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Duterte ready to lift quarantine restrictions

By Ruth Abbey Gita-Carlos May 4, 2021, 4:25 pm

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MANILA – President Rodrigo Duterte is willing to lift the quarantine rules once the situation in the country improves, Malacañang said on Tuesday.

Presidential Spokesperson Harry Roque issued the statement, a day after Duterte vowed to stop restrictions on public movement if the coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19) no longer serves as a threat.

Roque, in an online press conference, said quarantine restrictions would be lifted, on conditions that more Filipinos get inoculated against Covid-19, the number of intensive care unit (ICU) beds in the country increases, and the transmission of the coronavirus slows down.

“Ang ibig sabihin po ni Presidente, ‘pag marami-rami na ang nabakunahan at ‘pag napadami na natin iyong ating mga ICU beds lalung-lalo na at napakita natin na napababa na natin iyong pagkalat ng virus ay pupuwede na po talaga tayong magbukas muli ng ating ekonomiya (The President wants to say that if many Filipinos get vaccinated and we are able to get new ICU beds and slow down the transmission of the virus, we can reopen our economy),” he said.

In a taped address to the nation, Duterte admitted that it is not easy to prolong the strict health and quarantine protocols amid the Covid-19 pandemic.

Duterte, however, acknowledged that he needs to heed the “proper advice” of medical professionals to curb the spread of the coronavirus in the country.

“Sa katapusan nito, magpasalamat tayo sa mga doctor, the medical people who really give us the proper advice. It is good to listen to people na may alam. Linya nila ‘yan eh (We should thank the doctors and medical people who really give us the proper advice after its end. It is good to listen to knowledgeable people. That’s their expertise),” he said.

He, nevertheless, ensured the public that he will order the immediate lifting of quarantine restrictions, “once things begin to clear.”

A more restrictive modified enhanced community quarantine (MECQ) has been imposed in Metro Manila, Bulacan, Cavite, Laguna, Rizal, Quirino, Abra, Ifugao, and the City of Santiago in Isabela until May 14.

On the other hand, Apayao, Baguio City, Benguet, Kalinga, Mountain Province, Cagayan, Isabela, Nueva Ecija, Vizcaya, Batangas, Quezon, Tacloban City, Iligan City, Davao City, Lanao del Sur, and Puerto Princesa City are under the more relaxed general community quarantine (GCQ) for the whole month of May.

The rest of the country stays under the least restrictive MGCQ until May 31.

The Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases has approved the resumption of more businesses in MECQ zones by allowing restaurants, eateries, and other food preparation establishments to resume their indoor dine-in services at an initial 10-percent seating capacity.

Beauty salons, beauty parlors, barbershops, and nail spas are also allowed to operate at an initial 30-percent venue capacity. *(PNA)*

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