

**Presidential Communications Operations Office
Presidential News Desk**

**SPEECH OF
PRESIDENT RODRIGO ROA DUTERTE
DURING THE SEND-OFF CEREMONY OF THE BRP DAVAO DEL SUR (LD
6020) AND BRP RAMON ALCARAZ (PS 16) FOR THE REPATRIATION
OF OFWS IN THE MIDDLE EAST**

[Delivered at the Pier 14, Port Area in Manila | 14 January 2020]

May the commander give the tikas pahinga to the troops.

Thank you.

National Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana; AFP Chief of Staff Lieutenant General Felimon Santos Jr.; the Flag Officer-in-Command Vice Admiral Robert Empedrad; our men and women of the Armed Forces of the Philippines; fellow workers in government; ladies and gentlemen.

I have a prepared speech, dalawa. Pero may gusto lang akong sabihin na iyong galing sa puso ko.

The national interest of the Republic of the Philippines in the Middle East are the lives of more than three million Filipinos. That is not a joke. It runs into millions, men, women, and their families, and their children.

This is a sacred mission and it is really to safeguard the lives of the Filipino people. I tasked you this duty with a prayer and with a hope that you will carry out your mission successfully and that everybody will be safe.

There will be imponderables to reckon with. Hindi natin alam. But I hope that this mission will succeed. Do not worry, I will be with you and if need be pupunta rin ako doon kung magkahirapan.

Ngayon, tinatawag ko, the Armed Forces of the Philippines, sa mga panahon na ito walang ibang grupo o organisasyon na makatulong sa atin.

I hope, and I said, I pray that you will carry this mission successfully. I wish you luck. I'll add with my prayers that the winds will sail you to the Middle

East safely. I will keep track of every moment of your trip and I will be there in case you need me. Pupunta ako doon sa inyo wherever you are.

Now, it's raining. I want to read this --- sandali lang naman 'to. Para lang --- 'yung gumawa nito nandiyan sa likod baka...

I am glad to be here today to lead the send-off ceremony for the brave men and women of the Philippine Navy, who will embark on an important journey to ensure the safety and security of our Overseas Filipino Workers in the Middle East.

This undertaking attests to the courage and indomitable spirit of our soldiers and our kababayans, through which we can overcome any challenge and adversity.

We can overcome. Kaya natin 'yan.

As you bring home our brothers and sisters who exemplify the very best of Filipino excellence and professionalism as migrant workers, we also recognize your efforts to alleviate their suffering in times of need.

Your enduring commitment to provide timely, efficient and responsive humanitarian and lifesaving efforts to our people, wherever they are in the world, is truly noteworthy.

May your selflessness and dedication to duty inspire patriotism and integrity among our citizenry, so they may also do the same to their fellow kababayans.

I trust that you will exert all efforts and work hand in hand with the Secretary of the Department of National Defense to encourage affected Filipinos in the Middle East to return to the Philippines or be evacuated to safer grounds.

Bear in mind that this government will continue implementing programs that will enhance the capacity and efficiency of our Philippine Navy, even as we pursue a more prosperous and peaceful society.

Together, let us continue to embody solidarity as we chart a better and brighter future for the next generation.

At ako po'y sa-salute sa aking Navy. *[applause]*

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