

# Aklan blamed for Boracay degradation

BY ROY NARRA ON FEBRUARY 16, 2018TOP STORIES

The local government unit (LGU) of Malay, Aklan is accountable for the environmental crisis in Boracay, Interior and Local Government Secretary Eduardo Año said Thursday.

President Rodrigo Duterte last week called Boracay a “cesspool” and threatened to close down the island if the environmental problems are not addressed soon.

Año said the environmental degradation in Boracay, which had been voted as the best island in the world several times, would not have occurred had the local government been strict in implementing environmental and local government ordinances.

“The presence of commercial establishments even beyond the prescribed distance from the coastline would not be possible without building and construction permits issued by the LGU. It is their lookout,” he said in a statement.

Año said the President’s warning should serve as a wake-up call to local governments and business establishments.

“Kailangan pa bang masita bago umayos? Kailangan pa ba ng ultimatum galing pa sa Pangulo bago umaksiyon? (Do they have to get a scolding before doing what is right? Do they need an ultimatum before taking action?) The gradual ruin of our environment is already being felt as calamities devastate the country many times in a year,” he said.

The Interior chief ordered the local government of Malay to cooperate with the Department of the Interior and Local Government and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) in the investigation of Boracay.

The probe will look into the possible liability of the local government officials who issued building, occupancy, and business permits to establishments that did not comply with environmental laws.

Año said administrative and criminal charges will be filed against government officials who will be found accountable for the island’s degradation.

Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu earlier ordered the closure of 51 establishments in Boracay for having no wastewater treatment facilities and dumping sewage into the sea.

Famous for its powdery white sand beaches, Boracay draws in millions of foreign and local tourists every year.

<http://www.manilatimes.net/aklan-blamed-boracay-degradation/380492/>