

## China's Position on the Current Situation in Xisha Islands

1. Xisha Islands are China's inherent territory. The Vietnam government had always openly and explicitly recognized China's sovereignty over Xisha Islands, but it changed its position later on.

The waters where a Chinese company operates is close to China's Xisha Islands, being only 17 nautical miles away from Zhongjian Island of the Xisha Islands and nearly 150 nautical miles away from the coast of Vietnam. The Chinese company has been operating in this waters back to 10 years ago. From last May to June, Chinese companies also carried out 3-D seismic operations and drilling field investigation, doing necessary preparations for the drilling operation.

2. The current maritime situation is caused completely by Vietnam's illegal disruption of Chinese company's legitimate and legal drilling operation in China's contiguous zone. It is not helpful to maritime stability and order that the Vietnamese side dispatched over 60 vessels including military vessels and marched for as far as 150 nautical miles to China's coastal waters to forcefully disrupt Chinese company's normal operation and rammed Chinese government vessels on escort and security missions in waters under China's jurisdiction. Vietnam also cast steel fishing nets, logs and other large obstacles on the sea. Vietnamese frogmen were also found 5 meters from a Chinese vessel at scene.

All these have gravely violated international law, including the UN Charter, the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea and the Protocol for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Maritime Navigation, disturbing freedom and security of navigation in these waters.

China urges Vietnam to respect China's sovereignty, sovereign rights and jurisdiction, and calm down and come back to reason, and stop its disruptive activities and pull vessels and personnel out of the area.

3. Over the years, Vietnam has continued its oil and gas exploration and development activities in the disputed waters with China in the South China

Sea. It is estimated that Vietnam has designated 57 oil and gas blocs in the disputed waters, including seven oil and gas fields in production and 37 drilling platforms. Taking into consideration the overall bilateral relations and peace and stability in the South China Sea, China has exercised great restraint towards Vietnam's actions.

Moreover, violent riots against Chinese enterprises and citizens happened in across Vietnam over the past two weeks.

4.Despite all this, China has kept in mind the larger interest of bilateral relations as well as peace and stability in the South China Sea and has been maintaining communication with Vietnam. The two countries have smooth channels of communication.

Up to now, the two sides have had over 20 diplomatic communications at various levels, including a phone call between Chinese State Councilor Yang Jiechi and Vietnamese Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Pham Binh Minh and a phone call between Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi and his counterpart Pham.

China believe that China and Vietnam have the ability to properly handle the current situation through joint efforts. We also hopes that the ARF member countries can have a clear understanding of the basic facts of this incidents, stay neutral and together with China continue to safeguard peace and stability of the South China Sea.