



# DENR in Central Visayas provides PPEs for Cebu's garbage collectors

Published April 13, 2020, 3:45 PM

By *Ellalyn de Vera-Ruiz*

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) in Central Visayas has provided personal protective equipment (PPE) to Cebu province's garbage collectors. They are also vulnerable to the novel coronavirus and other hazardous infections that may be present in solid wastes collected from households, hospitals, and healthcare facilities.

Through its Environmental Management Bureau-Region 7 (EMB-Central Visayas), the DENR has donated an estimate of 1,600 PPEs to garbage collectors of Mandaue City. It consists of 60 double and single respirators with cartridges (NP306 and NP305), 104 pairs of high duty reusable safety gloves, and 1,500 pairs of disposable gloves, with a total worth of P60,000.

The DENR will also be turning over additional PPE consisting of coveralls worth P100,000 and respirators worth P77,000 to the local government of Mandaue in the next two weeks. According to EMB-Central Visayas Regional Director Lormelyn Claudio, the PPEs were initially intended for the quick response teams of the Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Officers (PENROs) and Community Environment and Natural Resources Officers (CENROs) in the region.

Aware of the similar and urgent need of protection of the garbage collectors in the city due to the coronavirus crisis, the EMB-Central Visayas decided to donate a large portion of its PPE supplies to them. "We realized that our garbage collectors need them more than we do. Now more than ever, their work potentially exposes them to hazardous wastes," Claudio said. She added that they will be distributing specially-designed 200-liter capacity silo drums to prevent spillage of medical wastes during transport to disposal sites.

DENR-EMB 7 nagbigay ng 1,600 PPE sa environmental

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## DENR-EMB 7 nagbigay ng 1,600 PPE sa environmental warriors sa Mandaue City

April 13, 2020 @ 9:43 AM 21 hours ago

Views: 117

Mandaue – Para bigyan proteksyon ang mga basurero na nakikipaglaban sa coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19) laban sa epidemya agad na kumilos ang Department of Environment and Natural Resources-Environmental Management Bureau (DENR-EMB) Region 7 para protektahan ang tinaguriang pinakabagong environmental heroes ng bansa.

Aabot sa 1,600 Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) ang ipinagkaloob ng DENR-EMB Region 7 sa mga garbage collectors sa Mandaue City, Cebu bilang proteksyon nila sa novel coronavirus at iba pang hazardous infections na maaaring makuha sa paghakot ng basura mula sa hospitals, healthcare facilities at mga kabahayan.

“If there are medical frontliners, the garbage collectors are environmental frontliners,” ayon kay DENR Undersecretary for Solid Waste Management and Local Government Units Concerns Benny D. Antiporda.

Idinagdag pa nito na “these environmental warriors are also putting their lives in line for our people and our country to ensure that we control this global pandemic.”

Ayon sa ulat ang donasyon na nagkakahalaga ng P60,000 ay binubuo ng 60 double at single respirators na may cartridges (NP306 at NP305), 104 pares ng high duty reusable safety gloves at 1,500 pares ng disposable gloves.

Nakatanggap din ng food packs ang mga garbage collectors na ipinamahala kay Mandaue City Mayor Jonas Cortes.

Sa susunod na dalawang linggo, magbibigay pa ang DENR-EMB 7, sa lokal na pamahalaan ng Mandaue, ng karagdagang PPE para sa mga basurero na binubuo ng coveralls na nagkakahalaga ng P100,000 at respirators na may halagang P77,000.

“We support DENR-EMB-7’s initiatives to donate and share their resources with the environmental frontliners, our fellow environmental warriors. Our garbage collectors play a critical role especially during this outbreak. We will do our best to respond to their needs in the best way possible,” dagdag pa ni Antiporda.

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Ayon kay DENR-EMB 7 Regional Director Lormelyn Claudio, ang mga naturang PPE ay nakalaan sana sa mga quick response team ng Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Officers (PENROs) at Community Environment and Natural Resources Officers (CENROs) sa rehiyon ngunit dahil mas kailangan ng mga garbage collectors ang proteksiyon sa katawan ay napagpasyahan ng DENR-EMB 7 na ibigay ang malaking bahagi ng kanilang PPE supplies sa mga basurero.

“We realized that our garbage collectors need them more than we do. Now more than ever, their work potentially exposes them to hazardous wastes,” ani Claudio.

Sabi pa ni Claudio, magkakaloob din sila ang mga specially-designed 200-liter capacity silo drums upang maiwasan ang pagtagas ng medical waste habang inililipat ito sa disposal sites.

Dahil na rin sa patuloy na paglobo ng bilang ng mga nagpopositibo sa COVID-19 sa Central Visayas ay patuloy na gumagawa ng paraan ang DENR-EMB 7 upang maisaayos ang tamang paghawak, paghakot at pagtapon ng solid waste mula sa mga barangay health centers at mga kabahayan partikular na ang mula sa mga suspect at probable cases. Nanawagan din si Claudio sa mga local government units na mahigpit na ipatupad ang “garbage disinfection protocol” ng Department of Health.

Aniya pa, ang mga garbage collectors ay nagtatrabaho ng mas mahabang oras simula ng ipatupad ang Enhanced Community Quarantine (ECQ) sa probinsiya ng Cebu upang matiyak na ang mga basura mula sa mga kabahayan at ospital ay regular na nakukuha at naitatapon nang maayos.

“Our garbage collectors are our partners in the implementation of our Ecological Solid Waste Management Act or Republic Act 9003. It is our responsibility to help them,” paliwanag pa ni Claudio.

Bukod sa PPE ay nagbigay din ang DENR-EMB 7 sa mga environmental frontliners mula sa mga lungsod na positibo sa COVID-19 ng suplay na nagkakahalagang P2 milyon na kinabibilangan ng food packs at vitamins.

Ang DENR-EMB ang nangunguna sa implementasyon ng environmental laws kabilang na dito ang Clean Water Act, Clean Air Act at Ecological Solid Waste Management Act.

Noong Marso 22 nang ideklara ng provincial government ng Cebu ang ECQ sa kanilang probinsiya matapos magtala ng COVID-19 cases sa mga lungsod kabilang na ang Mandaue City. Ipatutupad ang lockdown sa probinsiya hanggang Abril 28. **Santi Celario**

# 'Environmental frontliners': Garbage collectors in Mandaue get COVID-19 protective gear

By [CNN Philippines Staff](#)

Published Apr 13, 2020 2:56:11 PM



**Metro Manila (CNN Philippines, April 13)** — Garbage collectors in Mandaue, Cebu can now protect themselves from the risk of contracting COVID-19 while doing their jobs.

The garbage collectors — hailed as environmental frontliners in the COVID-19 fight — have received 1,600 sets of personal protective equipment or PPE. They are vulnerable to the novel coronavirus and other hazardous infections that may be present in solid wastes they collect from hospitals, healthcare facilities, and homes.

"If there are medical frontliners, the garbage collectors are environmental frontliners. These environmental warriors are also putting their lives in line for our people and our country to ensure that we control this global pandemic," Environment Undersecretary for Solid Waste Management and Local Government Units Concerns Benny Antiporda said on Monday.

The donation from the Environmental Management Bureau in Central Visayas or DENR-EMB 7 consisted of 60 double and single respirators with cartridges, 104 pairs of high-duty reusable safety gloves, and 1,500 pairs of disposable gloves all worth a total of P60,000.

Additional PPE consisting of coveralls worth P100,000 and respirators worth P77,000 will be turned over to the local government of Mandaue in the next two weeks, DENR added.

DENR-EMB 7 said it is working on a system to improve the handling, collection, and disposal of solid wastes from barangay health centers and households with suspect or probable cases to prevent contamination.

Central Visayas has recorded 36 COVID-19 cases, including eight deaths as of April 10.

Source: <https://cnnphilippines.com/regional/2020/4/13/Garbage-collectors-frontliners-COVID-19-PPE.html?fbclid=IwAR35Wv2GiHkKbftzVx9VG1XRZ1IoEXHqQTppRf4ZGjy5ozWDSi8aKZdbw5s>

# DOH to issue guidelines on proper waste disposal

Published April 13, 2020, 3:01 PM

By Argyll Geducos

The Department of Health (DOH) will issue guidelines shortly on the use of hypochlorite solution for the disposal of healthcare waste and for infection prevention as part of the ongoing campaign to stem the tide of the COVID-19 pandemic.

This was announced in the Monday virtual press briefing of Cabinet Secretary Karlo Nograles, spokesperson of the Inter-Agency Task force (IATF) for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases announced.



Cabinet Secretary Karlo Nograles (Photo from Karlo Nograles / Facebook page / MANILA BULLETIN)

Nograles said there was already an existing protocol in the infection control of healthcare facilities on the proper handling of waste materials.

“As a protocol, all health care waste is pre-treated with chemical disinfectants such as hypochlorite solution,” he explained.

He added that private hospitals in Metro Manila and in urban centers are being served by private waste treatment organizations and disposal systems service providers.

Nograles said the DOH was already disseminating information, particularly to field personnel, regarding the need to pre-treat waste like used personal protective equipment (PPEs) for persons under investigation (PUIs) or COVID-19 patients on home quarantine.

The World Health Organization (WHO) has recommended cleaning utility gloves or heavy-duty, reusable plastic aprons with soap and water and then decontaminating them with 0.5% sodium hypochlorite solution after each use.

Single-use gloves (nitrile or latex) and gowns, meanwhile, should be discarded after each use and not reused; hand hygiene should also be performed after PPEs are removed.

“Best practices for safely managing health care waste should be followed, including assigning responsibility and sufficient human and material resources to dispose of such waste safely,” the WHO said.

“All healthcare waste produced during the care of COVID-19 patients should be collected safely in designated containers and bags, treated, and then safely disposed of or treated, or both, preferably on-site,” it added.

Source: <https://news.mb.com.ph/2020/04/13/doh-to-issue-guidelines-on-proper-waste-disposal/>

LGUs asked to intensify campaign on medical waste

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# LGUs asked to intensify campaign on medical waste management

By Azer Parrocha April 13, 2020, 6:56 pm



Cabinet Secretary Karlos Nograles

**MANILA** – To ensure health and environmental safety amid the 2019 coronavirus disease (Covid-19) pandemic, local government units (LGUs) were asked to ramp up their efforts in handling and disposal of health care waste.

Cabinet Secretary and Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF-EID) spokesperson Karlo Nograles urged LGUs to observe existing protocol under the Infection Control of healthcare facilities.

“We urge our LGUs to continuously intensify their campaigns on proper waste management and segregation as they are responsible for solid waste management in their respective jurisdictions,” he said in a virtual presser on Monday.

As part of the protocol, he said all health care waste is pre-treated with chemical disinfectants such as hypochlorite solution.

Sodium hypochlorite, commonly referred to as bleach, is an effective disinfectant having broad applications, according to the US Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

This chemical appears to offer the best mix of low cost, ease of use, safety, and effectiveness in areas where there is enough water to drink and water is not excessively turbid, the CDC said.

Nograles said the Department of Health (DOH) must also disseminate information, particularly to field personnel, regarding the need to pre-treat waste like used personal protective equipment (PPE) gears for patients under investigation (PUIs) or Covid-19 patients under home quarantine.

“The department will soon be issuing guidelines on the use of hypochlorite solution for the infection prevention of Covid-19,” he said.

Last Sunday, Nograles said the IATF-EID will be weighing the pros and cons of spraying or misting of disinfectants to reduce the transmission of Covid-19.

He said while the IATF members have yet to meet, the DOH recommendation will be honored.

The DOH, in a statement, said there is no evidence to support that spraying of surfaces or large-scale misting of areas, indoor or outdoor with disinfecting agents, kills the virus.

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Spraying or misting poses an additional health concern as it can cause pathogens to be dispersed further during spraying, the DOH said.

It may also result in skin irritation and inhalation of chemicals, and cause environmental pollution, among others.

Instead of spraying or misting, the DOH advised the public to soak objects or disinfect surfaces to kill the virus. **(PNA)**



Medical waste is being inspected in this January 23, 2019 file photo.  
FILE PHOTO

## LGUs reminded on proper disinfection, disposal of hospital waste

[Alexis Romero](#) (Philstar.com) - April 13, 2020 - 3:13pm

MANILA, Philippines — The government on Monday reminded local government units (LGUs) to ensure proper health care waste disposal in their area to prevent the spread of the coronavirus disease 2019 or COVID-19.

Cabinet Secretary Karlo Nograles, Inter-Agency Task Force on the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases spokesman, noted that there is an existing protocol on infection control in healthcare facilities and handling of health care waste.

"Now, an emerging concern involves the disposal of health care waste," Nograles said at a press briefing.

"We urge our LGUs to continuously intensify their campaigns on proper waste management and segregation as they are responsible for solid waste management in their respective jurisdictions," he added.

Nograles said under the protocol, all health care waste should be pre-treated with chemical disinfectant like hypochlorite solution. He noted that private hospitals in Metro Manila and other urban centers are served by private waste treatment and disposal systems service providers.

"According to the DOH, the department will be soon be issuing guidelines on the use of hypochlorite solution for the infection prevention of COVID-19," the IATF spokesman said.

Nograles said the health department is working to spread information on the need to pre-treat waste like used personal protective equipment for persons under investigation or COVID-19 patients at home quarantine.

Source: <https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2020/04/13/2007019/lgus-reminded-proper-disinfection-disposal-hospital-waste?fbclid=IwAR15gDERLh4clQHcqHwVOc2wJ1JU8FIsRA-sGKiBroWi5cSkW-dmyXnl62U>



# NWRB chief says enough water in Angat Dam for entire summer

By: [Gabriel Pabico Lalu](#) - Reporter / [@GabrielLaluINQ](#)

[INQUIRER.net](#) / 05:07 PM April 13, 2020

MANILA, Philippines – There appears to be enough water in Angat Dam — Metro Manila and its nearby provinces’ primary source of freshwater — throughout the summer season, the National Water Resources Board (NWRB) head said on Monday.

NWRB Executive Director Dr. Seville David Jr. explained that Angat Dam’s current level is at least four meters higher than last year’s level when water shortage hit Metro Manila’s concession areas.

According to the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical, Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) dam monitoring information, Angat Dam’s water level was at 193.15 meters, at least 18 meters shy of the normal high water level.

“Medyo mataas po ito kumpara natin siya no’ng isang taon na nagkaroon tayo ng El Niño at matinding kakulangan sa tubig, ay halos apat na metro po ang kataasan nitong kasalukuyang lebel niya kumpara po no’ng isang taon,” David said in an interview with DZMM.

(This is partly higher compared to water levels last year, when we experienced El Niño and a strong water shortage, this year’s water levels are higher by almost four meters compared to last year.)

“Kaya ibig pong sabihin nito sa tingin po natin itong panahon ng tag-init ay may sapat po tayong supply ng tubig para po sa kababayan natin, hanggang bago mag tag-ulan,” he added. (This means that we believe that we can supply enough water to our countrymen for this summer season before the rainy season arrives.)

In the [summer of 2019](#), both water concessionaires Maynilad and Manila Water were forced to enforce water rationing after [Angat Dam’s water level](#) breached the 160-meter critical mark.

NWRB [suspended its allocation for irrigation](#) for farms after rains were hard to come by even after Pagasa declared the start of the rainy season last June 2019.

David said that part of the high water levels was because of the low water use in various commercial establishments, after the enhanced community quarantine (ECQ) due to the COVID-19 pandemic suspended public gatherings and work, except for those in frontline services like health care provision.

However, he also noted that the ECQ, which forced the public to stay at home, coupled with the health authorities’ request for frequent handwashing, has also increased water consumption within households and hospitals.

NWRB chief says enough water in Angat Dam for entire

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“Sa ngayon po kasi dahil isa ring bagay ‘yon kasi medyo mabagal (‘yong water consumption) dahil nga ‘yon pong nagslowdown ‘yong mga commercial establishments,” David explained.

(That’s one thing as of now because water consumption has been slower due to the slowdown of commercial establishments.)

“Pero tumaas din po ang paggamit sa mga kabahayan kasi nga po itong pangamba ng COVID-19, ay isa po kasing importanteng bagay ‘yong tubig para po mapigil ‘yong pagpapalawak nitong epekto ng COVID-19, kasi nga ‘yong paghuhugas ng mga kamay, ‘yong sanitation po eh madalas ginagawa ‘yan,” he added.

(But water usage also increased within households because the threat of COVID-19 has necessitated the use of water for handwashing and sanitation purposes to prevent the spread of the disease.)

As of now, Metro Manila and the rest of Luzon are still under the [ECQ](#) due to the rising COVID-19 cases. Department of Health officials said that nationwide, there are [4,932 infected patients](#) — 315 of which have already died while at least 242 have recovered.

Worldwide, over 1.8 million individuals have been infected, while 114,063 have died from the disease and 421,500 have recovered from it.

# Angat Dam has 'enough' water supply this summer: NWRB

ABS-CBN News

Posted at Apr 13 2020 08:24 PM

MANILA - Angat Dam has enough water supply to serve Metro Manila customers during the dry season, the National Water Resources Board executive director said Monday.

The water level at Angat Dam is currently at 198.15 meters, or 4 meters higher compared to the same period last year, NWRB executive director Seville David Jr told DZMM.

"Sa ganito pong level medyo mataas po kumpara noong isang taon halos 4 na metro po ang kataasan. Ibig pong sabihin nito sa tingin po natin ngayong panahon na tag-init, may sapat po tayong supply ng tubig para sa mga kababayan natin," David said.

(With this level which is higher compared to last year by 4 meters, it means during the summer season, we have enough supply of water for the people.)

The increased use of water in households during the Luzon quarantine partially offsets the reduced consumption from closed business establishments during the period, David said.

Millions in Luzon are under enhanced community quarantine until April 30 to contain the spread of COVID-19.

DZMM Interview with National Water Regulatory Board Executive Director Seville D. David Jr.  
around 4:25pm, April 13, 2020.

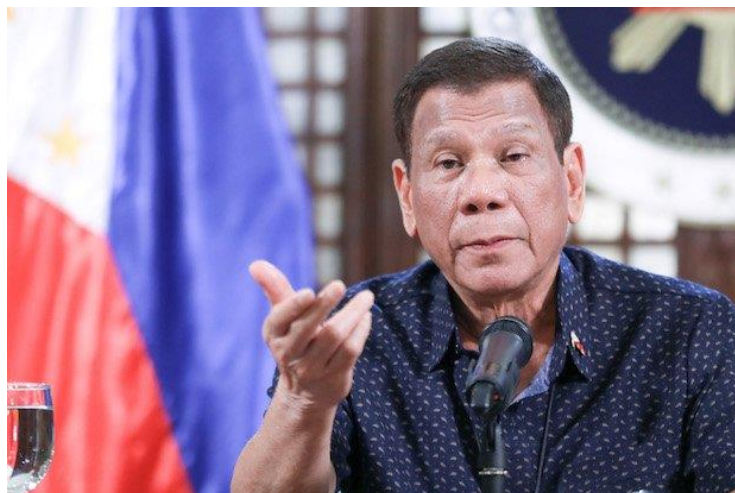


NWRB: Sapat ang Supply ng Tubig ngayong Tag-Init

# Increased water allocation, enough energy supply during quarantine — Duterte report

By: [Neil Arwin Mercado](#) - Reporter / [@NAMercadoINQ](#)

[INQUIRER.net](#) / 09:31 PM April 13, 2020



MANILA, Philippines — Water allocation has been increased while energy supply remains sufficient during the quarantine period caused by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19), President Rodrigo Duterte’s weekly report to Congress states.

According to the report, the National Water Resources Board (NWRB) has increased the water allocation of Metropolitan Water Works and Sewerage System (MWSS) from 42 cubic meters per second (CMS) to 46 CMS until April 30.

This was done to encourage the public to observe frequent hand washing and bath-taking during the quarantine in view of the pandemic.

“As of 09 April 2020, the water level in the Angat reservoir is 193.92 meters which is 13.92 meters above the minimum operating water level of 180 meters and 5.14 meters higher compared to the water level on the same date last year,” the report states.

“The water level in the Ipo Dam and the La Mesa Dam are 100.71 meters and 77.09 meters, respectively. The Pagasa’s rainfall forecasts project sustainable water supply in the Angat reservoir in the coming months,” it added.

Likewise, the report states that the energy supply in the country remains “sufficient with high level of reserve capacity for power generation.”

Section 4 (U) of the Republic Act No. 11469 or the Bayanihan to Heal as One Act tackles the conservation and regulation of the distribution and use of power, fuel, energy and water, and the ensuring the adequate supply of the said utilities.

*Edited by JPV*

Source: <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1258033/increased-water-allocation-enough-energy-supply-during-quarantine-duterte-report#ixzz6JXJcLpKI>

# Gov't ensures stable supply of water, energy, fuel amid COVID-19 crisis

Published April 13, 2020, 10:42 PM

By *Genalyn Kabling*

The government has moved to ensure a stable supply of water, energy, and fuel as the country battles the coronavirus pandemic, President Duterte said in his third weekly report to Congress.



President Rodrigo Roa Duterte (ALFRED FRIAS/PRESIDENTIAL PHOTO/MANILA BULLETIN)

The President made the assurance as the government stepped up efforts to respond to the public health emergency and mitigate its impact on people and the economy.

In his third report to the congressional oversight committee, the President said the National Water Resources Board (NWRB) has raised the water allocation of the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System from 42 cubic meters per second (cms) to 46 cms until April 30.

The higher water allocation seeks to help curb the spread of the new coronavirus disease with frequent hand-washing and bath-taking, according to Duterte.

Duterte also said the water level in Angat Dam reached 193.92 meters as of April 9, which is 13.92 meters above the minimum operating level of 180 meters, and 5.14 meters higher compared to the level during the same period last year.

The water levels in Ipo Dam and La Mesa Dam are 100.7 meters and 77.09 meters respectively. "The Pagasa's (Philippine Atmospheric Geophysical Astronomical Services Administration) rainfall forecasts project sustainable water supply in the Angat reservoir in the coming months," Duterte said.

Duterte, in his second report to Congress last week, said more than 500 water districts earlier committed to deliver safe drinking water to 4.7 million households. To help ensure adequate supply, more than 232 water projects are being undertaken.

NWRB has also directed water utility operators to ensure the continued supply of water to all hospitals and institutions, including quarantine sites and holding areas for coronavirus patients and health personnel.

## Sufficient energy supply

The President assured the nation that the country's energy supply continues to be "sufficient" with a high level of reserve capacity for power generation at 37 percent as of April 8.

The country also has an inventory of crude and refined petroleum products for 56.4 days as of April 8, he added.

He said the Department of Energy has established a 24/7 Bayanihan Energy Service hotline to address issues and concerns of industry players and consumers. He said the hotline continues to respond to the issues and questions raised by stakeholders.



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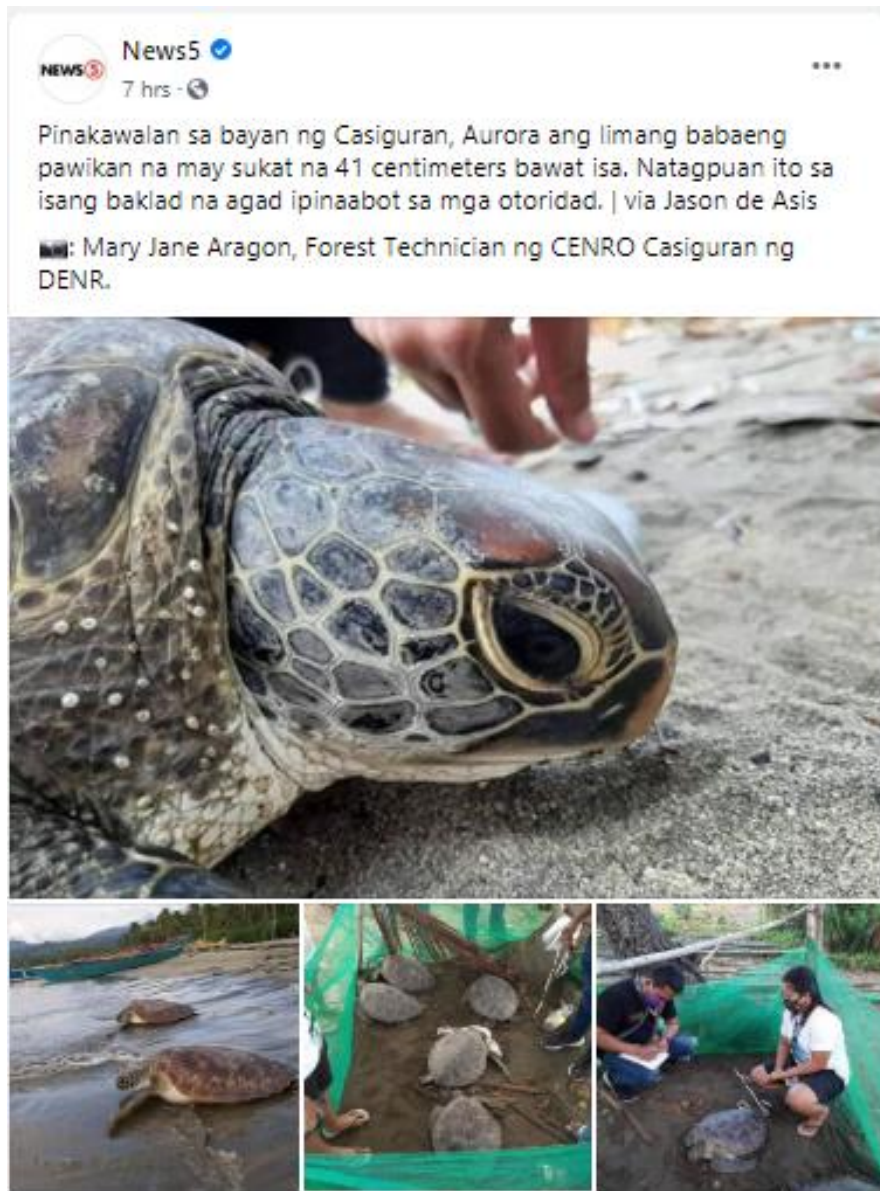
Yesterday at 4:00 PM · 🌐

## Metro Manila's clear skyline

Iba't ibang natural wonders, malinaw na nakikita sa Metro Manila mula nang ipatupad ang enhanced community quarantine. See Less



Source: <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1476414365862703>



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## MALALANG KRISIS SA PALIBING DAPAT TUGUNAN

April 13, 2020 @ 2:34 PM 16 hours ago

Views: 106

Umaalingasaw na ang baho ng mga patay mula sa ilang ospital na may limitasyon sa pag-iimbak ng mga bangkay.

Lumalabas namang hindi lahat ng mga patay ay biktima ng Corona Virus Disease-19.

Kapag ang namatay kasi ay nadeklarang may Covid-19, sa loob lamang ng ilang oras, kailangan na itong masunog o ma-cremate.

Siyempre pa, meron ding mga namatay na sa huli na lang nalamang may Covid-19 pala at ito ang nakatatakot na makahawa.

Alalahaning nagkaroon ng report mismo na nasa 45 porsyento ng namamatay sa Covid-19 ang nakita na positibo pala makaraan silang mamatay o mailibing.

Ewan natin kung ano ang susunod na rekord dito sa pag-arangkada ng rapid at mass testing dahil meron na tayong nasa 200,000 unit ng testing kit na ginawa sa loob ng Pinas, binili natin sa labas ng bansa at mga donasyon ng ibang bansa.

### WALANG PAMPALIBING

Sa pahayag ng ilang kaanak ng mga namamatayan sa mga ospital sa Kamaynilaan, lalo na ang mga mahihirap, hindi na umano sila magke-claim ng mga bangkay.

Isang malaking dahilan, wala silang pampalibing at kasama rito ang mahal na bayad sa kabaong, punerarya (kasama ang pagsundo sa morgue ng mga ospital) at bayarin sa mga lungsod o munisipyo sa pagpapalibing, kasama ang nitso o butas sa sementeryo.

Hirap sila dahil wala na umanong kita sa kawalan ng trabaho at negosyo, may lockdown pa pati sa mga saklang patay na inaasahan nila sa panggastos sa buong pag-aasikado ng patay hanggang sa mailibing ito.

### AYAW NG PUNERARYA

Ayaw namang magbigay ng libreng serbisyo ang mga punerarya dahil may mga bayarin din ang mga ito pag-aasikaso sa mga papeles, sa paglalagay ng gamot sa bangkay, sa kabaong hanggang sa paglilibing.

May sinasahuran din silang mga tauhan mula sa mga tsuper hanggang sa mga naglalagay ng mga lona at ilaw hanggang sa mailibing nila ang bangkay.

May mga tumatanggi na ring punerarya na sumundo sa patay sa takot na baka Covid-19 ang ikinamatay nito.

Kabilang sa mga labis na kawalan ng mga taong punerarya ang personal protective equipment.

Namamatay nga raw ang mga doktor na kumpleto ang PPE at may mabibisang gamot, sila pa umano?

### **HINDI LANG ALINGASAW**

Hindi magandang tingnan na maipunan ng mga bangkay ang mga ospital.

Grabe ang lilikhain nitong problema sa kalusugan ng mga pasyente at taong-ospital, kasama ang mga doktor, nars at iba pa.

Imadyinin mo lang ang baho at alingasaw ng bangkay, hindi na kakayani ng iyong sikmura.

Eh kung aktuwal nang nalalanghap mo ang alingasaw, tunay na grabe na ang kalagayan.

Kabilang sa maiimadyin mo ang pagkalat ng bakteria o virus sa paligid at ano na lang ang susunod na mangyari?

### **DAPAT NA MAGSABI**

Naiintindihan natin na karaniwang maliit lang ang espasyo na inilalaan ng mga ospital para sa namamatay nilang pasyente.

'Yun bang === maliit lang ang kanilang mga morge dahil karaniwang kinukuha ng mga kamag-anak ang kanilang patay.

Pero kakaiba ang panahong ito na maraming pamilya ang hirap sa pagpapalibing kaya hinahayaan na nila ang mga ospital na magdesisyon ukol sa mga bangkay.

Dahil naiipunan na sila ng mga patay, oras na para manawagan sila ng tulong kung ano ang gagawin.

Una, nakapaloob sila sa mga Local Government Unit na tiyak na gagawa ng paraan para makatulong.

Tingnan na lang ang pagpapabukas ni Quezon City Mayor Joy Belmonte ng isang crematorium sa Bagbag para matugunan ng cremation ng mga namamatay sa Covid-19 at iba pang namamatay sa highly infectious diseases.

Ikalawa, may mga kaukulang ahensya rin ng pambansang pamahalaan na pupwedeng kumilos para tumulong.

Hindi pupwedeng pabayaon, halimbawa, ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources na umalingasaw ang kapaligiran dahil sa mga bangkay na naiipon sa mga morge ng mga ospital.

Puwedeng makiusap ito sa mga LGU, ibang kaukulang ahensya ng pamahalaan at pribadong sektor na tumulong laban sa problema.

Ikatlo, hindi rin tumatanggi ang mga may kakayanan sa pribadong sektor na magbigay-ayuda.

Sampol na lang dito ang pagbibigay ni G. Jojo Soliman, founder ng Rosita Soliman Foundation Inc., ng isang “mobile freezer” sa East Avenue Medical Center sa Quezon City makaraang punuan na ang morge nito.

## **HUWAG MAGLIHIM**

Ang isang malaking susi sa pagsugpo sa sakit na Covid-19 ang pagiging makatotohanan ng lahat dito.

Kapag may naobserbahan ng isang pamilya na isang miyembro nila ang posibleng may Covid-19, dapat silang isangguni agad ito sa mga kinaukulang health unit na pinakamalapit sa kanila para sa kaukulang aksyon.

Kasama na rin sa dapat na bantayan ang mga galing sa ibang bansa na maaaring kapitbahay o kabarangay.

Ang mga ospital ay dapat ilinaw sa mga dumarating nilang pasyente ang kaya nilang gamutin at i-refer at itakbo kaagad sa iba ang pasyente na hindi nila kaya.

Ang mga kakulangan ng mga ospital, mga frontliner na kinabibilangan ng lahat ng uri ng health worker mula ospital hanggang barangay clinic, mga pulis at militar, at mga volunteer gaya ng mga tanod ay dapat na ilantad.

Walang imposible sa mga nagsasabi nang tapat.

# Harry Roque returns as Duterte's spokesperson

By Azer Parrocha April 13, 2020, 2:25 pm



Human rights lawyer Harry Roque (*File photo*)

**MANILA** – Human rights lawyer Harry Roque will return as spokesperson of Presidential Rodrigo Duterte more than a year after he stepped down to run as senator.

Outgoing Presidential Spokesperson and Chief Presidential Legal Counsel Salvador Panelo confirmed the news in a text message to reporters on Monday.

“Yup, Harry Roque will be back to his previous post. I’m still the Chief Presidential Legal Counsel. I will be performing the same role as the President’s chief lawyer and issuing statements as such,” Panelo said.

Asked why Roque was reappointed, Panelo said: “The present crisis requires a new tack in messaging.”

Panelo said Duterte has offered the position of presidential spokesperson to Roque “who, in turn, has accepted the same.”

“The Office of the President welcomes Secretary Roque back to the Cabinet and wishes him all the best as he assumes the role of the Chief Executive’s spokesman, a post he has already held in the past,” Panelo said.

In a text message to reporters, Roque said he will be taking oath as presidential spokesperson at 7a.m. on Tuesday.

Duterte appointed Roque in October 2017, replacing outgoing Presidential Spokesperson Ernesto Abella.

Roque stepped down as Presidential Spokesperson in October 2018 to run for a seat in the House of Representatives under Luntiang Pilipinas party-list.

He, however, later decided to run for a Senate seat against the advice of Duterte, who thought that he had a slim chance of winning.

He eventually withdrew from the senatorial race during the 2019 mid-term elections due to health reasons.

In the same year, he made headlines after serving as lawyer of the whistleblowers in the alleged Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PhilHealth) kidney dialysis fund scam.

Roque, a former House Deputy Minority Leader, earned a reputation for defending the marginalized sector.

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He represented the victims in the 2009 Ampatuan massacre, the rape victims of the World War II, the kin of murdered transgender Jennifer Laude and the family of murdered broadcaster Gerry Ortega.

He was also a law professor at the University of the Philippines who specialized in constitutional law and public international law for 15 years. **(PNA)**

# Harry Roque back as Duterte spokesperson

Arianne Merez, ABS-CBN News

Posted at Apr 13 2020 11:57 AM | Updated as of Apr 13 2020 01:39 PM



**MANILA (3RD UPDATE/CORRECTED)** - Harry Roque said Monday he will return as President Rodrigo Duterte's spokesperson just as the Philippines is in the middle of the fight against the coronavirus pandemic.

Roque, who left the post in 2018, said he will return to work on Monday afternoon. He will get the rank of Secretary.

Salvador Panelo, who replaced Roque, meanwhile will remain as Duterte's chief legal counsel.

"I will be performing the same role as the President's chief lawyer and issuing statements as such," Panelo said.

Asked why the sudden changes, Panelo said "the present crisis requires a new tack in messaging."

Roque, an activist-lawyer known for taking the cudgels for marginalized sectors of society, first took on the job as Duterte's spokesman in 2017. He was representative of the Kabayan party-list group in the House of Representatives before he was tapped to become the presidential spokesman.

He resigned in October 2018 to run for Senator, but later withdrew due to health reasons.

Source: [https://news.abs-cbn.com/news/04/13/20/harry-roque-back-as-duterte-spokesman-panelo-to-remain-legal-counsel?fbclid=IwAR1uH-d7Qo5ATxNWL4bmlKdIeCFWs4Lit58oHqbJvYAI\\_Clg3lq5xDe\\_o](https://news.abs-cbn.com/news/04/13/20/harry-roque-back-as-duterte-spokesman-panelo-to-remain-legal-counsel?fbclid=IwAR1uH-d7Qo5ATxNWL4bmlKdIeCFWs4Lit58oHqbJvYAI_Clg3lq5xDe_o)

# Duterte to lift Luzon-wide quarantine if COVID-19 antibody becomes available

By: [Darryl John Esguerra](#) - Reporter / [@DJEsguerraINQ](#)

[INQUIRER.net](#) / 01:30 AM April 14, 2020

MANILA, Philippines — President Rodrigo Duterte on Monday night said he would lift the Luzon-wide enhanced community quarantine once an antibody against the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) would become available in the market.

“If there’s an available antibody in the market, and when I can see that it is being used, I will lift it. At least, if you get sick, we have antibodies to buy,” Duterte said in Filipino.

The President claimed that a giant pharmaceutical firm, which he refused to name, had already developed an antibody against COVID-19 that might come out in the market by May.

But the problem, according to Duterte, is that the Philippines is on the “last ladder” of prioritization behind rich countries.

However, the President said the Philippines might be prioritized if China could develop its own antibody.

In mid-March, Duterte placed the entire island of Luzon under a month-long enhanced community quarantine. It was supposed to end on Monday, April 13 but he approved the proposal to [extend it until April 30](#) as the COVID-19 cases in the country continued to rise.

The measure was imposed to stop the spread of the coronavirus disease in the country. It suspended work for the majority of the region’s populace and halted the operations of public transportation.

The President then asked the public to brace themselves for the two more waves of the novel coronavirus.

“That’s how pandemic works. While the first cases die, others get infected They are the second wave. And then there is the third wave, which is the last, but that’s small-scale,” he said.

To date, [the Philippines has 4,932 confirmed cases](#) of the respiratory illness, of whom 315 have died while 242 were able to recover.

Source: <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1258149/duterte-to-lift-luzon-wide-quarantine-if-covid-19-antibody-becomes-available#ixzz6JXfciLtR>

# Duterte: No end in sight for lockdown

ECQ to be lifted only if cure against COVID-19 is available

posted April 14, 2020 at 02:05 am

by [Jimbo Owen B. Gulle](#)

President Rodrigo Duterte said early Tuesday he would lift the enhanced community quarantine (ECQ) imposed on the whole of Luzon region only if a vaccine, antibody, or medicine to cure the COVID-19 coronavirus disease was already developed and available to Filipinos.



In a televised address during a meeting with select Cabinet members, Duterte insisted Filipinos stay at home during the quarantine because the country would still need to endure two to three waves of the epidemic before they would see the end of the lockdown entering its fifth week.

“There's no end in sight. Anong katapusan nito, wala pa? (When will it end, we have no clue.) And our numbers are increasing,” the President said while reading the latest tally on the coronavirus spread in the country.

“At this time, we need to treat the sick, we need to feed our people,” added Duterte, who also admonished hospitals for turning away potential COVID-19 patients.

His remarks were made on the eve of government-led mass testing for coronavirus infections, which official Department of Health numbers put at just under 5,000 on Monday.

The President also discussed the utility of the National ID system to identify those who would need government aid, the distribution of aid to 18 million families most affected by the quarantine, observing social distancing, the United States “being part of the problem,” and the temporary travel ban on medical professionals and frontline workers from leaving the country.

In related developments during the same meeting:

The Finance Department proposed a wage subsidy for employees of small businesses, as Undersecretary Karl Chua said 3.4 million workers are affected by quarantine measures.

Presidential Adviser for Entrepreneurship Joey Concepcion said the government needed to plan “on how to gradually shift towards reviving the economy” because if not, “many of our Filipino brothers will suffer.”

Duterte ordered authorities manning checkpoints to let trucks and vehicles carrying food and essential goods from the provinces to pass unhampered to their destinations.

The President told medical workers to hail police vehicles to take them home, especially late at night.



Duterte reiterated several points raised in his previous late-night addresses, including his warning on discriminating against health workers, for local government leaders to “not play around” with quarantine efforts, and for the Left and other critics to inform him “if you have a better way of dealing with the problem, tell us.”

Filipinos needed to brace for a longer lockdown, the President said, because the country was just in the first wave of the epidemic that has claimed over 115,000 lives worldwide, including at least 315 in the Philippines.

“This doesn’t end with those at the hospital, those being treated now, that’s just the first wave. This will have a second wave. While those hit (by the disease) are dying, the others that are being infected, they are the second wave. That’s why you should maintain the social distancing rule,” Duterte explained.

The President promised that if a cure for the coronavirus was already “tested medically” and made available to the country, he would lift the ECQ, which he had extended to April 30 from an initial one-month lockdown that would have ended at midnight of April 12 (Sunday).

# National ID system could have made cash aid distribution faster – Duterte

By: [Darryl John Esguerra](#) - Reporter / [@DJEsguerraINQ](#)

[INQUIRER.net](#) / 01:05 AM April 14, 2020

MANILA, Philippines — The national ID system could have speeded up the distribution of the government's emergency subsidy distribution during the COVID-19 crisis, President Rodrigo Duterte said in a late-night televised address on Monday night.

Duterte acknowledged that the implementation of the government's two-month social amelioration program for low-income families had been delayed by certain issues, including discrepancies in the lists of beneficiaries of the national government and the local government units.

Duterte said the national ID system would have been a game-changer, but he noted that the left opposed its implementation.

"So now you see, we have no ID system until now," Duterte said in Filipino. "If we have the ID system we could have avoided these delays."

Duterte signed the Philippine Identification System (PhilSys Act), or Republic Act No. 11055, in August 2018.

The law seeks to harmonize and integrate several government IDs by establishing a single national identification system.

Senate President Vicente Sotto III earlier suggested the ["full-blown execution" of the national ID system](#) to address the discrepancies between the databases of the national government and the LGUs in distributing the cash aid.

But Bayan Muna Rep. Ferdinand Gaité said using the national ID in this time of health crisis would be ["untimely, impractical, and burdensome for the poor."](#)

The government has set aside P200 billion worth of cash aid for its social amelioration program to be distributed to about 18 million low-income households, half of which has already been disbursed and [the rest are currently being distributed](#).

Some families have complained, however, about the slow distribution of the emergency cash assistance, while Metro Manila mayors lamented that the amounts given to them for this was based on a 2015 census and was not enough for the poor families on their list.

The beneficiaries are to receive subsidies of P5,000 to P8,000 per household monthly for two months. It is being implemented to help families affected by the Luzon-wide lockdown imposed to stop the spread of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) in the country.

/atm

Source: <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1258144/national-id-system-could-have-made-cash-aid-distribution-faster-duterte#ixzz6JXZtIQOD>



"A selective quarantine is probable, but it is still early to say whether it would be implemented because of health and security aspects," a Malacañang official said yesterday.

Miguel de Guzman

## Task Force studying selective quarantine

[Alexis Romero](#) (The Philippine Star) - April 14, 2020 - 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — The government is studying a “selective quarantine” in Luzon, but it is still considering its impact on public health and security.

“A selective quarantine is probable, but it is still early to say whether it would be implemented because of health and security aspects,” a Malacañang official said yesterday.

On Sunday, Secretary Carlito Galvez Jr., chief implementer of the national policy on the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), said the Luzon-wide enhanced community quarantine may be eased into a “selective” quarantine if the Philippines sees an increase in health capacity and recovery rate and a decrease in fatality rate.

He said the selective quarantine may also be adopted if the Luzon-wide quarantine, which started on March 17 and will end on April 30, is implemented properly and massive tests are conducted.

Cabinet Secretary and Inter-Agency Task Force (IATF) on Emerging Infectious Diseases spokesman Karlo Nograles said there is a need to show accurately how existing mechanisms operate and how they would benefit the country’s health, safety, security, economic and social dimensions.

“When Secretary Galvez said that, that is probable, but is it final? Not yet, because ultimately we have to come up with a game plan with what happens after April 30, and ultimately, we need the approval of President Duterte,” Nograles said at a press briefing.

He said he and Galvez cannot preempt the decision of agencies handling the COVID-19 crisis.

“The IATF is not just Secretary Galvez and myself, there are plenty other Cabinet secretaries in the IATF and other high-ranking officials all discussing the probable,”

Some business groups have called for the gradual lifting of the Luzon-wide quarantine, which has affected more than 57 million residents and forced thousands of businesses to suspend operations.

The National Economic and Development Authority has estimated that the COVID-19 pandemic may slow economic growth to 4.3 percent or even contract the Philippine economy by 0.6 percent this year if mitigation measures are not adopted.

About 116,000 to 1.8 million jobs in the Philippines may be lost because of the disease, which has so far infected more than 4,000 people in the country.

Nograles said he agreed with Galvez that the lockdown played a significant role in preventing the spread of the disease.

“If President Duterte did not declare a lockdown, it would have been much, much worse for the Philippines. Take a look at the other countries, they are richer and look at their numbers,” he said.

“Some people who were even saying it’s OA (overacting), you can only imagine how overstretched we are if we did not immediately declare an ECQ (enhanced community quarantine),” he added.

Source: <https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2020/04/14/2007168/task-force-studying-selective-quarantine>



 **Philippine Star** ✓  
10 hrs · 🌐

The golden sun overlooking the Manila Bay descends during sunset as seen from the Manila-Cavite Expressway on Monday.



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**GMA News** 4 hrs · 🌐

**ILANG ANIMAL WELFARE ADVOCATES, NANAWAGAN NA ITURING AS FRONTLINERS!**

Dahil sa enhanced community quarantine, pahirapan ngayon sa ilang animal welfare advocates ang pagre-rescue sa mga stray animal tulad ng aso at pusa. Ang kanilang panawagan sa pamahalaan, ituring din daw silang frontliners para mas mapadali ang kanilang rescue operations. Ang buong kuwento, panoorin sa video.

Watch full episode here: <https://youtu.be/38r-PpDdRG0>



0:01 / 3:49

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Source: <https://www.facebook.com/116724526976/posts/10158646623716977/?app=fbl>

# Covid-19 could lead to better protection of biodiversity and wild animals

By [IDN-InDepthNews](#)

April 14, 2020

**SYDNEY:** A positive outcome of the coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19) pandemic could be a better understanding of protecting biodiversity and a global ban on the trade in wild animals for food. The belief that Covid-19 began at a wet market in Wuhan in China, where wild animals were being sold for human consumption, has led to the Chinese government banning the trade in wild animals and a growing international campaign for this to be made into an enforceable international law.

At the Wuhan wet market and in many such markets across China and Vietnam as well, numerous wild animals, including live wolf pups, salamanders, crocodiles, scorpions, rats, squirrels, foxes, civets and turtles are being sold for human consumption.



*Wet market in Indonesia. IDN PHOTO*

The international media's use of the phrase "wet markets," however, is dangerous because such markets exist right across Asia, including squeaky clean Singapore, where wild animals are not sold. Farmed animals, fish and vegetables are sold at these markets and they are named as such because the vendors wash the market stalls every morning for hygienic reasons before the food items are displayed for sale.

Such markets are where the poorer segments of the society come to do their daily shopping because of the low overheads, the food there is less expensive than in supermarkets and often fresher. The International Institute of Environment and Development argued in a recent blog post that rather than pointing fingers at wet markets, we should be looking at the burgeoning trade in wild animals. "It is wild animals rather than farmed animals that are the natural hosts of many viruses," state Eric Fèvre and Cecilia Tacoli in their blog.

The legal and illegal trade of wildlife for human consumption is a multibillion-dollar industry and recognized as one of the most severe threats to biodiversity. Even before the Covid-19 outbreak, ecologists and virologists had warned about the dangers of destroying biodiversity and the advent of new viruses as humans interact more directly with wild animals by destroying forests for "development" such as building roads and railways, expanding farmlands and human habitats.

In 2008, a team of researchers from the school of ecology and biodiversity from the University College London identified 335 diseases that emerged between 1960 and 2004, at least 60 percent of which came from animals.

COvid-19 could lead to better protection of biodiversity

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Almost every global pandemic that has occurred in the past three decades were caused by pathogens crossing from animals to humans. Among them are the 1996 Ebola, 2003 severe acute respiratory syndrome or SARS, 2012 Middle East respiratory syndrome or MERS, and 2013 Avian Flu outbreaks — in all the virus transmission went from animals or birds to humans.

On February 2, the most powerful arm of the Chinese Communist Party, the Politburo Standing Committee headed by President Xi Jinping issued a statement banning the sale of wild animals for human consumptions across China.

“We must strengthen market supervision, resolutely ban and severely crack down on illegal wildlife markets and trade, and control major public health risks from the source,” the statement said. But recent reports in the international media of some of those wild animals’ markets reopening have raised concern about the Chinese government’s resolve to implement the order.

Meanwhile, an international campaign is gathering steam to ban wild animal markets. A United States-based organization that promotes plant-based, preventative medicine called Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine, which has a membership of 12,000 physicians, has begun a petition asking both the US government and World Health Organization to ban wild animal markets.

The petition has been signed by 225 physicians, including Eric J. Brandt, cardiologist and lipidologist at Yale University School of Medicine, and Michelle L. O’Donoghue, a professor at Harvard Medical School, according to Livekindly Media, an American Vegan-promoting news site.

The petitioners point out that live animal markets aren’t exclusive to China. They are located around the world, including in Europe and the US. “Live animal markets are a welcome mat to coronaviruses,” the doctors state in the petition. “The failure to close a single live animal market in China led to a pandemic that has closed countless businesses worldwide and led to an enormous death toll and economic havoc.”

According to The Guardian of London, Elizabeth Maruma Mrema, the acting executive secretary of the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity, has also called for a global ban on wildlife markets to prevent future pandemics, but she has cautioned against unintended consequences.

“We should also remember you have communities, particularly from low-income rural areas, particularly in Africa, which are dependent on wild animals to sustain the livelihoods of millions of people,” she told The Guardian. “So, unless we get alternatives for these communities, there might be a danger of opening up illegal trade in wild animals ... we need to look at how we balance that and really close the hole of illegal trade in the future.”

In October 2019, an article in the American Science magazine pointed out that there is a widespread trade in wild animals in biological diverse tropics and up to 8,775 species are at the risk of extinction because of this. It called for proactive, rather than reactive, measures to stop this trade.

In the US, Sen. Lindsey Graham is leading calls for China to keep its wild animal markets closed, as the US media claims these are being reopened. Earlier in April, he called on Senate lawmakers to sign on to a letter he sent to the Chinese ambassador to the US “urging the immediate closure of these wet markets for the safety of the world at large.”



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Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison, in a radio interview on April 3, called for a global crackdown and ban on what he calls “Chinese wet markets.” His call came after there was widespread coverage in the Australian media of wild animal markets reopening in China after a national two-month long lockdown to eradicate the virus.

If this trade in wild animals for human consumption is going to be halted across the globe, David Quammen, author of *Spillover: Animal Infections and the Next Pandemic*, argues that we need to look at the broader picture of human behavior and destruction of biodiversity.

“We invade tropical forests and other wild landscapes, which harbor so many species of animals and plants — and within those creatures, so many unknown viruses,” he said in a recent article published by the *New York Times*.

“We cut the trees; we kill the animals or cage them and send them to markets. We disrupt ecosystems, and we shake viruses loose from their natural hosts. When that happens, they need a new host. Often, we are it.”

***BY KALINGA SENEVIRATNE, IN DEPTH NEWS***

# Asean leaders to meet online over COVID-19

The Jakarta Post/Asia News Network / 01:02 PM April 13, 2020



Shaking hands on stage at a summit between China and ASEAN on the COVID-19 coronavirus in Vientiane on Feb. 20 are (from left) Malaysia's Foreign Minister Saifuddin Abdullah, Myanmar's Union Minister for International Cooperation Kyaw Tin, Philippines' Foreign Minister Teodoro Locsin Jr, Singapore's Foreign Minister Vivian Balakrishnan, Thailand's Foreign Minister Don Pramudwinai, Vietnam's Foreign Minister Pham Binh Minh, Brunei's Second Minister of Foreign Affairs Erywan Yusof, Cambodia's Foreign Minister Prak Sokhon, Indonesia's Foreign Minister Retno LP Marsudi, Laos' Foreign Minister Saleumxay Kommasith and ASEAN Secretary-General Lim Jock Hoi. AFP/Dene-Hern Chen via The Jakarta Post/Asia News Network

JAKARTA — Limited by the need for self-isolating measures, Asean leaders will convene a virtual summit this week to propose various initiatives, officials say, as the bloc seeks collective and coordinated action against the COVID-19 pandemic.

The 10-member Southeast Asia grouping has held a number of cross-sectoral meetings over the past few weeks, deliberating on issues as varied as collaborative outbreak investigations and supply chain maintenance, all of which will be brought onto the virtual table when leaders meet for a special summit on Tuesday.

The summit is expected to be followed by an Asean Plus Three Summit, an important forum for collaboration with major development partners China, Japan and South Korea, Indonesian Foreign Minister Retno LP Marsudi told reporters in a virtual press briefing earlier this week.

China, Japan and South Korea have shown varying degrees of success in curbing the outbreak.

Speaking after an online ministerial huddle of the Asean Coordinating Council on Thursday, Retno assured that "the Asean diplomatic machine continues to spin" as member states try to collectively overcome a pandemic that has infected at least 15,000 people and claimed the lives of more than 500 in the entire Southeast Asia region.

She said the ACC was determined to ensure the bloc's synchronous and intersectoral efforts to combat the viral outbreak find wider implementation among member states.

"Indonesia stresses the importance of implementing the results of the Asean and Asean Plus Three Health Ministers' Meetings," Retno said.

Asean senior health officials have convened several video conferences, including with their Chinese, Japanese and South Korean counterparts, to exchange information on containment and mitigation measures and identify needs for technical support and medical supplies in some Asean countries.

The two meetings Retno mentioned were led by Indonesia's Health Minister Terawan Agus Putranto, who currently leads efforts under the Asean Health Ministers' Meeting as chair.

"I believe that through efforts to strengthen collaboration and a coordinated response in the region, we can win the war against COVID-19," Terawan said in a statement from the ministry.

The bloc has come under criticism over its slow response and its members' proclivity for putting national interests first, despite being able to draw from a reservoir of existing mechanisms and accumulated experiences.

Asean's traditional response to emergency and crisis situations has been to convene emergency meetings of leaders or relevant ministers to discuss regional solutions. When the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) hit the region in 2003, Asean leaders met in Bangkok and rolled out coordinated measures to fight the disease.

However, some experts say that Asean as a collective seems to be dragging its feet in the fight against COVID-19. And as the pandemic rages on, risks and fears of infection are magnified by geographical proximity and regional connectivity — two aspects of the Asean Community.

The Sri Pelaling tabligh gathering in Kuala Lumpur, which drew 16,000 participants in late February, not only made Malaysia the epicenter of the disease in Southeast Asia but also caused a spike in COVID-19 cases in neighboring Indonesia, Brunei and even Vietnam, said Hoang Thi Ha, lead ASEAN researcher for political and security affairs at the Singapore-based ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute, in an op-ed published in The Jakarta Post on Wednesday.

There is, however, a growing urgency among member countries to step up collaboration. At Thursday's ACC meeting, led by Vietnamese Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Pham Binh Minh, Retno also underlined the importance of protecting migrant workers as one of the most vulnerable groups in the region, as well as a common commitment to ensuring the continued flow of goods throughout the region.

As the current Asean chair, Vietnam has proposed to set up regional medical and essential goods reserves in case of an emergency, building a common health response based on guidance from the World Health Organization and organizing online drills at the Asean Center of Military Medicine on responding to epidemics, Viet Nam News reports.

The bloc is also working to establish a COVID-19 Asean Response Fund that would be drawn in part from the existing Asean Development Fund.

"Malaysia is of the view that we must prioritize the COVID-19 Asean Response Fund to expand the scale of existing emergency stockpiles for pandemic responses with items such as face masks, test kits and protective equipment. I understand there are shortages globally, but we must be prepared for any eventuality," Malaysian Foreign Minister Hishammuddin Hussein said recently as quoted by The Star.

The establishment of the Asean fund was endorsed by the region's foreign ministers on Thursday, according to the Philippines' Foreign Ministry.

Asean is also expecting help from various partner countries.

"We have received very strong commitments from China and the United States in supporting and uniting with Asean to fight the pandemic," Deputy Foreign Minister Nguyen Quoc Dung said as quoted by Viet Nam News.

Source: <https://globalnation.inquirer.net/186793/asean-leaders-to-meet-online-over-covid-19#ixzz6JXcoZG2S>

# WHO: Vaccine needed to fully halt spread of COVID-19

Published April 14, 2020 12:40am

GENEVA, Switzerland - The World Health Organization said Monday that a safe and effective vaccine would be needed to fully halt the spread of COVID-19, which has killed more than 114,000 people worldwide.

"Our global connectedness means the risk of re-introduction and resurgence of COVID19 will continue," WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus told a virtual briefing from Geneva, stressing that "ultimately, the development and delivery of a safe and effective vaccine will be needed to fully interrupt transmission." -- **Agence France-Press**

Source: <https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/news/world/733845/who-vaccine-needed-to-fully-halt-spread-of-covid-19/story/>

# Social distancing for tigers over virus fears



Published 9 hours ago  
on April 13, 2020 09:42 PM  
By **Agence France-Presse**



Keepers at a major western India zoo are putting their big cats into solitary confinement after a tiger in the United States caught the novel coronavirus.

“We have decided to isolate them to avoid any kind of infection,” said superintendent Bharatsinh Vihol of the Kamala Nehru Zoological Garden in Gujarat state.

“Also, since we have run a planned breeding program here, it has been decided to restrict mating between the pairs,” he told AFP.

Doctors are regularly inspecting the lions, tigers, and leopards at the facility, looking for breathing issues, runny noses and coughing.

Zookeepers tending to the animals wear masks and gloves and are screened for fever.

“We have been sanitizing the outer walls of the zoo on a daily basis, while individual enclosures are being sanitized every alternate day,” Vihol added.

The zoo usually attracts two million visitors a year but is closed under India’s nationwide lockdown, which allows residents to leave their homes only for essential services.

A tiger at New York’s Bronx Zoo tested positive for COVID-19 a week ago.

It is believed it contracted the virus from a caretaker who was asymptomatic at the time.