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PAO chief says stay-at-home order for unvaccinated 'unconstitutional'

ABS-CBN News

Posted at Jan 17 2022 09:25 AM | Updated as of Jan 17 2022 12:53 PM

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MANILA (UPDATE) - Government's order to restrict the mobility of the unvaccinated by prohibiting them in public transportation and establishments is "unconstitutional," the head of the Public Attorney's Office said Monday.

PAO chief Persida Acosta cited the Bill of Rights section 1 which states that "no person shall be deprived of life, liberty and property without due process of law," adding that "no person can be denied of equal protection of the law."

Acosta, who is unvaccinated, said she was waiting for a "protein-based" COVID-19 vaccine.

"I think the policy of the mayors is highly unconstitutional and against the law because Republic Act 11525 states that vaccine cards shall not be necessary for educational, any transactions and yet they are syncoating. Nilalabag nila ang batas eh (they are violating the law), indirectly," she told ANC's Headstart.

"Para bang you need magpabakuna para pasakayin ka (ng public transportation.)"

(It seems like you need to get vaccinated before you can ride public transportation.)

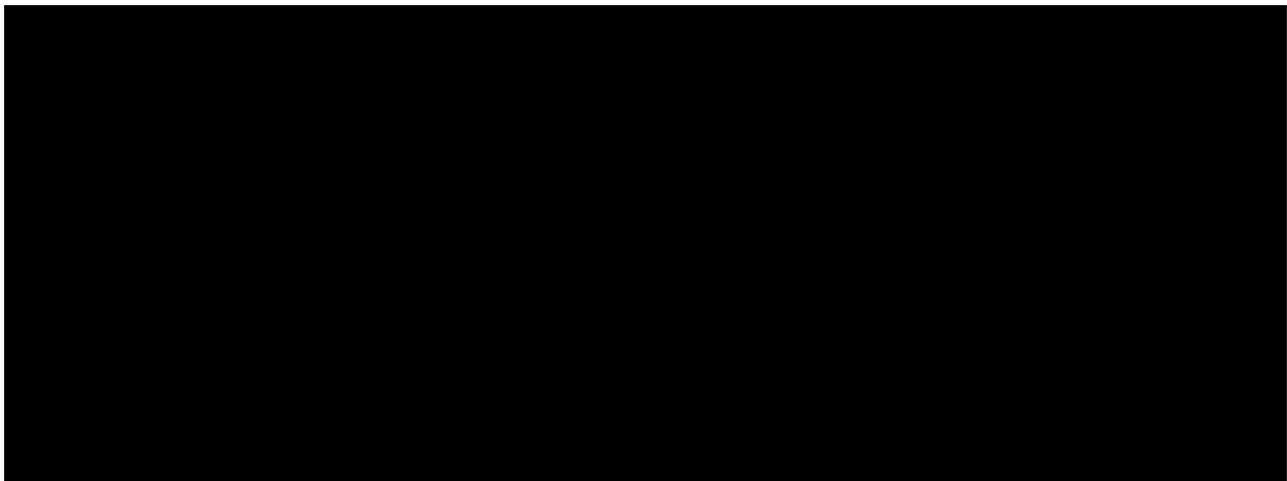
The PAO chief, however, denied that President Rodrigo Duterte was accountable for the nationwide policy.

- [Duterte's stay-at-home order for unvaccinated people covers entire PH: spox](#)
- [Duterte orders: 'Restrain, arrest' unvaccinated people who refuse to 'stay put'](#)

"We cannot blame the President because he believes the only way to curb the pandemic is by vaccination," she said.

"I respect the President, he's like a father to us. He's just doing his best so that people will be saved from the pandemic. Wala siyang sinabing labagin niyo ang Constitution, wala siyang sinabing labagin ang batas."

(He did not tell them to violate the Constitution, to violate the law.)





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The Department of Transportation earlier said its decision to bar the unvaccinated in public vehicles was meant to protect them from the respiratory disease, and prevent the economy from shutting down.

- [DOTr says 'no vax, no ride policy' to protect unvaccinated, prevent economic shutdown](#)

Majority of commuters are willing to comply with the policy, said Elvira Medina, chairperson of the National Center for Commuter Safety and Protection.

"Mismong mga commuters natin na nasa kalsada at naghihintay ng mga sasakyan nila, pinatanong po natin sa ating mga kasama at leaders ng commuters kung ano ang kanilang opinion, lahat po sila ay sinabi na kami po ay susunod," she told ABS-CBN's Teleradyo.

(We've asked commuters on the streets and leaders of commuters what are their opinion, all of them said they will comply.)

"Ang karamihang nakikita naming di pa nagpapabakuna ay yung kung minsan stay-at-home...'yun po talagang commuters talagang very vigilant sila at sinasabihan ang kamag-anakan na magbabakuna."

(Majority of those we see who have yet to get vaccinated are stay-at-home...commuters are very vigilant and they urge their relatives to get vaccinated.)

Medina said "consistency" is needed for the country's virus cases to continue its decline.

"Mula't mula pa pong nagkaroon ng SARS, nasa commuter protection na kami, ang nakikita po namin ang kailangan lang is consistency, mass information at mismong sa mga sasakyan meron nang impormasyon na kailangan ito ang gagawin," she said.

(I've been in commuter protection since SARS, and from what I see, what's needed are consistency, mass information, and information on public vehicles telling commuters what is required.)

"Ilabas na agad ang vaccine card o ilagay sa tinatawag na ID lace para di na sila magbubukas pa ng bag at magkakaroon ng komosyon sa kanilang sasakyan."

(Ask them to get their vaccine card right away or put it in an ID lace so they don't need to open their bags and cause commotion inside the public vehicle.)

The Philippines has so far fully vaccinated 55 million individuals, while 58.8 million have received an initial dose and 4.8 million booster shots have been administered as of Saturday, according to the Department of Health.



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