

Taiwan seizes another boat; sailors hurt

Mainland authorities called on Taiwan to thoroughly investigate the shooting of fishermen by the Taiwan coast guard over the weekend, to avoid similar incidents in the future.

A fishing boat from Guangdong Province was seized on Saturday morning by a Taiwan patrol boat in waters near Penghu county in southeastern Taiwan.

Two of its seven crew members were injured by rubber bullets fired from the patrol boat, Taiwan authorities said. They were sent to a hospital in Penghu for medical treatment, while the other five were detained.

An Fengshan, spokesman for the Taiwan Affairs Office of the State Council, called on the Taiwan side late on Saturday to respect the fact that fishermen from both sides of the Taiwan Straits have long been fishing in the area.

“Similar cases in which Taiwan has seized a mainland fishing boat have occurred frequently in recent times,” An said. “We have highlighted respect for the rights of mainland fishermen several times, but another incident occurred on Saturday morning.”

Taiwan should stop seizing fishing boats without sound reason for doing so, he said.

“We requested the Taiwan side take the case seriously, release the fishermen and the boat as soon as possible and prevent the recurrence of similar cases in the future.”

In March, another spokesman from the office, Ma Xiaoguang, commented on reports that Taiwan authorities had detained 20 mainland fishermen and their boat on charges of illegally trespassing in waters around the Dongsha Islands.

At that time, the office said, “Taiwan should respect fishermen from both sides of the Straits, including those from Hong Kong and Macao, stop its improper treatment of fishermen and protect their lives and property.”

Ma voiced opposition to acts that undermine the basis of cross-Straits talks and hinder the development of cross-Straits ties.

The mainland has offered travel conveniences to Taiwan residents for several years.

At the end of 2016, the Civil Aviation Administration of China started upgrading self-service systems at mainland airports, in a move to make buying tickets and checking-in easier for Taiwan travelers.

More than 1,700 self-service facilities are planned across the country by the

end of this year, the administration said.