

Catholic Church to lead rally vs casino operation in Boracay

Boracay – The Archdiocese of Kalibo is actively rallying the faithful here to hold a protest against the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corporation's (Pagcor) plan to establish a casino in this island.

Bishop Jose Lazo threatened to lead rallies anew to stop the casino, which is reportedly under construction inside the posh Fairways and Bluewaters Resort at the northern end of this 1,000-hectare island.

Lazo said operating casino in Boracay would cause great harm to residents.

„Boracay is a natural treasure of Aklanons and the Filipino people...we therefore want a drug-free and gambling-free Boracay,“ Lazo said.

Pagcor believed that Boracay casino complex could boost local tourism industry and generate more jobs.

However, Lazo said Boracay – even without casino – is thriving.

Since 2003, Pagcor has been consistent in its intention to put up casino in Boracay but President Arroyo ordered it shelved after a public protest.

According to Lazo, the Catholic Church has not changed its stand against the casino.

Lazo has sent a „letter of instruction“ urging parishioners and religious organizations „to unite, pray, reflect and act to express their stand and sentiments against gambling in

Boracay.”

Earlier, the Sangguniang Bayan (SB) of Malay, Aklan endorsed the operation of a casino in the municipality, that has somehow given an impression that gambling had been legalized in Boracay.