



Statement from U.S. Embassy Koror Ambassador Hennessey-Niland on IUU by the PRC at Helen Reef in Palau's Marine Reserve

The United States commends the Palauan government for the actions it has taken to apprehend a People's Republic of China vessel for allegedly illegally fishing at Helen Reef in Palau's marine reserve. Along with Australia and Japan, the U.S. works closely with Palau's Maritime Law Enforcement Center and we steadfastly support Palau's efforts to protect its territorial sovereignty and prevent PRC-flagged vessels from engaging in illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing. We stand with countries around the world whose economies and natural resources are threatened by the flagrant disregard for coastal state sovereignty and irresponsible fishing practices. IUU fishing costs the world tens of billions of dollars each year and is particularly damaging for countries like Palau that have large communities that rely on fishing for their livelihood.

Despite the People's Republic of China's claims of being a "responsible fishing nation" with "zero tolerance" for illegal fishing, the PRC's subsidized fishing fleet routinely violates the sovereign rights and jurisdictions of coastal states, fishes without permission, and overfishes license agreements. Given this unfortunate record of IUU fishing, rule-breaking, and willful environmental degradation, it is more important than ever that the international community stands together for the rule of law and insists on better environmental stewardship by Beijing.