

## **China not to accept UN tribunal verdict on South China Sea dispute**

30/06/2016 21:28 by admin

**Beijing:** China today made it clear that it will not accept ruling by an international tribunal on a case filed by the Philippines relating to territorial and maritime disputes over South China Sea.

### **Hong Lei**

China further said that the Arbitral Tribunal had no jurisdiction over the case and it should not have heard the case in first place.

"The Arbitral Tribunal in the South China Sea, (SCS) arbitration established at the unilateral request of the Republic of the Philippines claimed that it would issue the so-called final award on 12 July 2016," a statement issued by Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Hong Lei said.

"I hereby once again emphasise that the Arbitral Tribunal has no jurisdiction over the case and the relevant subject-matter, and that it should not have heard the case or rendered the award," he said.

His comments came after the tribunal said it will hand down a ruling on the case on July 12.

China claims all most all of the SCS. Its claim is firmly contested by the Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia, Brunei and Taiwan which have overlapping claims over the area.

In his statement Hong said the Philippines unilaterally initiated the arbitration in 2013.

"The Chinese government immediately declared that it would neither accept nor participate in the arbitration initiated by the Philippines, a position that has since been repeatedly reiterated," he said.

Subsequently, China also questioned the legality of the arbitration saying that "has no jurisdiction over the case, and that the Chinese government's non-acceptance of and non-participation in the arbitration are solidly founded in international law".

Ahead of the verdict of the tribunal several Chinese officials said openly that the judgement may go against China's stand.

But the tribunal constituted under the UN Convention on Law of Seas (UNCLOS) has continued with its proceedings.

Beijing had launched massive campaign to gain diplomatic support for its stand by approaching various Asian, African and Latin American countries to back its stand.

The foreign ministry claimed over 70 countries back its stand on the arbitration.

Hong said, "The Philippines' unilateral initiation of arbitration breaches international law."

"The essence of the subject-matter of the arbitration is beyond the scope of UNCLOS and does not concern the interpretation or application of UNCLOS," he said.

"With regard to territorial issues and maritime delimitation disputes, China does not accept any means of third party

dispute settlement or any solution imposed on China," he said.

The Chinese government will continue to abide by international law and basic norms governing international relations as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, and will continue to work with states directly concerned to resolve the relevant disputes in the South China Sea through negotiation and consultation on the basis of respecting historical facts and in accordance with international law, so as to maintain peace and stability in the SCS," he said.

- (With PTI inputs)