

Won't accept UN court verdict on South China Sea: Beijing

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Beijing: China on Friday said it will continue to exercise its sovereignty over the South China Sea regardless of the outcome of the ongoing case in a UN-appointed tribunal, which is widely expected to deliver its verdict favouring the Philippines.

It dubbed the arbitration as "a political farce" and an attempt to "negate China's claims" over the disputed South China Sea. The judgment is expected to be pronounced later this month.

"No matter what the outcome is, China will not recognise the award. It is a political farce," said Ouyang Yujing, a top Chinese foreign ministry official.

"It will not waver China's determination to uphold its sovereignty and claims," said Ouyang, the director-general of Chinese Foreign Ministry's Department of Boundary and Ocean Affairs, in an interaction with foreign media here. He also warned that China's global criticism over the issues will worsen the tensions, likening his country to a "coiled spring" which, he said, could "rebound" if pressured much.

China's expansive claims over South China Sea, contested and mirrored by the Philippines, Brunei, Vietnam, Malaysia and Taiwan have triggered concerns globally, with the US sending its naval warships in the disputed waters.

"We are willing to take on board constructive comments and criticism by the relevant countries," Ouyang added.

But if they are aimed at putting pressure on China or blackening its name then you can view it like a spring, which has an applied force and a counter-force. The more the pressure, the greater the reaction," he added.

The Philippines has reached the UN-appointed tribunal, the permanent court of arbitration (PCA) in The Hague that adjudicates in international disputes over maritime territory.

China has called the arbitration illegal as, it says, the Philippines has violated the agreement with China which talks of resolving disputes bilaterally.

Of late, the war of words between China and the US has escalated over the maritime rights in the waters. The US has sent its warships in the South China Sea, calling it its freedom to navigate.

China has also been building infrastructure on the islands in the Sea and conducting naval patrols.

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