



ISAMBAYAN strongly condemns the recent statements made by Vice President Sara Duterte that appear to downplay China's aggressive actions in the West Philippine Sea (WPS) and echo Beijing's propaganda. These remarks represent a dangerous deviation from the Philippines' unwavering commitment to upholding international law and protecting its sovereign rights in the WPS, as affirmed by the 2016 arbitral ruling.

"We should not let external forces exaggerate tensions in the West Philippine Sea. Dialogue, not provocation, is the path to peace," Vice President Duterte declared, dismissing documented accounts of Chinese harassment and incursions.

Vice President Duterte's statements are deeply concerning. They represent an open betrayal of the trust of the Filipino people. She completely disregarded the blatant violations of our sovereign territory and ignored the harassment of Filipino fishermen. Turning a blind eye to the illegal incursions of Chinese vessels is totally unacceptable. This is not a matter of choosing sides; it is a matter of defending our nation's territorial integrity and the well-being of our citizens.

ISAMBAYAN stands firmly with the Stratbase Albert del Rosario Institute (ADRI) and other organizations that have rightfully denounced the Vice President's remarks. We echo their call for a robust and principled foreign policy that prioritizes the protection of Philippine sovereignty and upholds international law. We urge the government to unequivocally reaffirm its commitment to the 2016 arbitral ruling and to take decisive action against China's continued aggression in the WPS.

The strengthening of alliances with the United States, Japan, Australia, and the European Union is crucial in countering China's assertive behavior. We must not compromise our national interests for the sake of appeasement. The future security and prosperity of the Philippines depend on a clear and unwavering stance against any attempts to undermine our sovereignty.

We call on all Filipinos to remain vigilant and to actively participate in the ongoing discourse surrounding this critical issue. The defense of our nation's sovereignty is a collective responsibility, and we must stand united in protecting our national interests.