

Philippine President expresses regret over use of expletive on Obama

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Manila: Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte expressed regret on Tuesday for his unbridled attack on US president Barack Obama in which he called the US leader a "son of a w****".

"While the immediate cause was my strong comments to certain press questions that elicited concern and distress we also regret it came across as a personal attack on the US president," a statement released by Duterte said.

Philippines President Rodrigo Duterte directed an expletive at president Barack Obama while slamming US for raising the issue of extra-judicial killings in his country.

Rodrigo's use of words has prompted the white house to cancel US president's upcoming meet with him at a regional summit in Laos on Tuesday.

"Who does he think he is? I am no American puppet. I am the President of a sovereign country and I am not answerable to anyone except the Filipino people," Philippines President Rodrigo Duterte scoffed in a speech on Monday. "Son of a w****," he said adding that "I will swear at you at that forum."

Duterte warned Obama not to ask him about extrajudicial killings related to his crackdown on drug dealers, a campaign pledge that helped sweep him to victory in the country's presidential election in May.

Obama had better think twice about raising the issue of Philippine extra-judicial killings, said the country's confrontational leader on Monday.

Duterte went on to blame the US for causing the unrest on the southern Philippines Island of Mindanao.

"As a matter of fact, we inherited this problem from the United States," he said. "Why? Because they invaded this country and made us their subjugated people. Everybody has a terrible record of extra-judicial killing. Why make an issue about fighting crime?"

In response, the White House cancelled President Obama's upcoming meeting with Duterte in Laos this week, where Obama is attending a meeting of Southeast Asian leaders, CNN quoted National Security Council spokesman as saying.

Earlier, hinting that his planned meeting with Duterte may not go forward, Obama said, "I always want to make sure if I'm having a meeting that it's productive and we're getting something done,"

"If and when we have a meeting, this is something that is going to be brought up," Obama said, referring to the Philippines' controversial record of combating drug crime since Duterte took office earlier in 2016.

"Look at the human rights of America along that line. The way they treat the migrants there," CNN quoted Obama as saying.

Since Duterte was elected, more than 1,900 people have died, including at least 700 in police operations that were part of the President's hard-line war on drugs.

"Double your efforts. Triple them, if need be. We will not stop until the last drug lord, the last financier, and the last

pusher have surrendered or put behind bars -- or below the ground, if they so wish," Duterte said during his State of the Nation speech on July 25.

Human Rights Watch has called for the International Narcotics Control Board and United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime to condemn the "alarming surge in killings of suspected drug users or dealers" in the country.

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