

## NATION

# Back to square one? Roque says it's because of mutating virus, not gov't

By: **Christia Marie Ramos** - Reporter / @CMRamosINQ INQUIRER.net / 09:19 AM March 29, 2021



Presidential spokesperson Harry Roque (Screengrab from RTVM)

MANILA, Philippines — “It’s not because of [the] government. It’s because of the virus.”

Malacañang on Monday reiterated that it is not the government’s handling of the COVID-19 pandemic that should be blamed for the country’s seeming return to “square one” after Metro Manila and four other provinces were placed back under enhanced community quarantine (ECQ) after more than a year into the health crisis.

“It’s not because of [the] government. It’s because of the virus, it’s because the virus mutated. There’s now the U.K., South Africa, Brazilian, and even the Philippine variant,” presidential spokesperson Harry Roque said in an interview on ABS-CBN News Channel.

“Unfortunately, all these variants made the disease more infectious and more transmissible. So I’d like to stress, it’s not just foreign variants. Even the Philippine variant now, that’s something that no one could have done anything about because it’s in the nature of viruses to mutate,” he added.

Over the weekend, Malacañang announced that [Metro Manila and four](#)

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19 cases in the country.

It was in March last year that the government first placed Metro Manila and other areas under an ECQ.

“What we need to do now is to adapt to these new variants, if they are more transmissible, then we will be more vigilant in our ‘Mask, Hugas, Iwas’ and of course our bakuna,” Roque added.

“So yung mga nagse-second thoughts pa about the bakuna, it’s more transmissible, although it is not deadlier...with more people getting sick, there will be more people inevitably who will get sick in a serious and critical manner, so have your vaccine if you are able to have it now,” he added.

On Sunday, the Philippines logged [9,475 new COVID-19 infections](#), pushing the country’s total to 721,892 cases (105,568 active cases).

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For more news about the novel coronavirus click [here](#).

[What you need to know about Coronavirus.](#)

For more information on COVID-19, call the DOH Hotline: (02) 86517800 local 1149/1150.

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