

Philippines - 'The Punisher' Duterte Goes to Washington? Trump Offers Invitation

Monday 1 May 2017, by [Telesur](#) (Date first published: 1 May 2017).

While Duterte tossed insults at former U.S. President Obama, the leader criticized for his bloody drug war has praised Trump.

U.S. President Donald Trump has invited his Philippine counterpart Rodrigo Duterte to the White House, in a nod to warming relations between the two countries.

While the pair waxed concern about the "threat" of North Korea, their phone call also touched upon Duterte's war on drugs, which has killed nearly 8000 people since Duterte he office last June. While Trump did not explicitly mention the Philippine president's tactics, he has previously praised the drug war.

"They also discussed the fact that the Philippine government is fighting very hard to rid its country of drugs, a scourge that affects many countries throughout the world," the White House's readout of their conversation stated.

"President Trump enjoyed the conversation and said that he is looking forward to visiting the Philippines in November," it concluded. "President Trump also invited President Duterte to the White House to discuss the importance of the United States-Philippines alliance."

While Duterte had been outlandish in his verbal insults of former U.S. President Barack Obama, he has praised Trump, calling him a "pragmatic thinker." The invitation represents a shift since October 2016, when Duterte announced his "separation" from the United States, declaring he had realigned with China as the two agreed to resolve their South China Sea dispute through talks.

"In this venue, your honors, in this venue, I announce my separation from the United States," he said at a forum in the Great Hall of the People attended by Chinese Vice Premier Zhang Gaoli at the time. "Both in military, not maybe social, but economics also. America has lost."

The invitation also comes on the heels of Philippine lawyer Jude Sabio's filing last week with the International Criminal Court alleging that Duterte, along with his cadre of 11 public officials, have committed mass murder and crimes against humanity through their drug war.

In the 77-page complaint, Sabio writes the president has "repeatedly, unchangingly and continuously" committed extra-judicial executions or mass murders in the last three decades, amounting to crimes against humanity.

Telesur

P.S.

* Telesur. 30 April 2017:

<http://www.telesur.tv/english/news/The-Punisher-Duterte-Goes-to-Washington-Trump-Offers-Invitation-20170430-0013.html>