

**PRESIDENTIAL COMMUNICATIONS OPERATION OFFICE**  
**News and Information Bureau**

**PRESS BRIEFING WITH PRESIDENTIAL SPOKESPERSON SALVADOR PANELO**  
**October 28, 2019 / 12:50-1:16 P.M.**

**USEC. IGNACIO:** Good afternoon MPC; kasama na natin si Chief Presidential Legal Counsel and Presidential Spokesperson Salvador Panelo.

**SEC. PANELO:** Hello. Sabi ni Pia ng Rappler eh, he offers a press briefing with his... and ang description niya smile; meron siyang modifier eh.

Anyway, I'd like to thank Mayor Bing Leonardia of Bacolod City. We attended the MassKara Festival; it was a sight to behold. I'm impressed with how the Bacolod people joined in the celebration, even their babies were with them, can you imagine that. And last night despite the heavy rains, the competition continued in the plaza kiosk. So we were all wet. But given the spectacular program with all those beautiful eye-catching costumes and mask, ubod talaga ng ganda, kahit na nabasa kami lahat okay lang.

And I understand pala the baseball team of Bacolod is the leading baseball team in the Philippines and has won many contest abroad.

And we would like to also thank the Korean delegation, there was a huge delegation from Korea, one town Mayor or City Mayor of Korea was there, including a rock band of Korea plus many dancers, female dancers. Thank Mayor Bing of Bacolod City. I represented the Presidente there because President could not attend, it would have been his fourth attendance.

I'm ready.

**JOYCE BALANCIO/DZMM:** Sir, Russian President Vladimir Putin has accepted President Duterte's invitation to visit the Philippines, that's according to Russian Ambassador to the Philippines Igor Khovaev. May we know the details of this visit?

**SEC. PANELO:** I asked the President yesterday, he said wala pa iyon, matagal pa iyon.

**JOYCE BALANCIO/DZMM:** Sir, not within this year—

**SEC. PANELO:** That was his reply.

**JOYCE BALANCIO/DZMM:** Not within this year, sir.

**SEC. PANELO:** I'm quoting him, exact words, matagal pa iyon.

**JOYCE BALANCIO/DZMM:** On another topic, sir, may Chief PNP na po ba na napili si Pangulong Duterte?

**SEC. PANELO:** Wala pa yata eh, hindi pa ina-announce eh.

**JOYCE BALANCIO/DZMM:** Will he be announcing before he leaves for Bangkok?

**SEC. PANELO:** Let's see. He may, he may not.

**ACE ROMERO/PHIL. STAR:** Sec, may we just get Malacañang statement on the confirmation that ISIS leader Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi is dead?

**SEC. PANELO:** Is that confirmed?

**ACE ROMERO/PHIL. STAR:** Yeah, President Trump announced the death of the ISIS leader.

**SEC. PANELO:** Then that's good news for countries who have been terrorized by the ISIS. But then again, the leader of one group does not mean the extinction of that band of terrorists; we know that for a fact. Remember... who was the leader... sino ba iyong pinatay? Si Obama, look at the Obama...

**Q:** Osama.

**SEC. PANELO:** Osama rather. Sorry President Obama, Osama bin Laden. Si Osama bin Laden, I apologize.

**ACE ROMERO/PHIL. STAR:** What do you think are the implications of this development, considering that the President said iyong ISIS nga na-penetrated na iyong Mindanao. Ano iyong nakikita ninyong implications nitong development na ito sa Mindanao and overall sa security ng bansa?

**SEC. PANELO:** Well, as I said, the death of the leaders doesn't mean the extinction of that group. But then, it may also cause discouragement on the part of the terrorist groups. But as far as we are concerned, whether the leader dies or not, we will secure that part of our country from them.

**ACE ROMERO/PHIL. STAR:** Do you see parang... impact nito sa recruitment sa ISIS sa Mindanao, do you think maapektuhan iyon?

**SEC. PANELO:** Ah, iyon ang hindi natin alam, hindi ko mabasa iyong magiging response ng mga nire-recruit nila, kung it will affect them or not.

**ROSALIE COZ/UNTV:** Sir, may contingency plan na po ba o may specific instruction si Pangulong Duterte sakaling magtuloy-tuloy iyong pagbaba po ng level sa Angat at Ipo dam?

**SEC. PANELO:** Wala, wala siyang nabanggit kahapon. But I suppose the people involved in that problem are doing measures to prevent the evolution of a major crisis on water.

**ROSALIE COZ/UNTV:** Sir, puwedeng makakuha ng particular measures na ginagawa po ng particular government agencies?

**SEC. PANELO:** We'll have to ask them, the managers involved.

**ROSALIE COZ/UNTV:** Sir, natanong na po ito sa inyo over the weekend, pero for sound bite purposes po, ang sinasabi po ng mga militanteng grupo may mga—ginagamit daw po ng gobyerno iyon pong usapan tungkol po sa water crisis para i-push iyon pong Kaliwa Dam project?

**SEC. PANELO:** No, I don't think so. Remember, we said then that—there have been oppositions on the project and there has been probe on the matter. We do not know the findings of that investigation.

**FRANCIS:** Sir, follow up lang doon sa water. Kasi at least three senators po - pro government senators - si Senator Bong Go, Francis Tolentino and Imee Marcos are asking for accountability doon sa water concessionaires considering nga na ito may napipintong water crisis nga sa Metro Manila. Ano bang ano ng Malacañang, kasi sir earlier di ba sinabi ni Presidente baka patawan ng mga parusa or his thinking of parang tanggalin iyong kontrata or ano sa water sa concessionaires, sir, sa Maynilad and Manila Water?

**SEC. PANELO:** I suppose the fact that they have not undertaken corrective measures that will prevent the evolution of this upcoming crisis again would be a factor that would make the President decide on drastic action against them.

**Q:** Warning?

**SEC. PANELO:** No, I mean, if indeed they have not done anything despite the fact that there was a crisis before and now it is being repeated again, then the President may consider that factor.

**CELERINA MONTE/MANILA SHIMBUN:** Sir, regarding the Kaliwa Dam. Do you agree that there is really a need push with that project to alleviate the situation?

**SEC. PANELO:** I said there has been a probe and there is an ongoing probe and we do not know yet the findings.

**CELERINA MONTE/MANILA SHIMBUN:** So, we still have to wait for the—

**SEC. PANELO:** There has been criticism against this project coming from the inhabitants there as well as with respect to the terms, parang mas mahal yata sila kaysa dito sa Japanese.

**CELERINA MONTE/MANILA SHIMBUN:** So, right now, kahit i-shelve mo na iyong project.

**SEC. PANELO:** How is that?

**CELERINA MONTE/MANILA SHIMBUN:** I-shelve muna po iyong project, hindi muna siya ituloy—

**SEC. PANELO:** Hindi iniimbestigahan pa nga di ba. Ang alam ko iyong Japanese firm wrote us a letter and cited many reasons why the project, the present project is not to the advantage of our country and the residents there at. And I refer the letter to the appropriate departments and I have not heard from them yet, what is their take.

**CELERINA MONTE/MANILA SHIMBUN:** So, the government could still rescind the contract with the Chinese government or whichever Chinese company—

**SEC. PANELO:** Well, if the finding shows that it is indeed disadvantageous and against the interest of the people there, then it can be rescinded.

**CELERINA MONTE/MANILA SHIMBUN:** But don't you think, it would cause irritant between the Philippines and China considering that the project was signed during the visit here of President Xi Jinping?

**SEC. PANELO:** Even so. If the findings will show that it is against the interest of our country, I'm sure the Chinese government will understand; as it would do the same, if it was placed in the same situation.

**CELERINA MONTE/MANILA SHIMBUN:** Does the government have any time frame as to when the result of that investigation could come out so that we could somehow come up with another proposal if ever for that particular program?

**SEC. PANELO:** We will wait for their findings.

**CELERINA MONTE/MANILA SHIMBUN:** Walang time frame?

**SEC. PANELO:** Wala.

**JULIE:** Sir, just to clarify something you said earlier. You said that the authorities involved have not undertaken any actions to prevent—

**SEC. PANELO:** No, I didn't say that. I said if, 'if' they have not and the consequence of that is this looming water crisis again, then they have not done anything and that factor may compel the President to do something drastic against them.

**JULIE:** Sir, given that we are experiencing the second water crisis in a year. Do you feel that whatever the said agencies have done to address the problem that occurred in March, was not enough?

**SEC. PANELO:** Obviously. Otherwise, there would not be a looming crisis.

**JULIE:** Factually, sir. Ano po iyong alam ninyo na ginawang steps?

**SEC. PANELO:** I do not know, I have no personal knowledge.

**JULIE:** Have you talked to the President about his thoughts on this?

**SEC. PANELO:** We didn't talk about it.

Oh by the way the President mentioned something about his health. Because I asked him directly, 'how's your pain, Mr. President?' If I am not mistaken, his response was, 'the pain is only  $\frac{1}{4}$  now, the  $\frac{3}{4}$ 's gone.' And also coming from the First Lady, she said that the President had thread mill, nag-thread mill daw siya kahapon; and he's supposed to be here, because he has some activities this afternoon.

**INA ANDOLONG/CNN PHILS:** Sir, can you be more specific on what drastic measures the President could take?

**SEC. PANELO:** Well, di ba sabi niya, either tanggalin niya iyong kontrata, may binanggit siyang ganoon noon eh. Make them accountable, as suggested by the three senators you mentioned earlier.

**INA ANDOLONG/CNN PHILIPPINES:** Sir, the last time there was a water shortage the President felt frustrated because he had to directly intervene at that time. Do you have a message to water concessionaires to, you know, hihintayin pa ba nila ulit na gawin ni Presidente 'yun na 'wag nila dapat hintayin?

**SEC. PANELO:** Well, the message again is shape up or ship out! Shape up or ship out. 'Yun naman ang message palagi ni Presidente eh. Kung hindi n'yo kaya eh umalis na kayo.

**INA ANDOLONG/CNN PHILIPPINES:** Thank you, sir.

**ACE ROMERO/PHILIPPINE STAR:** Sec, balikan ko. 'Yung drastic measures include 'yung revocation nung deal, ano pa, Sec?

**SEC. PANELO:** 'Yan 'yung—kung ano 'yung mga binanggit ni Presidente noon.

**ACE ROMERO/PHILIPPINE STAR:** So, how about—do we expect heads to roll dun sa water regulators?

**SEC. PANELO:** Na kay Presidente 'yun. Noon ba may tinanggal siya?

**MPC:** Meron. Yes.

**ACE ROMERO/PHILIPPINE STAR:** Well, ni-reassign yata. Do we expect him again to call 'yung water concessionaire officials and then 'yung MWSS? Parang ginawa niya dun 'di ba binigyan niya ng—

**SEC. PANELO:** I will ask him this afternoon, kung anong gagawin niya for that crisis.

**ACE ROMERO/PHILIPPINE STAR:** Thank you, Sec.

**REYMUND TINAZA/BOMBO RADYO:** Pero Sir, do you think whatever drastic move will ever solve the actual crisis because the reality is kahit anong gawin mo kung pigang-piga na 'yung Angat Dam, saan sila kukuha kung walang alternative source of water? So, aside from drastic measure against the concerned agencies or contractors, ano 'yung parang naisip natin na to solve the shortage of water considering na 'yung El Niño effects in the near months?

**SEC. PANELO:** We will ask those responsible for this particular problem. If there are other solutions outside of what they have already been doing.

**REYMUND TINAZA/BOMBO RADYO:** 'Yung—although sinabi ni Secretary Esperon na medyo magastos nga raw 'yung water purifying the Laguna waters, hindi ba parang we can do something about it kahit na gaano...well, how costly but if it solves at least part of the problem?

**SEC. PANELO:** Well, if it comes to that, the government may consider that.

**REYMUND TINAZA/BOMBO RADYO:** Thank you, sir.

**Q:** Hello, sir! Going back to Russian Ambassador Khovaev, sir. Sir, last week the Russian Ambassador to the Philippines said that they are proposing a joint venture with the Philippines in producing small arms and light weapons so the Philippines can export their own weapons. Does Malacañang have any comment regarding that?

**SEC. PANELO:** Any suggestion relative to that will be always under study by the military as well as the National Security Adviser.

**Q:** Pero sir, what's—has Duterte expressed any comment regarding of course Russia's interest in helping the Philippine develop its defense industry?

**SEC. PANELO:** You mean, has President Duterte; not just Duterte?

**Q:** Yes, sir.

**SEC. PANELO:** Yes.

**Q:** Has he expressed any comment because of course he respects President Putin—

**SEC. PANELO:** I have not heard yet of any comment.

**Q:** Okay.

**SEC. PANELO:** But it's a good time for me to ask him about this later this afternoon.

**Q:** Sige. Thank you, sir.

**BERNADETTE REYES/GMA 7:** Sir, good afternoon.

**SEC. PANELO:** Hi.

**BERNADETTE REYES/GMA 7:** I'm Bernadette Reyes from GMA 7, reliever po ni Joseph Morong.

**SEC. PANELO:** Oh! What happened to him?

**BERNADETTE REYES/GMA 7:** Hindi ko po alam, sir. Sir, what's your take on this na sinabi po ni Vice President Leni Robredo na kailangan munang i-recognize ng China 'yung sovereignty ng Philippines before any joint explorations?

**SEC. PANELO:** Bakit? Hindi ba nire-recognize ng China?

**MPC:** West Philippine Sea.

**SEC. PANELO:** West Philippine Sea. Kung minsan kasi si VP Leni parang divorced from reality kung mag-statement eh. Kagaya nung sa war on drugs sabi niya failure tapos kumambyo siya ngayon, hindi naman daw 'yun ang ibig niyang sabihin. Hindi ko na maintindihan kung anong gusto niyang sabihin.

But to respond to your question, your question is whether or not—ano nga ulit 'yun, hija?

**BERNADETTE REYES/GMA 7:** Whether the joint exploration should push through even if our sovereignty is not yet recognized by China in relation to the West Philippine Sea.

**SEC. PANELO:** Well, in relation to the West Philippine Sea, we know that China is not recognizing our rights over there. In fact, they are saying that it's theirs; but nevertheless, they're open to negotiation. So, if it's open then we will proceed provided the terms are to our favor.

**NESTOR CORRALES/[INQUIRER.NET](https://inquirer.net):** Sir, just a follow-up. The Vice President said that that should be one of our most basic demand that before we enter into any contract with China, they recognize first our ownership and sovereignty over those areas, referring to these disputed areas in the West Philippine Sea.

**SEC. PANELO:** She's entitled to her opinion. As far as this President is concerned on this country, we will move with respect to our foreign policy on the basis of whether it is to our interest and whether or not it will boost the development leading to the progress of this land.

**NESTOR CORRALES/[INQUIRER.NET](https://inquirer.net):** So, the joint exploration will push through whether or not China will recognize?

**SEC. PANELO:** The President—remember the President said that China is open to that and in fact would—or agreeable to the 70/30 or 60/40? 60/40 sharing.

**Q:** Sir, si Mayor Navarro po ba natanggal na po ba siya dun sa narco-list? What's the latest on that?

**SEC. PANELO:** What I read is that he talked with the President. But regardless of whether he is involved or he's not involved, as I said on my statement, we condemn any kind of extrajudicial killing. We cannot allow this situation occurring in our country. There are processes and the law must be observed on this especially because Navarro...the late Mayor Navarro was killed under the watch of the PNP. He was being brought from inquest I think in connection with a case and he was ambushed. To my mind, that's done with impunity and we will not let these transgressors of law go unpunished.

**Q:** Sec, it's the family who's claiming that Mayor Navarro is already off the list of the narco-list of the President?

**SEC. PANELO:** I don't know their basis; I really don't know. We should ask the PNP and the PDEA.

**MARICEL HALILI/TV5:** Hi! Sir, good morning!

**SEC. PANELO:** Good morning!

**MARICEL HALILI/TV5:** Just a quick follow-up on the President's health. Sabi n'yo po kanina the pain is  $\frac{1}{4}$  now from—

**SEC. PANELO:** Parang kung hindi ako nagkakamali, kasi magulo 'yung linya, but parang 'yun ang dinig ko.

**MARICEL HALILI/TV5:** And ano po 'yung—

**SEC. PANELO:** In other words, there was a considerable easing of pain otherwise hindi sana tutuloy iyan sa ano... sa Bangkok trip at saka hindi na sana nag-thread mill 'yun.

**MARICEL HALILI/TV5:** But he is still taking the pain reliever?

**SEC. PANELO:** I think so...yes.

**MARICEL HALILI/TV5:** Uhm. Sir, ano 'yung plano ni Presidente this coming Undas? Will he be going back to Davao before—

**SEC. PANELO:** Yes, he will visit the graveyard of the parents.

**MARICEL HALILI/TV5:** Uhm. And then from Davao dun na po siya didiretso going to Thailand?



**SEC. PANELO:** I think so, yes.

**MARICEL HALILI/TV5:** Alright. Sir, November 1 din ‘yung flight ni Presidente going to Thailand or November 2?

**SEC. PANELO:** Hindi ko alam. Ang alam ko ‘yung akin eh, ‘yung amin, 31; pero ‘yung sa kaniya—but usually, ganun si Presidente eh, a few hours lang nauuna ‘yung delegation.

**MARICEL HALILI/TV5:** Okay. Sige, sir. Thank you!

**REYMUND TINAZA/BOMBO RADYO:** Sir, doon lang African Swine Fever. Is the President contented with how the Department of Agriculture is acting on it considering na they’ve been saying that ASF virus has been contained and controlled; pero this time, mayroon naman ‘yung last week ‘yung processed foods from Central Luzon eh sinasabi na posibleng positive sa ASF. So, parang the reality is parang nandiyan pa rin, hindi pa controlled all along.

**SEC. PANELO:** From what I gather, the Secretary—Secretary Dar issued a statement in connection with that.

**REYMUND TINAZA/BOMBO RADYO:** ‘Yung pag-announce kasi ng Department of Agriculture official na ‘yung ganitong processed products...processed pork products ay positive sa ASF tapos hindi naman pinapangalanan kung anong brand siya, anong maker tapos nade-delay, so it created ‘yung panic or takot sa lahat ng mga processed foods. So, do you think it’s acceptable ‘yung mga ganiyang mga palutang ng DA?

**SEC. PANELO:** But what I know is Secretary Dar is doing something about it. ‘Yun ang sabi niya eh.

**REYMUND TINAZA/BOMBO RADYO:** Sir, parang ang problema kasi parang they are not so frank and honest. Hindi nila tinutukoy kung saan ‘yung lugar. Itinatago nila kasi baka mag-panic tapos ‘yung mga binabanggit nila hindi naman pinapangalanan so, parang lahat na lang nadadamay dahil sa kanilang pagba-blind item ng mga—

**SEC. PANELO:** Baka naman hindi talaga nila alam kung saan nanggagaling; so, they are not keeping it a secret.

**REYMUND TINAZA/BOMBO RADYO:** Well, they should know.

**SEC. PANELO:** Not necessarily. Paano kung biglang pumasok sa isang lugar na hindi mo alam? Paano mo naman—

**REYMUND TINAZA/BOMBO RADYO:** So, overall kuntento naman kayo sa trabaho ng DA?

**SEC. PANELO:** So far, wala namang sinasabi si Presidente. I’ll ask him.

**REYMUND TINAZA/BOMBO RADYO:** Thank you, sir.

**CELERINA MONTE/DAILY MANILA SHIMBUN:** Sir, pinapatanong lang ng mga netizens. May possibility daw ba na i-declare din na special non-working holiday ang October 31?

**SEC. PANELO:** 31? 31?

**CELERINA MONTE/DAILY MANILA SHIMBUN:** October 31.

**SEC. PANELO:** I'll ask ano...I'll ask ES.

**MPC:** (unclear)

**SEC. PANELO:** I'll ask ES. Last year ba ganun? Hindi?

**MPC:** Half-day.

**SEC. PANELO:** Half-day?

**MPC:** Pero late na in-announce.

**SEC. PANELO:** Eh, 'di sabihin natin agahan.

**USEC. ROCKY:** Okay. No more? Okay. Thank you, MPC. Thank you, Secretary Panelo.

**SEC. PANELO:** Thank you.

**END**