinese-controlled Scarborough Shoal in the disputed South China Sea [Ted Aljibe/AFP]

China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokesperson Wang Wenbin had previously defended the installation of the "floating barrier", saying its coastguard took necessary measures in accordance with the law to drive away a Philippine vessel.

He did not specify which law he was citing to justify the installation of the barrier.

China claims 90 percent of the South China Sea, an area that overlaps with the exclusive economic zones (EEZ) of Vietnam, Malaysia, Brunei, Indonesia and the Philippines.

The Philippine Department of Foreign Affairs said the barrier was a violation of international law and the Philippines would "take all appropriate measures to

protect our country's sovereignty and the livelihood of our fisherfolk”.



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