

## Philippines at UN tells world not to interfere

Sunday September 25, 2016 06:54 AM



Philippines' Foreign Minister Perfecto Yasay addresses the United Nations General Assembly in the Manhattan borough of New York

September 24, 2016. — Reuters picNEW YORK, Sept 25 — The Philippines' foreign secretary yesterday pushed back against criticism of President Rodrigo Duterte's drug war, telling the United Nations not to interfere.

“We urge everyone to allow us to deal with our domestic challenges in order to achieve our national goals, without undue interference,” Perfecto Yasay told the UN General Assembly.

There has been growing international alarm over the rising death toll from Duterte's crackdown on crime, with human rights groups saying that security forces are engaging in extrajudicial killings.

Duterte won elections in a landslide in May after vowing to eradicate the illegal drug trade in six months, and promising that 100,000 criminals would be killed in the process.

Since he took office on June 30 about 3,000 people have been killed, about a third of them suspects shot dead by police and the rest murdered by unidentified attackers, according to police statistics.

"We have not and we will never empower our law enforcement agents to shoot-to-kill individuals suspected of drug crimes," the foreign secretary told the General Assembly.

"Extrajudicial killings have no place in our society, and in our criminal justice system."

The top diplomat told the General Assembly that Duterte enjoyed a 92-percent approval rating at home for his stance and suggested that his campaign was misunderstood.

"Our actions, however, have grabbed both the national headlines and international attention for all the wrong reasons," he said.

He argued that corruption and drugs had "torn apart many of our communities, destroyed our families and snuffed out the hopes and dreams of our people — young and old — for a bright future."

Invoking the UN's new sustainable development goals adopted last year, Yasay said his country would not be able to meet those goals without tackling corruption and drugs.

Relations between Duterte and the United Nations have been tense after the newly-elected leader launched several tirades against the world body for its criticism of his tactics, even threatening to pull out — a threat he later withdrew.

Earlier this month, Duterte declined a meeting with UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon on the sidelines of a meeting in Laos of South-east Asian leaders. — AFP

- See more at: <http://www.themalaymailonline.com/world/article/philippines-at-un-tells-world-not-to-interfere#sthash.GmLrcgfo.dpuf>