

China and Taiwan cooperate on bird flu research

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Taiwan has received specimens of the H7N9 avian flu virus from China to help research the new strain, in what an official described Sunday as a landmark move in health cooperation.

The [virus samples](#) were taken from China's eastern Anhui province and transported to Taiwan on Saturday, according to the Taiwanese Centers for Disease Control (CDC).

"The virus could be used in producing vaccines and diagnosis," Liu Shih-hao of CDC, told AFP.

"This will help sustain health of people from the two sides ... It is a milestone in the joint prevention and treatment of epidemic by the two sides."

Taiwan and China were split at the end of a civil war in 1949, but ties have improved markedly since 2008 when Ma Ying-jeou of the China-friendly Kuomintang party came to power. He was re-elected in January 2012.

Taiwan, separated from the Chinese mainland by a 180-kilometre (111.6-mile) strait, has made a number of moves to protect itself from the outbreak, which has killed 18 and infected dozens on the mainland.

Taipei has stepped up temperature checks at airports on passenger arrivals from several Chinese cities where infections have been reported.

Earlier this month Taiwanese authorities destroyed more than 100 birds smuggled from the mainland and seized by the [coastguard](#) in a fishing port in northern Taiwan.

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