

PHILIPPINES: Duterte officially endorsed sex tourism, trafficking in Boracay during State of the Nation Address

By Rosette Adel

Philstar (24.07.2019) – <http://bit.ly/30Siag> – lawmaker from a women’s party-list Tuesday said President Rodrigo Duterte formally advertised sex tourism, trafficking and prostitution in Boracay in his fourth State of the Nation Address speech.

“Duterte’s Boracay rehabilitation program created thousands of unemployed, impoverished Aklanon women now increasingly vulnerable to prostitution, human trafficking and abuse,” Gabriela Women’s Party Rep. Arlene Brosas said.

“Duterte in his SONA officially endorsed sex tourism, trafficking and prostitution in Boracay,” she added.

Brosas said this after Duterte last Monday mentioned the rehabilitation of Boracay.

The president, in his speech, boasted about the restoration that occurred on the island.

He said the government “equipped with political will” ordered the closure of the world-famed tourist destination for six months to prevent its “further deterioration.”

“I am proud to say that it has been restored close to its original pristine state,” Duterte said.

Duterte, however, said Boracay is just the beginning while adding commentary about the women on the island waiting for foreign male visitors as he invited them to visit Boracay.

“Boracay Island is just the beginning. And the girls there, the foreigners are waiting for you gentlemen to visit the place. They are all on the beach sunbathing. You are invited to – I have not been there,” he said in his SONA.

The remark was deemed sexist by some.

In January last year, during his last day in India, Duterte also joked that he would like to lure tourists to the Philippines with virgins.

Duterte said that Islamic State extremists lure followers with the promise of “42 virgins” in heaven as he addressed the Filipino and Indian businessmen present then.

'No to leading by example'

Meanwhile, on Wednesday, the Center For Women's Resources raised the danger of Duterte's call during his SONA about leading by example as it could mean "following his misogynistic attitude, which made it worse for women."

"I implore those who occupy positions of power and authority, to let your deeds and accomplishments do the talking. Lead by example. Words ring hollow when not followed by positive and prioritized action," Duterte said Monday in his speech.

The CWR cited that that violence against women has continued, as one woman or girl is raped every hour.

"Worse, state-perpetrated VAW has become rampant. Since President Duterte became the president, more than 50 cops were involved in various cases of violence against women," CWR said.

Duterte has been previously criticized for casually talking about rape and abuse on women.

His remarks were, however, often been explained by the Palace as jokes and as part of what makes him endearing to the people.