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## CHINA, PHILIPPINES URGED TO ABIDE BY MARITIME RULING

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Yeni Şafak (7 August 2017)

The U.S., Japan and Australia called on the Philippines and China on Monday to abide by the ruling of an international tribunal which invalidated Beijings claims in the South China Sea.

Rappler, a Philippines-based online news portal, reported that a joint statement made clear the three foreign ministers wanted Beijing and Manila to "to abide by the Arbitral Tribunal's 2016 Award in the Philippines-China arbitration, as it is final and legally binding on both parties.

The three countries also said that they will continue to fly, sail, and operate wherever international law allows, ignoring Chinas call for foreigners to keep out of the disputed waters.

The Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague concluded in July 2016 that Beijing's claims to areas of the resource-rich sea have no legal basis in an arbitration launched by the Philippines, whose sovereign rights it said China had violated.

President Rodrigo Duterte downplayed the ruling as part of his push for broader bilateral relations with Beijing.

The foreign ministers also "expressed serious concerns over maritime disputes in the South China Sea (SCS)" and noted their strong opposition to coercive unilateral actions that could alter the status quo and increase tensions.

They also urged South China Sea claimants to refrain from land reclamation, construction of outposts, militarization of disputed features, and undertaking unilateral actions that cause permanent physical change to the marine environment in areas pending delimitation.

In a joint communique issued by ASEAN on Sunday evening, the regional bloc expressed concerns over Chinas land reclamation activities and called for the non-militarization of the disputed waters.

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Kaynak/Source: