

STATEMENT ON THE DFA SUMMONING OF THE CHINESE AMBASSADOR OVER THE JULIAN FELIPE REEF ISSUE

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We fully support the efforts of the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) in summoning Chinese Ambassador Huang Xilian over the “illegal lingering presence of Chinese vessels in Julian Felipe Reef.”

In doing so, the DFA has acted consistent with our collective constitutional duty to protect our “national sovereignty, territorial integrity, national interest, and the right to self-determination.” This is truly the “independent foreign policy” contemplated by our Constitution, which is to protect our national heritage in the West Philippine Sea.

As long as Chinese vessels remain in Julian Felipe Reef, which is part of our Exclusive Economic Zone, such Chinese vessels violate our laws, especially the Philippine Fisheries Code of 1998 (RA 8550, as amended) which provides, in part, that “it shall be unlawful for any foreign person, corporation or entity to fish or operate any fishing vessel in Philippine waters.”

Our law also provides that the “entry of any foreign fishing vessel in Philippine waters shall constitute a prima facie presumption that the vessel is engaged in fishing in Philippine waters.”

The lingering Chinese presence in Julian Felipe Reef is an open and continuing violation of our laws. It is but right that our leaders do whatever is necessary to address this open and continuing insult to Filipinos. END