

《湄公河惨案后中国军队将护航湄公河》

中国公安部周二表示从下个月开始，中国和中国东南亚相邻各国将派送军队在上个月13名中国船员遭谋杀的湄公河畔巡逻。边境管制局的新闻发布员表示中国派往巡逻的军队是云南边境管理军团建设的一支特殊武装力量。

BEIJING - Starting next month, China and its Southeast Asian neighbors will begin sending armed patrols along the Mekong River, where 13 Chinese crew members were murdered this past month, the Ministry of Public Security said on Tuesday.

China's contribution to the patrols will come from a special armed force established under the Yunnan Provincial Border Control Corps, Cheng Jun, the press officer from the ministry's border control bureau, said.

Fang Youguo, secretary-general of the Lancang River Shipowners' Association of the autonomous prefecture Xishuangbanna, whose vessels use the Mekong River, which is called the Lancang River in China, said the force will consist of nearly 1,000 armed police officers.

China will send five patrol vessels, adapted from merchant ships, along the waters of the Mekong River. Shipping on the waterway came to a standstill after the Chinese sailors were killed there on Oct 5. Commercial traffic is to resume on the river at the end of the month, Fang said.

The Chinese patrol force will escort both Chinese ships and those that are under other flags, Yang Xi, the press officer from Yunnan Provincial Border Control Corps, said on Tuesday.

Yang said China and its three partners in the patrols are still negotiating the details of their plan and will release more information about it in the future.

Song Qingrun, a researcher with the China Institutes of Contemporary International Relations, called the armed patrol a milestone in China's cooperation with Southeast Asian countries.

"This is a first, since China's past cooperation with Southeast Asian nations has mostly had to do with economics," Song said.

"The resumption of shipping along the river will help improve China's image as a responsible regional power and promote free trade between China and Southeast Asia."

At a meeting held in Beijing a week ago, China, Laos, Myanmar and Thailand agreed to strengthen efforts to ensure security along the river, where crimes such as drug smuggling are rampant.

The four nations also agreed to share intelligence as part of a "specific and unified action to completely eradicate criminal gangs, which have long threatened the regional security", according to a statement released after the meeting.

On Oct 5, 13 Chinese sailors aboard two cargo ships, Hua Ping and Yu Xing 8, were killed on the Mekong River.

Nine Thai soldiers were later detained in the case and now face charges of murder and concealing evidence.

Thailand's police chief, Priewpan Damapong, has promised to conduct a thorough investigation into the matter and said the country's military will cooperate in that work.

"The police will prosecute all nine soldiers," he was quoted by a Bangkok-based newspaper. "Their actions have nothing to do with the Thai army."

The bodies of 11 of the Chinese sailors have been cremated in the northern Thai province of Chiang Rai, Chinese officials said on Monday, and the families of each victim will soon receive 200,000 yuan (\$31,500) in compensation.

The 4,880-kilometer Mekong, originating in China, is the longest river in Southeast Asia, and has been deemed the "Oriental Danube".

The river is an important shipping route between China and Southeast Asia.