

## **FRONT NEWS**

### **Change has come, Rodrigo Duterte takes oath as 16th president of the Philippines**

By: Yashika F. Torib, Manila Bureau Senior Correspondent

Change has come for the Philippines as the republic welcomed its 16th president, the blunt and feisty former mayor of Davao City, Rodrigo Duterte.

President Duterte was sworn into office by Supreme Court Justice Bienvenido L. Reyes at the Rizal Hall of Malacañang Palace at exactly 12:00 noon last Friday, June 30.

This was preceded by the proclamation of presidency by Senate President Franklin Drilon.

He took oath flanked by his children with ex-wife Elizabeth Zimmerman – Sarah, Paolo, and Sebastian, and his daughter Veronica with partner Honeylet Avanceña.

The oath-taking was made in front of 627 crowd composed of the members of the Senate, House of Representatives, Supreme Court justices, the diplomatic corps, lawmakers, cabinet members, ranking officials of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and the Philippine National Police (PNP), and his personal guests.

While Duterte earlier promised a five-minute discourse following the oath taking ceremonies, his inaugural speech actually lasted for 15 minutes in what political experts considered as one of the greatest speech of a newly inaugurated president in Philippine history.

The president' speech reflected his campaign slogan of instigating change in governance, eradicating criminality and illegal-drugs in the country. He addressed corruption from the highest and lowest echelons of the government, criminality in the streets, rampant use of drugs, and the break-down of law and order, as the symptoms of social disease and urgent concerns of the nation.

He stated that his administration will listen and feel the pulse of the people in supplying and fortifying their needs.

Duterte, in his usual blunt self, straightly addressed the Commission on Human Rights (CHR) and the Congress to “allow a level of governance that is consistent with our mandate.” This was in response to the CHR's constant criticism of Duterte's manner of speaking and behaving in handling issues and felons.

“Those who don't approve of my methods of ending criminality, saying it is unorthodox and verging on illegal... I've seen how these (criminalities) destroyed families, relationships and bled the government of funds that are supposedly given to the poor. The fight against these will be relentless and sustained.

“As a lawyer, I know the limits of the power and authority of a president; what is legal and not. The rule of the law is uncompromising. You mind your work and I will mind mine,” Duterte strongly pronounced.

The president emphasized his dictum of “Malasakit at Tunay na Pagbabago” especially for the people who are hungry for genuine and meaningful change.

“It should start with us and in us,” he said.

He called on every Filipino to join in his crusade of making Philippines a better country no matter how “rough” and “wobbly” it can be at first.

“A test of a good government is not whether we have added to the coffers of those who have much, but instead, to provide to those who have little,” he said.

The newly-inaugurated president also gave a running order to all department secretaries and heads to remove red-tape within their agencies. He instructed them to reduce the requirements and processing time in the application, submission and release of documents to the people, and to remove redundant requirements for such.

He also charged the department heads to refrain from “changing and bending” the rules of government contracts, projects, and business transactions when it is already implemented. “It is wrong to change the rules when the game has already started,” he reiterated.

In the international front, Duterte affirmed that the Philippines will honor treaties and its international obligations. He earlier pronounced that while some neighboring countries refuse to have multi-lateral agreements, his administration is open to bilateral talks regarding the pressing concerns of territorial disputes.

For domestic concerns, he vowed to sign and implement amendments instead of constitution and legal reforms.

Looking at the immediate concerns of the south, the president called on the local government units, the Moro leaders and brothers, as well as the indigents to work together for peace.

“I call on the participation of all, to include the stakeholders especially the indigenous people, in the peace process,” he stressed.

Duterte ended his inaugural speech by announcing his readiness to work for the nation; that his service extends to everyone and not for the interests of any particular groups.

“I have no friends to serve. I have no enemies to harm. Join me in this crusade to make a better country. I am ready to start my work for the nation,” he concluded.

After delivering his inaugural speech, Duterte led the mass oath-taking of the cabinet secretaries and the other appoints of key agencies.

He was then given a military honors by the AFP.

Duterte then took the ceremonial first ascent of the Malacañang's stairs which is symbolic of his charge of office at the presidential palace.

The Diplomatic Corp Reception was then led by Papal Nuncio, Bishop Guiseppe Pinto, congratulating the new Philippine president in behalf of all the state leaders comprising the diplomatic corp.

The president's last activity for the day was a feeding program to be held in Delpan, Manila.

His first activity as the Philippine President begins on July 1 when he will lead and preside over the change of command of the PNP and the AFP.

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## **FRONT NEWS**

### **Bongbong Marcos: oust Leni Robredo**

By Gina Villanueva, Associate Editor

On the eve of the Philippines presidential inaugurals, Senator Ferdinand Marcos Jr. filed a 1000-paged petition before the Supreme Court's Presidential Electoral Tribunal (PET) against Maria Leonor 'Leni' Robredo, who was just sworn in as the allegedly elected vice-president of the Philippines.

In his petition, Marcos substantiated it with 20,000 pages of affidavits, certificates of canvass and other supporting documents, letters of support from those who did not even vote for him, but felt that he was cheated --which he said would provide clear and convincing evidence of what he dubbed as the biggest electoral fraud in the history of the Philippines.

George Garcia, lawyer of Marcos, said that through a series of electoral frauds, anomalies and irregularities, people behind the whole operation made sure that Robredo would win and that Marcos' votes would be reduced. Marcos' votes were reduced to 14,155,344 while Robredo suddenly soared with 14,418,817 -- a victory margin of 263,473 votes.

The votes obtained by Marcos, (which in a sudden wink of an eye) -- were drastically reduced, manipulated and altered to make it appear that he only placed second during the last elections, the petition read.

Marcos is contesting the election results in 39,221 clustered precincts in 25 provinces and five highly urbanized cities all over the country.

His petition is three-pronged, namely: that the first is the 'flawed' automated election system (AES), the second consists of the more 'traditional' modes of cheating like vote-buying, pre-shading, intimidation and failure of elections, and the third focuses on the unauthorized introduction by Smartmatic's Marlon Garcia of a new hash code (or a new script or program) into the Transparency Server as well as the effects brought about by the unauthorized change.

Comelec and Smartmatic violated Republic Act No. 9369 or the Automated Election System Law, which requires, among others, that the AES to be used by Comelec should have demonstrated capability and been successfully used in a prior electoral exercise here or abroad. However, the vote counting machine supplied by Smartmatic as a component of the AES was an entirely new model, and never been used, or supplied by Smartmatic for any election, in the Philippines or abroad.

Bongbong cited other irregularities

The Commission on Election (COMELEC) issued a resolution, 13 days before Election Day, ordering the boards of canvassers not to transmit the certificate of canvass until SD cards from the VCMs would have been uploaded or imported into their Consolidation and Canvassing System (CCS).

The Comelec also set up, six days before the elections, seven regional hubs for the reconfiguration of SD cards without prior notice to the political parties and candidates, while the national and local candidates thought that the SD cards were being configured solely at the Configuration Room in the Sta. Rosa facility of the Comelec and Smartmatic.

Instead of being replaced by standby CCS, some 30 affected CCSs were pulled out of the BOCs custody, and were supposedly delivered to the Sta. Rosa facility for configuration, upon the order of the Comelec, through Executive Director Jose M. Tolentino.

The unauthorized introduction of a new program into the Transparency Server and the apparent use of a fourth server (called the Queue Server) that was not subject to review by political parties and candidates as required by law.

During the election period, the voting public was made to believe that all electoral data were received by the three servers directly from the VCMs and that those were secured by digital signatures and coded encryptions, a far cry from what truly happened on Election Day.

Data had to pass through the fourth server and it was here where the results were encrypted and decrypted. This being the case, the integrity of the data subsequently received by the CCSs, the Central Server and the Transparency Server could no longer

be relied upon since the purpose of encryption of the data transmission is precisely to prevent any alteration or change.

Soon after the unauthorized new program was introduced at 8:30 p.m. on Election Day, there appeared to be an abnormally high turn-out of unaccounted undervotes or around three million for the position of vice-president.

Marcos stressed, "The accuracy of the election results and the reported irregularities should therefore be thoroughly investigated and determined, through the immediate conduct of judicial revision or a recount of the ballots and the examination, system audit and verification of the voter's receipts, election returns and related election documents.

"I will continue the fight," Marcos vowed, "until the truth behind the reports of massive electoral fraud is made public."

He added, "It is my moral and social duty to the Filipino people to expose the truth, and the fraudulent machinations, anomalies and irregularities which attended the recently concluded May 2016 elections, by filing this election protest. I owe it to the 14 million people who voted for me and to the millions of Filipinos whose voices were not heard."

Meanwhile, counsel to Ma. Leonor 'Leni' Robredo, Romulo Macalintal called Marcos' protest "dismissable" and he said so, as an election lawyer, according to a report by Inquirer.

Macalintal argues that Robredo had nothing to do with Marcos' allegations, and filing it with the Supreme Court renders it "dismissable," having no jurisdiction on Comelec election offenses.

Macalintal said it should have been filed with the Law Department of the COMELEC.

## **FRONT NEWS**

### **July 4, 1776: 13 colonies exit from England**

On July 4, 1776, the 13 original colonies claimed their independence from England, an occasion which eventually led to the formation of the United States.

Conflict between the colonies and England was already a year old when the colonies convened a Continental Congress in Philadelphia in the summer of 1776. In a June 7 session in the Pennsylvania State House (later Independence Hall), Richard Henry Lee of Virginia presented a resolution with the famous words: "Resolved: That these United Colonies are, and of right ought to be, free and independent States, that they are absolved from all allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political connection between them and the State of Great Britain is, and ought to be, totally dissolved."

Lee's words were the impetus for the drafting of a formal Declaration of Independence, although the resolution was not followed up immediately.

On June 11, consideration of the resolution was postponed by a vote of seven colonies to five, with New York abstaining.

However, a Committee of Five was appointed to draft a statement presenting to the world the colonies' case for independence. Members of the Committee included John Adams of Massachusetts, Roger Sherman of Connecticut, Benjamin Franklin of Pennsylvania, Robert R. Livingston of New York and Thomas Jefferson of Virginia. The task of drafting the actual document fell on Jefferson.

On July 1, 1776, the Continental Congress reconvened and on the following day, the Lee resolution for independence was adopted by 12 of the 13 colonies, New York not voting.

Discussions of Jefferson's Declaration of Independence resulted in some minor changes, but the spirit of the document was unchanged. The process of revision continued through all of July 3 and into the late afternoon of July 4, when the Declaration was officially adopted.

Of the 13 colonies, nine voted in favor of the Declaration, two-- Pennsylvania and New York abstained.

John Hancock, President of the Continental Congress signed the Declaration of Independence.

It is said that John Hancock signed his name "with a great flourish" so that "King George can read that without spectacles!"

Today the original copy of the Declaration is housed in the National Archives in Washington, D.C. and July 4 has been designated a national holiday to commemorate the day the United States laid down its claim to be a free and independent nation. (Source: Military.com)

As you know, the 13 original colonies are New Hampshire, New York, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina and Georgia (GV).

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## **EDITORIAL**

### **FIRST ENCOUNTER - A DAY AFTER EACH OTHER'S OATH TAKING**

Finally, the two highest officials of the Republic met for the first time during the change of command of the Armed Forces of the Philippines at Camp Aguinaldo.

President Digong whose public stance on not giving any government position to Vice President Leni Robredo, was apparently said in order not to hurt his friend, Senator Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr.

Senator Bong Bong Marcos could have been easily be his vice president hopeful but President Digong's pronouncement that he will not run for the presidency made Senator Bong Bong to look for another candidate and found Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago.

They may belong to different political parties, but President Digong and Vice President Leni have the same advocacy, and that is to help alleviate the plight of the poor Filipino people in all four corners of the archipelago.

The most important and crucial to the economy of the Philippines is the amount of money lost in the daily traffic along EDSA. According to data, the Philippines is losing Php21B daily because of the ever growing problem on traffic congestion of all forms of vehicles plyng the main EDSA highway.

Department of Transportation and Communications Secretary Arthur Tugade has been tasked by the President to immediately solve the ever growing problem of traffic congestion, which to many of the daily commuters thought, there would never be an end.

Confucius once said, "One can never cross the Yantze River with one bamboo pole, you need to have two or more to be successful," and with the meeting of both President Digong and VP Leni, they can both work hand in hand to realize their promise to the Filipino people, to make life a bit easier compared to the previous administration.

We always look on the brighter side of life and never wanted to be darkened by failures and disappointments in our quest for peace and tranquility.

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## **INNERVIEW**

### **The accumulated humiliation of Muslims, a responsibility of journalism (Part 4 of 4, Conclusion)**

#### Veiled Motives

Little of this long history of Western manipulation, deceit and brutality in the Middle East is known to Americans because U.S. corporate media almost never invokes it to explain Arab and Iranian attitudes toward the West.

Muslims remember this history. Arabs are still infuriated by the Sykes-Picot backstabbing, let alone the most recent depredations. Fanatics like the Islamic State are still ticked off about the Crusades, a much earlier round of Western intervention in some ways.

Surprising and welcomed, that only the tiniest fraction of Muslims has turned to terrorism. (Joe Lauria, consortiumnews)

Stripping out the political and historical motives renders terrorists as nothing more than madmen fueled by irrational hate of a benevolent West that says it only wants to help them.

They hate us simply because we are Western, according to people like Tower --(not only shows an ignorance of history, since WWI when it was the Arabs who suffered the most, more than any other) and not because we have done anything to them.

Israel and its Western enablers likewise bury the history of Israel's ethnic cleansing and piecemeal conquest of Palestine so they can dismiss Palestinians who turn to terrorism as motivated only by hatred of Jews for being Jews.

There's no excuse for terrorism, but there is a practical way to curb it: end the current interventions and occupations and plan no more.

The Western view of terrorism is that Islamist extremists merely hate modernity and secularism.

But that's not what they say when they claim responsibility for striking inside the West.

To ignore their word and dismiss their violent reaction to the long and ongoing history of Western intervention may shield Americans and Europeans for their partial responsibility for these atrocities, but it also provides cover for the continuing interventions, which in turn will surely produce more terrorism.

Instead of looking at the problem objectively, and self-critically -- the West ludicrously veils its own violence as an effort to spread democracy (which never materializes) or protect civilians (who are endangered instead).

To admit any connection between the sordid historical record and anti-Western terrorism would be to admit culpability and the price that the West is paying for its dominance.

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## **STRAIGHT TALK**

### **ILLEGAL DRUG AND CRIMINALITY**

By Ed Libranda

The clamor for a drug-free Philippines has reverberated in all corners of the Philippines with the daily occurrences of various police operations against illegal drugs.

More users and pushers are seen making pledges to cooperate with the Philippine National Police (PNP) in their campaign to at least maximize the police effort to clean the barangays of all illegal drug activities.

As we have known now that drug addiction proliferation started from the lowest level of society and has engulfed most of the barangay residents either as a drug pusher or a user.

The zero tolerance espoused by President Digong in his inaugural speech during his oath taking at the Rizal Hall of Malacanang Palace only shows his fight against drug trafficking and criminality in the Philippines.

The "Daan Matuwid" by former President Benigno Aquino III centered on graft and corruption in the government while President Digong's unwavering stance on illegal drug and criminality have been consistent from day one of his presidential campaign which catapulted him to the presidency of the Republic.

How could these drug lords who are all incarcerated in a supposedly tight maximum National Bilibid Prison (NBP) do all these activities such as manufacturing "shabu" and even marketing it beyond the walls of the NBP?

These nefarious activities must have been going on now for years and supposedly under the watchful eye of the Justice Secretary and now Senator Leila de Lima, angered President Digong, who as we know had an unpleasant word war between the President and the Senator.

If there would really be a CHANGE in the Philippine governance, there must be an orchestrated effort on all heads of the government agencies to join hands with the President, not only in illegal drug and criminality but as well as in the cleansing of the skalawags in the government.

Have you heard of the Filipino cultural trait and idiomatic "ningas cogon ( good only in the beginning) ?" I hope this won't happen during the 6-year term of President Digong. I wish him well for a new and better Philippines, and true to his campaign promises that he will eradicate criminality, illegal drugs, graft and corruption in 3 to 6 months.

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## **TOURISM**

### **Northern Samar: Port of Call of Manila Galleons for 250 Years**

By Randy V. Uurlanda, Manila Bureau Chief Correspondent

Northern Samar of yore was called Ibabao ("on top") because of its geographical location in the island of Samar. Since the turbulent San Bernardino Strait was along the route of the Spanish galleons that plied the Manila to Acapulco, Mexico route between 1565 to 1815, a royal port was established in the town of Palapag along the Pacific coastal plains where the richly laden Manila galleons were protected from unfavorable winds and troubled seas.

Ibabao became a major commercial center during the 250-year galleon trade where Acapulco-bound galleons were loaded in Palapag with tons of abaca fibers, bees' wax and prime produce, which were in demand by Spanish, Mexican and Peruvian households. On the other hand, the island town of Capul along the strait that separates Luzon from Samar was the provisioning call of the galleons.

Capul, then known as Abak, became a regular stopover for galleons because it was an ideal anchorage station for ships that came in from the Pacific on their way to Manila. On their way back to Acapulco they also dropped anchor at Capul (an abbreviated

name of Acapulco) to wait for the trade winds to blow and the swift currents that propelled them out into the vast Pacific Ocean.

The galleon trade became so lucrative that the merchants of Seville in Spain petitioned King Philip II complaining of their losses and secured a law in 1593 that set a limit of only two ships to sail each year from either port. Prior to 1593, three or more ships would set sail annually from each port.

In the early part of the 16th century, shipbuilders were drafted from Palapag to the Cavite shipyards near Manila for the construction of the galleons. Built of Philippine hardwood, a 49-meter long wooden ship weighing 1,700 to 2,000 tons can carry up to a thousand passengers. A total of 110 Manila galleons set sail in the 250 years of the Manila-Acapulco galleon trade. Most of the ships were built in the Philippines and only eight in Mexico.

The galleons, which took four months to sail across the Pacific Ocean, from Manila to Acapulco, carried spices, porcelain, ivory, lacquer ware, processed silk cloth gathered from both the Spice Islands and the Asia-Pacific region, to be sold in European markets. The galleons also carried with them Luzon Indians or the so-called Manila men, who were the first Filipinos in America. The Mexican war of independence in the early part of the 19th century ended the galleon trade.

With the galleons long gone Northern Samar is slowly rising from obscurity to fame as an upcoming major tourist destination in Eastern Visayas.

Divided into three major geographical areas with 24 municipalities facing the Samar Sea to the West, San Bernardino Strait to the North and the Pacific Ocean to the East. Northern Samar, the gateway to Eastern Visayas and Mindanao via the Eastern Nautical Highway, offers a wide variety of relatively undeveloped picturesque island destinations with beautiful white sand (and a pink one) beaches, caves, waterfalls, mysterious stone and rock formations, and friendly and hospitable inhabitants.

Northern Samar, whose capital is Catarman, is 734 kilometers by land from Manila, including a one-and-a-half hour ro-ro ferry crossing is one of the three provinces comprising Samar Island. Most its more than 500,000 people speak Norte Samaron, a variation of Waray, though Cebuano is also widely spoken in the town of San Isidro and the island municipalities of San Antonio and San Vicente, famous for its pink beach and ancient shipwrecks. The pink sand is caused by the weathering of a tall, crimson rock wall facing a pocket of narrow, 100-meter-stretch of fine, white sand beach.

Being the galleon trade route, it is widely believed that resting within the waters of San Andres Island (now Baragay Maragat) is the galleon "San Andres" that sunk in the early 17th century while negotiating the treacherous waters of San Bernardino Strait.

Due to its strategic location in the maritime navigation during the ancient time, Northern Samar is a province spiked with lighthouses, most of which were built by the combined forces of Spanish missionaries to guide the galleons to safe waters at night and to serve as watchtowers to warn the islanders of approaching seaborne pirate invasion.

But, Northern Samar's major tourism icon is the primeval sandstone rock formations collectively called "Magasang" (full of coral reefs) in the picture card-pretty island town of Biri off the coastal town of Lavezares. To reach these natural wonders, one has to wait for low tide so that one could wade through ankle-deep water across a 200-meter wide field of sea grass, coral beds and slippery, moss-covered flat rocks.

Sculpted by winds and lashed by waves for millennia, the sides of the rock-hard sandstone walls have small petrified tree limbs and small branches peeking out like brown eyes. Carved by the elements through time, the rock mountains resemble an eagle, a turtle, and a unique pattern of crop-like circles. In between the towering crags are mini lagoons and deep chasms that serve as shady shelter from the scorching noonday sun.

Biri, together with the other island towns of San Vicente, Capul and San Antonio, were declared as eco-tourism zone destinations by Republic Act 9458. Biri's natural beauty has attracted 150 foreigners, many of whom are married to local women, who spend their holiday there.

Called the "Lost Frontier," Northern Samar is now being rediscovered again for its pristine and unequalled natural assets and rich maritime. From being a major center of commerce and lifeline for the Manila galleons of yore, Ibabao is now again on top as a major tourist destination this time.

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## **NEWS AT A GLANCE**

### **Duterte to US envoy: clarification on 1951 Mutual Defense Treaty**

In a recent meeting, Philippines President Rodrigo Duterte point-blank asked Philip Goldberg, US envoy to the Philippines, "Are you with us or are not with us?"

Goldberg replied, "Only if you are attacked."

Duterte disclosed this in a recent business forum speech held in southern Davao city, declaring that the 1951 Mutual Defense Treaty between the US and the Philippines "does not automatically oblige Washington to immediately help if the Philippines gets into a confrontation with China over a territorial dispute."

Former president Benigno Aquino III's challenge of China's validity of its claims under the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) before an international arbitration tribunal has strained relations with Beijing.

Mr. Duterte said he would wait for the tribunal's ruling before deciding his move but added he would not confront militarily superior China and risk losing Filipino troops.

"Why would I go to war?" he asked. "I will not waste the lives of people there."

The now chief executive pointed out the benefits of nurturing friendly relations with Beijing, including a Chinese offer of financing railway projects in the Philippines.

Apparently referring to the US, Duterte queried, "Can you match the offer? Because if you cannot match the offer, I will accept the goodwill of China." (Source: AP)

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## **NEWS AT A GLANCE**

### **President Rody releases political prisoners**

Prior to amnesty, in a "gesture of goodwill" President Rodrigo Duterte will order the unconditional release of several political prisoners during the peace talks with the communist-led National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP).

This was announced by Duterte's chief peace negotiator Silvestre Bello III, who said the prisoners will be freed upon Duterte's inauguration, subject to Congress approval.

Labor secretary Bello was part of the team sent by Duterte to Oslo, Norway last week, which met with NDFP representatives led by Luis Jalandoni and Fidel Agcaoili for preliminary talks to clear the way for the resumption of formal negotiations, to end one of the world's longest running communist insurgencies.

The Oslo statement, the Joint Agreement on Security and Immunity Guarantees (JASIG) was signed between the Duterte team and the NDFP.

Alleged violations of the agreement, including the arrests of NDFP consultants, were among the major reasons for the collapse of the talks under the Aquino administration.

The resumption of the formal talks is slated for the third week of July. (Source: Karlos Manlupig@inquirerdotnet)

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## **NEWS AT A GLANCE**

### **Leave Panatag alone, say Zambales fishermen**

Planting the Philippine flag on Panatag Shoal (Scarborough Shoal) on Wednesday, some 100 Filipino fishermen and members of the People Power Volunteers for Reform (PPVR) staged a rally in Masinloc town, located 203 kilometers off the coast of Zambales, in anticipation of a UN-backed international tribunal's ruling on the Philippines' territorial dispute with China in the West Philippine Sea (South China Sea).

Coming from the coastal towns in Zambales, the protesters called on Chinese coast guards to leave Panatag Shoal, a traditional fishing ground for Filipinos.

July 4, 2016

Lawyer Aleta Tolentino, one of the organizers of PPVR said, "The (assembly intends) to show our opposition to what China is doing. They have been driving away our fishermen from our territorial waters."

China seized Panatag, internationally known as Scarborough Shoal, in 2012 after a two-month standoff with the Philippine Navy and the Philippine Coast Guard to add it to a string of reefs that it had grabbed and started to develop into artificial islands to assert its claims to almost all of the South China Sea (West Philippine Sea). (Source: <http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/792167/zambales-stage-protest#ixzz4CfyT10tR>)