

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 10793



Introduced by Representative ANTOLIN “LENLEN” A. ORETA III

AN ACT
DECLARING JULY 12 AS THE NATIONAL WEST PHILIPPINE SEA VICTORY
DAY IN COMMEMORATION OF THE PHILIPPINES' TRIUMPH BEFORE THE
PERMANENT COURT OF ARBITRATION

EXPLANATORY NOTE

On July 12, 2016, the Republic of the Philippines secured a monumental legal victory when the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA) in The Hague ruled unequivocally in our favor, invalidating China's expansive and baseless "nine-dash line" claim over the South China Sea. The historic arbitral award firmly established the Philippines' sovereign rights over its Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) in the West Philippine Sea under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). A decade later, this landmark ruling remains the unassailable bedrock of our maritime rights and territorial integrity.

However, despite the final and binding nature of this international legal decision, the Philippines continues to face relentless and escalating acts of aggression within our own waters. Over the past few years, state-sanctioned incursions, violent blockades, and coordinated intimidation tactics against our maritime personnel and fisherfolk have intensified, demonstrating a blatant disregard for international law.

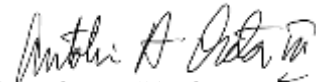
The necessity of this legislation is underscored by a deeply troubling pattern of recent hostilities. In June 2024, a routine rotation and resupply mission to the grounded BRP Sierra Madre at Ayungin Shoal escalated violently when China Coast Guard personnel, armed with axes and bladed weapons, attacked and boarded Philippine Navy vessels. This brazen assault severely damaged our communications equipment and tragically resulted in a Filipino Navy seaman losing his thumb. By late 2025, aggression expanded geographically and tactically, with Chinese vessels utilizing water cannons against civilian Filipino fishing boats near Sabina Shoal; an alarming escalation targeting the livelihoods of our citizens.

Most recently, on July 20, 2026, just days after the tenth anniversary of our arbitral victory, Chinese forces once again subjected our personnel at Ayungin Shoal to unprovoked violence. During an unlawful intrusion by the China Coast Guard, a Chinese officer struck a Philippine Navy sailor on the head with a wooden baton. This physical violence was accompanied by a sophisticated psychological warfare campaign, including the circulation of an AI-generated, racist video by Chinese state media intended to distort facts and humiliate the Filipino people. These continuous illegal, coercive, aggressive, and deceptive (ICAD) activities highlight the urgent need for a unified national response.

This proposed measure seeks to declare July 12 of every year as the National West Philippine Sea Victory Day, to be observed as a special working holiday. Establishing this national observance serves a multi-fold purpose: it preserves the legacy of our diplomatic and legal triumph, fortifies the patriotic resolve of the Filipino people, and institutionalizes a national consciousness that our sovereign rights cannot be diluted, coerced, or negotiated away. While several local government units across the country have already passed ordinances commemorating this victory, this bill elevates those grassroots initiatives to a national mandate, cementing the 2016 arbitral award into our permanent historical and cultural record.

Celebrating this victory is not an act of hostility, but a steadfast affirmation of international law. It's a constant reminder to our government and our citizens that right makes might, and that the West Philippine Sea undeniably belongs to the Filipino people.

In view of the foregoing, the passage of this bill is earnestly sought.



ANTOLIN "A. ORETA III

Lone District of Malabon City

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 10793

Introduced by Representative ANTOLIN “LENLEN” A. ORETA III

AN ACT
DECLARING JULY 12 AS THE NATIONAL WEST PHILIPPINE SEA VICTORY
DAY IN COMMEMORATION OF THE PHILIPPINES' TRIUMPH BEFORE THE
PERMANENT COURT OF ARBITRATION

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the Philippines in Congress assembled:

1 **SECTION. 1. *National West Philippine Sea Victory Day.*** – In order to commemorate the
2 Philippines' triumph on the West Philippine Sea dispute before the Permanent Court of
3 Arbitration (PCA) in The Hague, Netherlands, July twelve of every year is hereby declared the
4 National West Philippine Sea Victory Day which will be observed annually as a special working
5 holiday.

6 **SEC. 2. *Lead Agency.*** – The Department of Foreign Affairs, in coordination with relevant
7 government agencies, is designated as the lead agency in organizing and coordinating activities
8 for the National West Philippine Sea Victory Day. The planned activities must highlight the
9 importance of the historic PCA decision upholding the Philippines' sovereign rights in the West
10 Philippine Sea, inspire and instill a sense of patriotism and pride in every Filipino, constantly
11 remind the government to continually uphold our sovereign rights and territorial integrity, and
12 emphasize that the policies the government must pursue are consistent with Philippine
13 Constitution, national interest, and recognized principles of international law, particularly the
14 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).

15 **SEC. 3. *Information Dissemination and Public Observance.*** – Copies of this Act shall be
16 distributed to all colleges and universities, local government units (LGUs), and all government
17 agencies. Furthermore, these institutions and agencies are hereby enjoined to hold
18 comprehensive information activities to rally support and instill in the consciousness of the
19 Filipino people the significance of the 12 July 2016 Arbitral Award on the South China Sea.
20 These activities shall emphasize the Philippines' sovereign rights within its exclusive economic
21 zone, particularly with respect to the exploration and utilization of marine resources.

22 **SEC. 4. *Appropriations.*** – This Act will be implemented initially within the framework of the
23 budget of the DFA for the year it is enacted into law. As far as practicable, the funds required
24 will be drawn from its line budget appropriations for policy formulation, development, conduct
25 of personnel development, technical research, publication and dissemination of studies in
26 Philippine foreign policy. Thereafter, the amounts as may be necessary for the implementation
27 of this Act will be included in the budget of the DFA in the annual General Appropriations Act.

28 **SEC. 5. *Separability Clause.*** - Should any provision or part of this Act be declared
29 unconstitutional or invalid, the other provisions and parts hereof, insofar as they are separable
30 from the invalid ones, shall remain in full force and effect.

31 **SEC. 6. *Repealing Clause.*** - All laws, executive orders or parts thereof inconsistent with this
32 Act are hereby repealed, modified, or amended accordingly.

33 **SEC. 7. *Effectivity.*** - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the
34 *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.

35 *Approved,*