



FOOTNOTES

Stories, milestones, and opportunities
across the AIJC community

Journalists, scholars, and law experts examine truth and trust in the West Philippine Sea discourse

AIJC and the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands convene experts at the National Library of the Philippines 10 years after the arbitral award

Ten years after the South China Sea Arbitral Award, the search for truth, trust, and informed public understanding remains central to conversations surrounding the West Philippine Sea.

As competing narratives continue to influence public perception, journalists, scholars, and legal experts play a critical role in ensuring that discussions on maritime issues are grounded in facts, evidence, and international law.

Recognizing the importance of responsible communication in shaping public understanding, the Asian Institute of Journalism and Communication (AIJC), in cooperation with the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, convened the public briefing, "Facts at Sea, Seeing the Facts: Narratives, Law and the Media Ten Years After the South China Sea Arbitral Award" on July 21, 2026, at the National Library of the Philippines.



Photo credit: National Library of the Philippines

The forum brought together representatives from government, media, the diplomatic community, and academia to examine how law, journalism, and information systems influence the way the public understands developments in the West Philippine Sea. The discussions highlighted the shared responsibility of institutions and communication professionals in promoting credible information, strengthening public trust, and advancing informed discourse.

The panel discussion, “From Newsroom to Public Understanding: Journalism, Disinformation, and the Power of Narratives in Shaping Public Perception and Policy,” focused on the evolving role of media in covering the West Philippine Sea.



Photo credit: National Library of the Philippines

Journalists and academics shared perspectives on the realities of reporting on complex geopolitical issues, including the challenges posed by disinformation, competing narratives, and pressures on the media landscape. The discussion highlighted the need for ethical reporting, contextualized storytelling, and sustained public engagement to help communities better understand the significance of the arbitral award.

Panelists also emphasized the importance of dialogue and regional engagement, particularly in promoting greater awareness and encouraging informed conversations on maritime concerns.



Photo credit: National Library of the Philippines

The speakers were Hon. Antonio T. Carpio, Retired Senior Associate Justice, Supreme Court of the Philippines; Atty. Fretti Ganchoon, Senior State Counsel, Department of Justice; Regine Cabato, independent journalist; Bea Cupin, journalist, Rappler; Chiara Zambrano, former senior defense correspondent; Princess Catherine Pabellano, Assistant Professor, University of the Philippines Los Baños; and Deryk Matthew Baladjay, Lecturer, De La Salle University.

Mel V. Velarde, Chairman, AIJC and the NOW Group, delivered the opening remarks, sharing the historical foundation of the West Philippine Sea, while Ambassador Marielle Geraedts, Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, closed the program. Serving as host and moderator was Mara Cepeda of The Straits Times, also a faculty member at the Ateneo de Manila University and University of the Philippines Diliman.



Through initiatives that bring together media, academe, government, and technology stakeholders, AIJC remains committed to strengthening communication as a foundation for informed communities, public trust, and meaningful dialogue on issues of national and regional importance.

AIJC students gather for in-person class on Government Relations and Lobbying

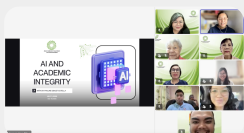
On July 25, AIJC students stepped out of the virtual setup and into the classroom for a hands-on, in-person session on Government Relations and Lobbying, led by Dr. Felicidad Galang Pereña.





The face-to-face class provided a platform for students Walter Panganiban, Cherey Bigay, and Edilyth Caloñge to discuss and analyze strategic communication approaches and policy advocacy strategies shaping the field.

What's happening at AIJC: Some highlights from July 2026



AIJC footnotes learning huddle sparks conversations on AI and academic integrity

With generative AI now commonly used in classrooms and academic spaces, how can educators and researchers explore its potential while safeguarding learning and academic integrity? This question set the tone for the very first session of the AIJC Footnotes Learning Huddle on July 3, 2026.

In response to student feedback identifying AI as a key area of interest, the free online session on AI and Academic Integrity was organized by AIJC via MS Teams, led by faculty member Dr. Pauline Gidget Estella. AIJC students were encouraged to bring a “plus one” (guest) to the session.

[More information](#)



From AIJC to Galway: Princess Catherine Pabellano at IAMCR 2026

From the classroom to the global conference circuit, AIJC community extend the reach of their research through international scholarly exchange.

Princess Catherine Pabellano, who took up Master of Arts in Journalism at AIJC and is now faculty member at the University of the Philippines Los Baños, presented her master's thesis on media framing of the West Philippine Sea at two international conferences, most recently at the International Association for Media and Communication Research (IAMCR) 2026 Conference in Galway, Ireland.

In this interview, Pabellano discusses the research journey that began at AIJC, the insights she gained from presenting at IAMCR 2026, and how the experience reaffirmed that meaningful research is measured by its contribution to society.

[More information](#)

In case you missed it, we announced the second session of our AIJC Footnotes learning huddle series in an email invitation on July 23. As the AIJC community expands discussions on AI and emerging technologies, learning how to protect oneself digitally is paramount.

This free session will be led by Ellie Glino, Outreach Manager – Asia for Qurium Media Foundation, a Sweden-based digital rights organization. Qurium specializes in digital forensics, focusing on internet censorship, disinformation campaigns, and cyber attacks targeting media and human rights organizations.

Upcoming online event: AIJC Footnotes Huddle on Digital Safety

Date: Friday, August 7, 2026

Time: 3:00 – 5:00 PM

Platform: MS Teams

[Register now](#)



AIJC students are welcome to bring a “plus one” (guest) to this free online event. Students and their guests may register [here](#).



Invite your friends and colleagues!
Virtual Open House

August 12, 2026 (Tuesday),
10:00 to 11:00 a.m. via
Teams, featuring a Graduate
School orientation

[Register now](#)

Here is the [registration link](#). Feel free to share it with your colleagues and friends.

For queries, please contact:

Email: gs@aijci.com

Landline: +632 8743 4321

We look forward to seeing you there.

Sincerely,

Janess Ann J. Ellao

Director of Student Affairs

Asian Institute of Journalism and Communication

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