

# CHINA'S LAW 'FORMALISES' ITS LAC ACTIONS

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The legislature, which is largely ceremonial and controlled by the Communist Party, on Saturday “voted to adopt a new law on the protection and exploitation of the country’s land border areas,” the Xinhua news agency said. The law “stipulates that the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the People’s Republic of China are sacred and inviolable”, the text said, adding that “the state shall take measures to safeguard territorial integrity and land boundaries and guard against and combat any act that undermines territorial sovereignty and land boundaries”.

It also calls on the state to “take measures to strengthen border defence, support economic and social development as well as opening-up in border areas, improve public services and infrastructure in such areas, encourage and support people’s life and work there, and promote coordination between border defence and social, economic development in border areas”.

The law designates the various responsibilities of the military, the State Council or Cabinet, and provincial governments in managing the security and economic issues in border areas. Article 22 of the law says the PLA “shall carry out border duties” including “organising drills” and “resolutely prevent, stop and combat invasion, encroachment, provocation and other acts”. The law also says China will “handle land border-related affairs with neighbouring countries through negotiations to properly resolve disputes and long-standing border issues”.

The passing of the law coincides with stepped up Chinese activity along the land borders, which have mirrored actions in disputed waters in the East and South China Sea. The law will give a stamp of approval for the military’s recent actions in disputed areas.

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