## Philippines calls for expelling Chinese diplomats as South China Sea row escalates

MANILA, May 10 (Reuters) – The Philippines' national security adviser called on Friday for Chinese diplomats to be expelled over an alleged leak of a phone conversation with a Filipino admiral in a significant escalation of a bitter row over the South China Sea.

China's embassy in Manila had orchestrated "repeated acts of engaging and dissemination of disinformation, misinformation and malinformation", with the objective of sowing discord, division and disunity, Eduardo Ano said in a statement.

Those actions "should not be allowed to pass unsanctioned without serious penalty", he said.

Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson Lin Jian called the comments provocative and said Chinese diplomats in the Philippines had to be allowed to do their job.

"China solemnly requests the Philippine side to effectively safeguard the normal performance of duties by Chinese diplomatic personnel, stop infringing and provoking, and refrain from denying the facts," Lin said at a regular press briefing in Beijing.

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