

No sighting in northern Philippines of Chinese rocket debris

September 15 2022, by JIM GOMEZ



In this handout photo provided by the Philippine Coast Guard, rescuers recover debris, which the Philippine Space Agency said has markings of the Long March 5B (CZ-5B) Chinese rocket that was launched on July 24, after it was found in waters off Mamburao, Occidental Mindoro province, Philippines, on Aug. 2, 2022. In July, the core stage debris of the Long March 5B rocket that was launched in China landed in Philippine waters in an uncontrolled reentry, the agency said. No damage or injuries were reported. Credit: Philippine Coast Guard via AP

Philippine officials have warned of possible danger to aircraft and ships from debris from a new Chinese rocket launch that might fall in

northern Philippine waters, authorities said Thursday, adding no debris has been sighted so far.

The Philippine Space Agency said China's Long March 7A rocket was launched Tuesday night from the Wenchang Space Launch Center on Hainan island. That prompted the agency to notify Philippine authorities of potential danger in two offshore areas where the debris could crash down.

The possible "drop zones" were 71 kilometers (44 miles) off Burgos town in Ilocos Norte province and 52 kilometers (32 miles) from Santa Ana town in Cagayan province, the space agency said, citing information from a notice to pilots released by the Civil Aviation Administration of China.

Rocket parts that detach before reaching space should by design fall back offshore less than an hour after a rocket launch, Philippine Space Agency spokesperson Tricia Zafra said.

"So far, no sighting. We continue to seek out reports," Zafra told The Associated Press. "Hopefully, no injuries or damage related to it."

The Civil Aviation Authority of the Philippines warned Wednesday in a notice to pilots about the possible danger posed by the debris in the two northern Philippine offshore areas.



In this handout photo provided by the Philippine Coast Guard, Coast Guard personnel check on debris, which the Philippine Space Agency said has markings of the Long March 5B (CZ-5B) Chinese rocket that was launched on July 24, after it was found in waters off Mamburao, Occidental Mindoro province, Philippines on Aug. 2, 2022. In July, the core stage debris of the Long March 5B rocket that was launched in China landed in Philippine waters in an uncontrolled reentry, the agency said. No damage or injuries were reported. Credit: Philippine Coast Guard via AP

"While debris from CZ-7A is unlikely to fall on land features or inhabited areas in the Philippine territory, falling debris still poses a considerable threat to ships, aircraft, fishing boats, and other vessels that will pass through the drop zones," the Philippine Space Agency said in a statement Tuesday.

In July, the core stage debris of a Long March 5B rocket that was launched by China [landed in Philippine waters](#) in an uncontrolled reentry, the agency said. No damage or injuries were reported.

Fishermen at the time found a torn metal sheet showing part of the Chinese flag and a marking of the Long March 5B rocket in the West Philippine Sea about 160 kilometers (100 miles) off Mamburao town in Occidental Mindoro province, according to the space agency, using the Philippine name for a part of the South China Sea closer to its western coast.



In this photo released by Xinhua News Agency, people gather at the beach as they watch the Long March 5B Y3 carrier rocket, carrying Wentian lab module, lift off from the Wenchang Space Launch Center in Wenchang in southern China's Hainan Province on July 24, 2022. Authorities warned of potential danger to aircraft and ships. There has been no reported sighting in northern Philippine waters so far of debris from a new Chinese rocket launch, which prompted authorities to warn of potential danger to aircraft and ships, officials said Thursday, Sept. 15. Credit: Zhang Liyun/Xinhua via AP, File



In this handout photo provided by the Philippine Coast Guard, Coast Guard personnel carry debris, which the Philippine Space Agency said has markings of the Long March 5B (CZ-5B) Chinese rocket that was launched on July 24, after it was found in waters off Mamburao, Occidental Mindoro province, Philippines on Aug. 2022. In July, the core stage debris of the Long March 5B rocket that was launched in China landed in Philippine waters in an uncontrolled reentry, the agency said. No damage or injuries were reported. Credit: Philippine Coast Guard via AP



In this handout photo provided by the Philippine Coast Guard, Coast Guard personnel inspect debris, which the Philippine Space Agency said has markings of the Long March 5B (CZ-5B) Chinese rocket that was launched on July 24, after it was found in waters off Mamburao, Occidental Mindoro province, Philippines on Aug. 2, 2022. In July, the core stage debris of the Long March 5B rocket that was launched in China landed in Philippine waters in an uncontrolled reentry, the agency said. No damage or injuries were reported. Credit: Philippine Coast Guard via AP



This handout photo provided by the Philippine Coast Guard shows rocket debris, which the Philippine Space Agency said has markings of the Long March 5B (CZ-5B) Chinese rocket that was launched on July 24, after it was found in waters off Mamburao, Occidental Mindoro province, Philippines on Aug. 2, 2022. In July, the core stage debris of the Long March 5B rocket that was launched in China landed in Philippine waters in an uncontrolled reentry, the agency said. No damage or injuries were reported. Credit: Philippine Coast Guard via AP

The agency asked the public on Tuesday to immediately inform authorities if suspected floating debris is sighted at sea and warned people against retrieving or coming in close contact with such materials.

Manila's space agency says it's working with the Department of Foreign Affairs to push for the Philippine ratification of two U.N. treaties, including one that promotes accountability among nations for possible damage or injuries arising from the launching of objects such as satellites to space.

China has faced criticism for allowing rocket stages to fall to Earth uncontrolled at least twice before. NASA accused Beijing last year of "failing to meet responsible standards regarding their space debris" after parts of a Chinese rocket landed in the Indian Ocean.

The country's first space station, Tiangong-1, crashed into the Pacific Ocean in 2016 after Beijing confirmed it lost control. An 18-ton rocket fell uncontrolled in May 2020.

China also faced criticism after using a missile to destroy one of its defunct weather satellites in 2007, creating a field of debris that other

governments said might jeopardize other satellites.

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