



## Kwago nahuli sa N. Ecija, isusurender

April 23, 2020 @ 6:30 PM 14 hours ago  
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Nueva Ecija – Nakatakdang isurender ng isang manggagawa sa kinauukulang ahensya ng pamahalaan ang nahuli niyang kwago sa Sta. Barbara, San Antonio, kagabi.

Kinilala ang nakahuli na si Ryan Pascua, may asawa, aircon installer, naninirahan sa naturang lugar.

Nabatid na dakong alas-8 kagabi habang naghahanap ng makakain sa kabukiran si Pascua nang mamataan at mahuli nito ang isang kwago sa puno ng acacia.

Dahil alam niyang bawal katayin at ibenta ang ganitong uri ng ibon, nagpasaklolo siya sa kanyang mga kaanak kung ano ang dapat gawin hanggang sa makarating ito sa kaalaman ng REMATE.

Pinayuhan ng pahayagang ito ang mga ito na isurender ang naturang kwago sa pinakamalapit na tanggapan ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources sa kanilang lugar o sa San Antonio Municipal Environment and Natural Resources Office para sa kaukulang disposisyon.

Dahil sa ipinatutupad na enhanced community quarantine, kinailangan pa nila ng ayuda ng kapulisan para makabiyahe at maisurender sa kinauukulan ang naturang kwago. **Remate News Team**

# EMB-7, 2 other firms to donate PPEs for Cebu City garbage collectors

By: Irene R. Sino Cruz - CDN Digital Correspondent|April 23,2020 - 09:16 PM

CEBU CITY, Philippines — Recognizing the need for proper disposal of face masks and the protection of garbage collectors amid the coronavirus disease 2019 outbreak, the Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) in Central Visayas continues to turn over personal protective equipment (PPEs) to local government units for the latter's personnel.

On Friday, April 24, the EMB-7 led by regional director Lormelyn Claudio, together with the ARN Central Waste Management Inc. and Jomara Konstrukt Corp., will be donating some PPEs to the Cebu City government for the use of the Department of Public Services (DPS) personnel, said Cindylyn Pepito, chief of EMB-7 Environmental Education and Information Unit.

The EMB-7 will be turning over 100 units of single-cartridge respirators (NP 305); 100 pairs or 200 pieces of safety gloves and 100 pieces of 200-liter silo drum for special wastes to Cebu City Mayor Edgardo Labella and DPS head John Jigo Dacua, Pepito said.

Meanwhile, ARN Central Waste Management president Arnold Espinoza will be donating 100 pieces coverall and 100 pairs or 200 pieces safety gloves, all worth P130,440.

On the other hand, Myra Lapitan, president of Jomara Konstrukt, will be turning over P54,246 worth of PPEs comprised of 50 units of double-cartridge respirators (NP306) and 50 pairs or 100 pieces of safety gloves.

In partnership with the Pollution Control Association of the Phils. Inc.-7 (PCAPI-7), EMB-7 had also donated 30 units of single cartridge respirator and 300 pairs of nitrile safety gloves worth P76,500 to the Lapu-Lapu City government for the use of their garbage collectors. The EMB-7 likewise turned over PPEs to the Mandaue City government.

A respirator is defined as a device to protect you from inhaling dangerous substances, such as chemicals and infectious particles, according to the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The donation of PPEs for the use of garbage collectors is pursuant to Republic Act No. 11469, otherwise known as the Bayanihan to Heal as One Act, and the bureau's continuous pursuit to protect all garbage collectors in the middle of this global crisis, according to EMB-7.

There should be proper disposal of used face masks from hospitals, barangay health centers, and clinics in accordance to the Implementing Guidelines of DENR Administrative Order No. 22-2013 because these are considered hazardous or infectious waste, the EMB said.

“As a precautionary measure, used masks from households with Person/s Under Investigation (PUI), and Person/s Under Monitoring (PUM) should be treated as hazardous wastes as well and must be segregated into a separate bin or trash can prior to collection by TSD Facility personnel or crew,” the EMB pointed out in an earlier statement.

Also, even the used masks from offices, work places, and homes without persons under investigation (PUIs) and persons under monitoring (PUMs) have to be treated as residual waste. These must be stored separately, collected by eco-aides or garbage collectors equipped with Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), and disposed into Category 3 or 4 Sanitary Landfill accordingly. /rcg

Source: <https://cebudailynews.inquirer.net/304902/emb-7-2-other-firms-to-donate-ppes-for-cebu-city-garbage-collectors#ixzz6KtkWSN6A>

# Bulacan's south zone water allocation resumes in June: NWRB

By Manny Balbin April 23, 2020, 7:02 pm



An irrigated farmland in Bulacan. (File photo)

**CITY OF MALOLOS, Bulacan** – The National Water Resources Board (NWRB) will allocate irrigation water to the National Irrigation Administration's (NIA) south zone service areas in this province starting in June.

Sevillo David Jr., NWRB executive director, said on Thursday that 15 cubic meters per second (cms) will initially be allocated for the irrigation of farmlands in the southern part of the province.

“This is to support the government’s program on food security which is equally important in sustaining the food requirement of our people under enhanced community quarantine (ECQ),” David said in a statement.

Noel Miranda, president of the Irrigators Association Federation of Pandi, Bustos, Plaridel and Bocaue Working Station No. 2 of the NIA, identified the towns included in the south zone service areas as Bustos, Plaridel, Pandi, Bocaue, Guiguinto, Balagtas, Bulakan, Malolos, Calumpit and Hagonoy, which have some 5,800 hectares of combined irrigated farmlands.

The NWRB suspended the allocation of irrigation water in those areas during the dry cropping season from January to April as the water elevation of Angat Dam did not reach its ideal 212-meter level at the end of last year.

Last January, the NWRB only allocated 20 cms of irrigation water to the north service areas of NIA-Bulacan, which include the towns of Pulilan, Baliwag, part of Calumpit and San Rafael in Bulacan and San Simon, San Luis, Candaba and Apalit in Pampanga that have a total irrigated rice lands of some 16,000 hectares.

Miranda said it will be advantageous to farmers of the south service areas of NIA which were deprived of irrigation water for the dry cropping season to start planting early this coming wet season.

“Ayon sa NIA hold muna lahat ng irrigation project except sa repair ng rubber gate sa Bustos Dam na before June 1 ay matatapos na (According to NIA, all irrigation projects were put on hold except the repair of the rubber gate in Bustos Dam which will finish before June 1),” he said.

On water sufficiency, the NWRB assured that water in Angat Dam is sustainable until the onset of rainy season in June.

As of Thursday morning, water elevation at Angat Dam was 191.85 meters, which is 11.85 meters above the minimum operating level of 180 meters and more than eight meters higher than the level of the dam on the same date last year.

With rainfall projection indicating near normal condition until September, the water level in Angat Dam is projected not to reach below the minimum operating level of 180 meters despite the full water allocation to Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) and the releases for irrigation supply to Bulacan farmlands for the wet cropping season this June.

David said the NWRB is coordinating with MWSS and NIA in sustaining their requirements and in providing steady supply for the public considering the importance of water in fighting off the coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19). (PNA)

Source: <https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1100787>

# Conserve water during dry season: PAGASA

By Ma. Cristina Arayata April 23, 2020, 6:36 pm



**MANILA** – As the country starts experiencing the scorching heat, a hydrologist from the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) said Metro Manila residents should conserve water.

In a phone interview with the Philippine News Agency (PNA) on Thursday, Edgar dela Cruz said the heat and less rainfall during the dry season would affect the water level in the three dams that are main sources of Metro Manila's water supply – the Ipo, Angat, and La Mesa dams.

"When the wet season arrives, that would help in increasing the water level in these dams," dela Cruz said.

PAGASA climate monitoring chief Analiza Solis earlier said the Philippines only observes two seasons – the dry season when rain showers are greatly reduced and when the public could expect higher temperatures; and wet season, which usually begins in June.

For this year, PAGASA declared the onset of the dry season last March 20.

Meanwhile, dela Cruz said water levels in the Ipo and Angat dams were normal as of Thursday.

Angat Dam's water level reached 191.99 m., while Ipo Dam's water level measured 100.61 m., he said, adding that these levels are normal.

"For today, the normal water level for Angat Dam should be 187.33 m., so there is an excess of 4.55 m., which means we have a little excess to use for the coming days," dela Cruz said.

He noted that water concessionaires prefer a 101-m. water level for Ipo Dam, so its water level of 100.61 m. on Thursday "is okay."

However, La Mesa Dam's water level was recorded at 76.79 m. on Thursday, according to dela Cruz.

He earlier said that La Mesa Dam's water level should be at least 78 m. to 79 m.

Despite the below-normal level, dela Cruz said it is still manageable and could not be considered as "abnormal".  
(PNA)

# PH sends back over 2,600 tons of wastes to South Korea

Robie de Guzman • April 23, 2020



**MANILA, Philippines** – The Bureau of Customs (BOC) has shipped back to South Korea some 2,676 metric tons (MT) of waste materials that were stored at the PHIVIDEC Industrial Authority premises in Misamis Oriental since 2018.

In a report to Finance Secretary Carlos Dominguez III, Customs Commissioner Rey Leonardo Guerrero said the shipment was part of the 5,176.91 MT that the South Korean government committed to help send back to their country after these were illegally exported to the Philippines in July 2018.

The waste materials consist of plastic synthetic flakes that were illegally imported by the Cebu-based Verde Soko Philippines Industrial Corp.

Guerrero said the garbage was shipped back in 151 forty-footer containers.

The first batch of 51 containers was re-exported to Korea on Jan. 25, 2019, followed by another shipment of 50 containers on Jan. 15 this year.

A third batch consisting of 50 containers was shipped to Korea last March 21.

“The re-exportation took some time because the wastes have been exposed to natural elements of heat and rain, which made it difficult to re-bag and stuff inside the containers,” Guerrero said in his report.

The remaining 2,500 MT of wastes were initially scheduled to be shipped back in March but it was delayed due to the Enhanced Community Quarantine (ECQ), according to Guerrero.

The community quarantine has forced most people to stay in their homes as the operation of public transportation and classes in schools were suspended. Most government offices have implemented a skeleton force while other employees were ordered to work from their homes.

“Rest assured that the Bureau will undertake all the necessary means, within the bounds of the law, in order to expedite the re-exportation of these wastes,” Guerrero said.

# Climate group joins call for probe on activities of Chinese vessel in Antique

By: [Bong Lozada](#) - Reporter / [@BLozadaINQ](#)

[INQUIRER.net](#) / 09:21 PM April 23, 2020

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippine Movement for Climate Justice (PMJC) has joined Antique Rep. Loren Legarda in demanding the provincial government of Antique to investigate Semirara Mining and Power Corporation's (SMPC) decision to allow a Chinese vessel into the province.

PMJC said that locals in the area reported that the Chinese vessel "continue to enter and exit" SMPC to ship materials and goods for coal mining thus violating the Bayanihan We Heal as One Act's enforcement of physical distancing in the mining workplace.

"It has been reported by mine workers and locals that foreign vessels from China continue to enter and exit Semirara for coal mining. The report confirms the complaints of Rep. Loren Legarda and why the government is lax about it," said the group in a statement on Thursday.

PMJC asserted that the shipment of materials and goods for mining by a foreign vessel for exportation is a non-essential service in the time of COVID-19. Allowing foreign vessels during the period of a nationwide lockdown defeats the purpose of the Bayanihan Act, it also said.

Rodrigo Cabatac, the community leader of Sabang Pooacan Farmers and Fisherfolks Association (Sapoffa) even called for the shutdown of SMPC.

PMJC implored the provincial government, through the Office of the Governor, as well as the Department of Environment and Natural Resources and Department of Foreign Affairs to investigate the activities of the Chinese vessel in Antique.

Cabatac added that the continuous mining operations during the COVID-19 crisis would put the lives of workers and locals at a risk.

PMJC also questioned the apparent lack of relief operations that the government should have extended to communities in SMPC during the enhanced community quarantine.

"It's during this lockdown that the government should help the citizens who don't have work so they can support the daily needs of their families," said Cabatac. "If the government doesn't give its support then hunger will fall on the citizens."

# Roque takes lead in gov't Covid-19 info dissemination

By Azer Parrocha April 23, 2020, 10:56 pm



Presidential Spokesperson Harry Roque (*File photo*)

**MANILA** – Presidential Spokesperson Harry Roque will take the lead in the government's information dissemination on the coronavirus disease (Covid-19) pandemic.

Roque confirmed this in a virtual presser, explaining that Executive Secretary Salvador Medialdea authorized only him and Health Undersecretary Maria Rosario Vergeire to speak on behalf of the government.

*"Nagkaroon na po ng pag-utos ang ating* (There is an order from our) Executive Secretary that information sharing will now be centralized through the Office of the Presidential Spokesperson," he said.

He said he had no knowledge on the basis of Medialdea's decision.

"The memo said po that the only authorized person to speak on behalf of government are, number one, the Presidential Spokesperson; and number two, Usec. Vergeire of the DOH for health-related matters," he said.

After taking his oath on April 14, Roque returned to the Cabinet succeeding former Presidential Spokesperson and Chief Presidential Legal Counsel Salvador Panelo.

Asked why Roque was reappointed, Panelo said "the present crisis requires a new tack in messaging."

Before Roque's reappointment, Cabinet Secretary Karlo Nograles held daily virtual pressers to update the public on new revised guidelines under the enhanced community quarantine.

Nograles is also currently spokesperson for the Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases.

He was last seen at Willie Revillame's online show "Tutok To Win sa Wowowin" on Wednesday.

Vergeire regularly holds virtual pressers for health-related matters such as updated numbers of Covid-19 cases, deaths, and recoveries, and contact-tracing, isolating, and mass testing efforts.

Aside from Nograles, Presidential Peace Adviser and National Task Force (NTF) Covid-19 chief implementer Carlito Galvez Jr. also holds day-end virtual pressers at least thrice a week.

State-run PTV-4 also hosts a daily Laging Handa public briefer that invites officials from both the public and private sector as well as regular citizens to speak about matters concerning the government's Covid-19 response. **(PNA)**

Source: <https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1100832>

# COVID-19 info flow coursed thru Roque

Published 12 hours ago  
on April 23, 2020 08:23 PM  
By **Francis Wakefield**



Presidential Spokesperson Harry Roque on Thursday said he will be taking the lead role in the government's information dissemination on the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), including pronouncements by the Inter-Agency Task Force on the Management of Emerging of Infectious Diseases (IATF-MEID).

In a press briefing at Malacañang Palace, Roque said Executive Secretary Salvador Medialdea ordered that information sharing on COVID-19 will now be centralized through the Office of the Presidential Spokesperson.

Prior to the executive secretary's order, Cabinet Secretary Karlo Nograles holds a daily IATF briefing in the morning on COVID-19.

When asked what prompted the change in the communications strategy and if Nograles will still hold a regular press briefing, Roque said he has no idea.

He added that the only authorized persons to speak on behalf of government regarding COVID-19 are him and Department of Health Undersecretary Dr. Maria Rosario Vergeire.

Source: <https://tribune.net.ph/index.php/2020/04/23/covid-19-info-flow-coursed-thru-roque/>



# Another ECQ extension may benefit economy

Published 23 hours ago  
on April 23, 2020 09:42 AM  
By **TDT**



Health Secretary Francisco Duque (L) checks on the tests kits of the Philippine Red Cross. (DOH Facebook)

As various sectors issue differing opinions on the eventual fate of the enhanced community quarantine (ECQ) after 30 April, a lawmaker called for an extension for another two weeks, saying Luzon is not fully ready to modify, let alone, lift, the lockdown.

President Rodrigo Duterte may issue a decision on the ECQ Thursday.

“We’re simply not there yet, no matter how much we wish this pandemic to end. It would be almost willful neglect to say that the country can now reopen,” Albay (2nd District) Rep. Joey Salceda said, adding that local planners should learn from the experiences of other countries which are more technically capable than the Philippines.

Salceda’s call came after reports that other countries are having second wave of infections after easing up on community lockdowns, among them, Singapore, Taiwan, Japan and South Korea.

Salceda, who also co-chairs the House Economic Stimulus Cluster, urged the National Task Force to recommend re-extending the ECQ for another two weeks, pointing out that the country hasn’t yet reached a “point of justified confidence.”

Choosing between health and the economy, Salceda said “it’s a short-sighted assessment of the situation.”

He described as misguided the idea that the choice is between health damage and economic damage, explaining that there must be no trade off between people’s safety and that of the economy.

“Resurgence will likely be more damaging to both the people’s lives and the economy, and consumer confidence than the initial six-week ECQ was. We are trying to minimize both. At this rate, opening up the country and hoping we will not have to lock it down again is wishful thinking. Let’s finish the job now, when we are already building on some successes, rather than erase those gains and then face a second wave later,” he said.

With about 130,000 tests or 0.1% of population as of 20 April, Salceda said several cases are still undetected.

“Lifting the ECQ amounts to carelessly exposing the entire population to infection, no matter what residual social distancing efforts they do. Every day, there are about 1.9 billion social contacts in the Philippines, and the ECQ despite all the rule breakers, must have eliminated 80 percent or a reduction of 1.5 billion,” he noted.

Salceda estimates that the expected monetary value of the costs in foregone economic activity and loss of market and consumer confidence from a six-week resurgence in cases will be much more significant than the economic costs of another two-week extension.

A resurgence, he said, “will likely require a longer lockdown period than the initial March 15 to April 30 ECQ and the country’s economic recovery period will be delayed, while another package of both survival and transitional measures will have to be financed and rolled out.”

“The liquidity of already struggling companies will likely be erased in a viral resurgence, at a time when the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas shall have expended much of its monetary policy tools,” he added.

Salceda proposes that the following conditions be met before lifting of the ECQ is considered: comprehensive measures to protect at-risk and vulnerable population (people above 65 and co-morbidities); pervasiveness of low-cost non-pharmaceutical interventions, such as personal hygiene, hand washing, face masks, and social distancing; full protection for frontliners, including complete personal protective equipment, and readiness for peak capacity; and adequate testing.

Salceda said “greater care is required in planning and implementing a pathway or pathways towards recovery... the reason why our efforts should strengthen over time, and modifications should not amount to an easing of our efforts in the aggregate, but rather a recalibration towards more efficiency and effectiveness, based on science and facts.”

Go urges government to initiate ‘balik probinsya’

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## Go urges government to initiate ‘balik probinsiya’ programs

[Cecille Suerte Felipe](#) (The Philippine Star) - April 24, 2020 - 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — Sen. Bong Go appealed to the national government to prepare “balik probinsiya” programs by providing incentives and livelihood opportunities to Filipinos who wish to relocate to the provinces after the state of public health emergency and the enhanced community quarantine measures are lifted.

“We have to prepare for the ‘new normal’ and one of the most important steps is the movement of people from the cities to the provinces,” he said in Filipino.

He stressed that the effort to decongest Metro Manila is becoming relevant now more than ever as the country struggles to contain the further spread of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19).

Go also pointed out that the high density of communities in Metro Manila amplifies the spread of infectious diseases such as COVID-19 and also slows down the efficiency of the government to provide assistance to all affected constituents.

He emphasized that aside from responding to the immediate needs of the people, such as health care and social assistance at this time of crisis, the government must also put importance on long-term solutions to current problems that have adversely affected the country’s ability to respond to the COVID-19 health crisis.

The senator specifically pointed out that the lack of urban planning and rural development has in some way contributed to the spread of the virus in congested areas and has also affected the distribution of resources in different parts of the country.

“We’re pouring our resources into the cities because that’s where most of those infected are and that’s also where most of the poor are. We’re doing everything to stop the spread of the disease to other provinces because if that happens, we won’t be able to cope,” Go said.

Go urges government to initiate 'balik probinsya'

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He stressed that when the time comes that the enhanced community quarantine can be lifted, the government should be ready to move Filipino families out of Metro Manila by providing them the means and incentives to move back to the provinces.

According to Go, if this move becomes a national priority, it would require the government to provide transportation and livelihood options to those who agree to go back to their provinces for good.

Go suggested that this initiative must be implemented only when the COVID-19 outbreak has been controlled. Upon implementation, this strategy will also require local government units (LGUs) to enforce necessary quarantine measures and mass testing for COVID-19 to ensure that those who will be relocated will not be carriers of the disease.

Go also said that this move would make it easier for national agencies and LGUs to provide assistance to Filipino families when necessary since government resources will be scattered and equitably distributed to the regions. In effect, it will unburden overpopulated LGUs and would also result in additional resources for the countryside.

"Let's get the provinces ready for when the people will move there. We should ensure that the provinces have the capacity to take care of the people, to give them housing, food and livelihood. We will ease the burden of the cities when we lessen the people there," he added.



## Agencies told: Draft transport guidelines

[Cecille Suerte Felipe](#) (The Philippine Star) - April 24, 2020 - 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — The government's task force on the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) has ordered concerned agencies to propose guidelines on the possible resumption of public transportation in case the enhanced community quarantine is relaxed in some areas.

Presidential spokesman Harry Roque said the transportation, interior, tourism and health departments and the quarantine bureau would study and recommend protocols for air, land and sea travel, subject to existing measures on social distancing and isolation.

"It will be a new norm. You may no longer have a seatmate in buses. No one will stand in buses and even in queues, there should be social distancing. But the President will still decide on this," Roque said.

Public transportation has been suspended since March 17 because of the enhanced community quarantine in Luzon, one of the stringent government measures intended to contain COVID-19. The quarantine has sidelined thousands of transport workers and has forced them to rely on government dole-outs for their basic needs. The government has unveiled a P200-billion aid package for transport workers, low-income households and other sectors affected by the quarantine, which was supposed to end last April 13 but was extended until April 30. Officials have said the lockdown may be relaxed in some areas with low number of COVID-19 cases and with a health capacity that can adequately handle future infections. Last Wednesday, transportation Secretary Arthur Tugade said his agency was studying the possibility of resuming the operations of buses and trains but only at 30 percent capacity to prevent the spread of the disease. Roque said Duterte has yet to decide on the proposal. He clarified that the easing in public transportation would not be applied to areas that would remain under enhanced community quarantine (ECQ) after April 30. "If the health sector has no capacity yet to provide medical assistance... you will remain under ECQ. If you are still under ECQ, we can't talk about modification as far as transportation and what have you is concerned," the Palace spokesman said.

## Random testing

The Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) should mandate industries to put COVID-19 mitigation measures by conducting random testing of workers before allowing them to resume operations, Sen. Joel Villanueva said yesterday.

Once certain sectors are allowed to operate as the government restarts the economy, Villanueva said DOLE must mandate employers to conduct regular monitoring on their employees' health and mitigate the spread of COVID-19.

Villanueva, who chairs the Senate labor committee, said policymakers should consider allowing industries and sectors providing essential goods and services to operate as long as they maintain hygiene and sanitation protocols, coupled with regular testing among its workers with the gargantuan task of striking a balance between public health and the economy.

"Industries that are necessary to boost the economy may be allowed to operate provided they follow strict protocols on social distancing, sanitizing and use of personal protective equipment, among others," Villanueva said in a statement, citing a discussion paper by the University of the Philippines School of Economics (UPSE).

Villanueva said one of the most important insights that the paper offered is the value of conducting random testing of workers for surveillance and monitoring.

Citing occupational safety and health standards, DOLE could set guidelines and parameters on resuming operations, keeping in mind minimizing the risks of workers to contract the disease.

He suggested that industries and sectors that would be allowed to resume operations should likewise provide temporary lodging and point-to-point transportation for its workers to minimize their risk of contracting COVID-19 from their communities and give them a lift since public transport is limited.

Online selling platforms and logistics are two sectors that have shown resilience given the strict enforcement of social distancing and community quarantine.



## CONGRATS SA MABIBILIS NA PULIS VS MGA KRIMINAL

April 23, 2020 @ 4:57 PM 15 hours ago  
Views: 74

BINABATI natin ang mga pulis na mabibilis sa paglutas sa mga krimen sa gitna ng pandemya sa Corona Virus Disease-19.

Kabilang sa mga pinakahuling nagawa ng mga pulis ang pagdakup sa loob ng 24 oras sa mga pumaslang kay Brgy. Julian Olivas, Camalaniugan, Cagayan Chairman Eranio Caleda kamakalawa.

Nakakulong at nasampahan na ng mga kasong murder at pag-iingat ng baril ang mga suspek na sina Geronimo Joaquin y Garcia alyas "James Bond", 39 anyos, tubong Urdaneta, Pangasinan at naninirahan sa Brgy. Centro Norte, Camalanuigan; at si Cagayan at Alvin Carlo Aggabao na tubong Camalaniugan.

Napag-alamang isa palang dating empleyado ng provincial government ng Nueva Ecija si Joaquin at may kasong pagpatay bilang isang hired killer na wanted sa nasabing lalawigan.

Nang iharap ang mga suspek sa piskalya, umamin ang mga ito na may nagbayad sa kanila ng P30,000 ang upang patayin si Caleda at natanggap na ni Aggabao ang P15,000 habang tatanggapin pa lang sana ni Joaquin ang natitira makaraan nilang maisagawa ang krimen.

### AKSYON AGAD

Makaraan ang pamamaslang, agad ipinag-utos mismo ni Cagayan Philippine National Police Director PCol. Ariel Quilang ang manhunt operation laban kina Joaquin ng Camalaniugan PNP.

At sa loob ng anim na oras mula alas-8:00 ng gabi makaraan ang krimen, natunton nina PCapt. Arnel Acain, chief of police ng PNP Camalaniugan, si Joaquin sa compound ni Camalaniugan ex-Mayor at ngayo'y Vice Mayor Isidro Cabaddu; at ilang oras matapos nito, nasukol din si Aggabao.

Sa pamamagitan ng masusing imbestigasyon nina PCapt Acain, napag-alamang sina Joaquin at Aggabao rin ang may kagagawan ng pagpaslang kina Roberto Tolento at Arjay Galapia na ikinasugat ng isang Ronald Pascua sa Brgy. Bulala Junction Centro, Camalaniugan noong Mayo 2, 2019 at Fredelito Ugalde Sr. ng Brgy. Centro sur noong Agosto 30, 2019.

Kaya naman, patong-patong na kasong murder ang isinampa laban sa dalawa ng pulisya.

Sinasamahan natin sina PNP Chief Police General Archie Gamboa at Police Regional Office 2 chief PBGen. Angelito Casimiro ang hanay ng Cagayan Police Provincial Office at PNP Camalaniugan sa agarang pagkaka-resolba sa kaso sa gitna ng matinding hamon ng implementasyon ng Enhanced Community Quarantine.

### **SINO ANG UTAK?**

Ang hinihintay na lang natin ay ang pagkilala sa mga utak ng mga pagpaslang.

Sana'y makilala agad ang mga ito, mahuli at mapanagot sa batas.

Hindi pupwedeng walang patutunguhan ang kaso nina Joaquin at Aggabao dahil umamin ang mga ito sa extra-judicial confession nila sa piskalya na bayaran silang mamamatay-tao.

Nauna rito, lumabas na rin sa interbyu ng Remate online ang paghahayag ni Camalaniugan Mayor Angelica Cabaddu dela Cruz, anak ni VM Cabaddu na wala silang kinalaman sa krimen bagama't naging job order employee nila si Joaquin at pinatira lang nila sa kanilang compound.

Nagulat nga sila sa raid ng pulisya at mismong si VM Cabaddu ang nagpapasok sa mga pulis sa kanilang compound para arestuhin si Joaquin na tumakas pa ngunit nahabol din ng mga pulis.

### **LOCKDOWN**

Kung iisipin, nakatulong din nang husto ang lockdown at curfews laban sa COVID-19 sa pagkilos ng pulisya laban sa mga kriminal na katulad nina Joaquin at Aggabao.

Dahil sa lockdown, stay at home order, 24 oras na curfew at pagbabawal ng pagbiyahe ng mga pampublikong sasakyan at karamihan sa mga pribadong sasakyan, hindi nagawang makalayo at makatakas agad ang mga suspek na gumawa ng pagpaslang sa dilim ng gabi.

Maituturing na isang "blessing in disguise" ang pagkakaroon ng COVID-19 upang malutas ang mga kasong pagpatay na noong una ay mga natutulog nang kaso dahil sa kawalan ng pagkakilanlan sa mga suspek.

Syempre pa, hindi natin pasasalamatang ang COVID-19 na matindi ang pagmamasaker lagi araw-araw sa mga biktima nito sa mahal kong Pinas.

Sa nakalipas na 24, may minasaker ang Covid-19 na 16 katao at inimpeksyon na 6,981 habang nakaligtas sa bangis nito ang 722.



Waste pickers in Rizal appeal for food, money as many

April 24, 2020

TITLE: fight starvation amid Luzon lockdown

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# Waste pickers in Rizal appeal for food, money as many fight starvation amid Luzon lockdown

**Sherrie Ann Torres, ABS-CBN News**

Posted at Apr 23 2020 09:32 PM | Updated as of Apr 23 2020 11:22 PM

**MANILA (UPDATED)** - Just less than an hour of travel from Quezon City lies the community of Waste pickers in the dusty part of Barangay San Isidro in Rodriguez, Rizal.

Barangay San Isidro chairperson Karen Mae Hernandez, estimates the number of families in the community at around 1,800. All of them source their livelihood from the Rizal Provincial Sanitary Landfill that receives Metro Manila's waste.

A typical 10 to 12 hour-daily work as a “mangangalahig” - sifting through trash for bottles, metals and reusable scraps at the sanitary landfill that they can sell - fetch them at least P400 a day, according to 43-year old Jose Juan.

But in the middle of March, the start of the Luzon lockdown to prevent the spread of the coronavirus disease, their only source of livelihood was suddenly cut off.

That month, they received food aid from their village officials twice. Nothing came after that.

For a time, scavengers living around the Rodriguez Sanitary Landfill scoured for food in trees and other vegetables around their area to feed their family.

Their children, meanwhile, braved trekking the steep ravine to get water supply from a well.

Families here also locked themselves in their shanties, as instructed by the government.

But as days progressed, the already hard life of residents was becoming more and more difficult due to the lack of food to eat.

Every morning, 33-year-old Jasmine Non is confronted by the cries of her three children aged 11, 4 and 1, because they have no milk to drink for breakfast.

Ken, her middle child, cannot be forced to eat sardines that a relative shares with them whenever they receive help, Jasmine said.

“Pag walang gatas, iiyak talaga siya. 'Pag nakalimutan niya titigil siya. 'Pag naalala niya uli, iiyak siya uli,” Jasmine shared.

These days, Jasmine is having difficulties breastfeeding his youngest child because of her own nutritional problems.

“Nagwawala rin siya sa gabi...isinasayaw na lang, tulog din naman siya eh... minsan po pakiramdam ko lagi akong nakasakay sa barko siguro nahihilo. Siguro dahil sa puyat dahil sa pagbantay namin sa panganay namin...hindi ko siya puwedeng tulugan nang matagal dahil baka bigla siyang ma-choke. Puwedeng hindi na siya makahinga,” she said

Asked how difficult it is for her to hear her children cry because of hunger, Jasmine said: “Siyempre mahirap, kasi bilang isang ina, ayaw naming makikita silang umiiyak. Lalo na 'yung panganay namin, hindi namin maibigay. Masakit po 'yun.”

Jasmine's eldest son Justin has pneumonia. But they cannot bring him to the health center because of the lockdown and lack of public transportation.

“Kailangan niyang nagpapasok three times a day kasi hirap siyang huminga palagi, pero wala tiis lang. Kasama na po 'yan simula nang siya ay kinumbulasyon, ganiyan na po talaga siya, hirap siyang huminga palagi. Kaya kailangan niya ng pausok, nebulizer. Madalas naming siyang tinatakbo sa clinic pagka nagkakasakit sya. Madalas siyang nilalagnat,” Jasmine said.

“Ngayon po nilalagnat, pagka po nararamdaman kong matamlay siya. Ang kaniyang mata matamlay. Pinupunasan ko na siya nang pinupunasan para hindi na siya uminit pa nang uminit pa,” she added.

Waste pickers in Rizal appeal for food, money as many

April 24, 2020

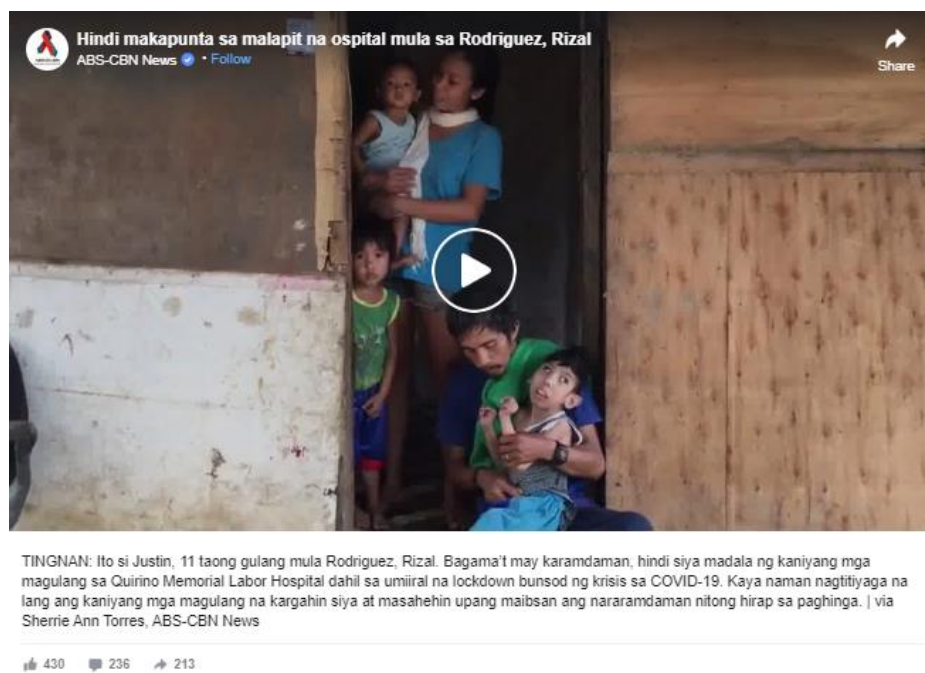
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Justin became paralyzed after experiencing high fever and can only sleep while being carried by his parents due to too much phlegm.

“Hindi po siya nadadala sa health center. Kasi pagka siya po sinusumpong ng pneumonia niya, sa ospital po talaga siya. Kailangan po talaga siyang i-admit. Sa ano po siya naa-admit madalas sa Quirino Labor (hospital in Quezon City). Wala kaming sasakyan, maglalakad kami papunta doon,” Jasmine said.



Justin, she said, needs daily milk and medicine supply.

Seeing her children suffer, all she could tell them is "pasensiya na lang," an emotional Jasmine shared.

“Minsan umiiyak na lang ako ng hindi ko pinapakita sa kanila para hindi nila isipin na mahina kami,” she added.

There were many times when Jasmine and her partner Jose would just watch their children eat whatever they have for the day. During lucky days, they eat sardines from relief packs.

From what used to be three meals a day, they do everything to see their children have whatever is possible for breakfast and dinner.

“Kami tiis, mahalaga sa amin sila kumakain eh...basta makatawid lang maghapon,” she said.

Despite all these, Jasmine said she would continue following the enhanced community quarantine order to also help government arrest the effects of COVID-19.

She said it's difficult to complain these days as many like them are suffering due to the pandemic.

She keeps on praying for COVID-19 to disappear so that her husband could already resume his work as a scavenger, Jasmine said.

“Sana matanggal na 'yung sakit na 'yan para makabalik na sa dating buhay. Wala nang umiiyak kada umaga, nanghihingi ng gatas. Siyempre masakit sa amin 'yun eh. Kasi 'yun nga magkasakit 'yung panganay namin mahirap tanggapin,” Jasmine said.

“Sana lang kung dadating na tulong sa amin, 'yung sapat. Dahil hindi po tayo makapaghanap-buhay,” she said.

According to Jasmine, what they need most is cash assistance as food aid that reached them were also insufficient.

Just beside Jasmine's shanty is her sister Jenny Lyn who has seven children, including triplets.

According to Jenny Lyn, their main concern is also feeding their children now that her husband Ronnilo cannot work as a scavenger.

While thankful for the food aid they received in March, she said 4 kilos of rice and 4 canned goods cannot last for one week.

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Residents living near the landfill in Barangay San Isidro, Rodriguez, Rizal fetch water near a ravine. *Mark Damayo, ABS-CBN News*

The rice that they received they turned into porridge to ensure that they have something to eat for the next few days.

For countless times, they came to the point of almost asking for alms just to feed their children.

“Talagang kung kani-kanino na lang kami lumalapit, magkaroon lang. lalo na dito sa tatlo (triplets). Hindi talaga puwedeng wala kaming mapakain,” Jenny Lyn shared.

“Minsan hindi na ako makakilos. Nandiyan na lang ako sa upuan, nag-iisip kung anong gagawin. Kahit ano namang isip, wala ring magagawa. Naghihintay na lang,” she added.

While on lockdown, Ronilo volunteers to guard their barangay or participate in the village’s repacking center, hoping that he could bring home some food like noodles or instant coffee.

An extension of the lockdown, Jenny Lyn said, would be a “big blow” to poor families like them. The enhanced community quarantine in Luzon is set to lapse on April 30, but the President is expected to announce Thursday evening whether this would be lifted by that date.

If the President declares another extension of the lockdown, Jenny Lyn said they would still abide.

“Handa kaming magtiyaga kahit na hirap. Kasi 'yun lang din naman ang magagawa namin. Ang sumunod... hindi kami nawawalan ng pag-asa, matatapos din 'yun,” she said.

Ronilo, for his part, said what’s more difficult for him is seeing his family suffer amid the lockdown.

“Sa mahal nating presidente, hihingi po sana ako sa inyo ng tulong para po sa aking mga anak. Lalo na po at mahaba pa ang lockdown, wala na po akong maipakain sa kanila. Nagbo-volunteer po akong makatulong... kung sino po ang may bukang puso, naiintindihan po ang gaming kalagayan... kapos din po ako sa pinag-aralan... sana matulungan po kami,” an emotional Ronilo appealed.

“Hindi po kami lalabas ng aming bahay tulad po ng kaniyang sinabi,” he added.

What they need most, he said, is food.

There are times where all he could feed his children these days is 3-in-1 instant coffee, without rice.

“Pagka nagbo-volunteer ako, sasabihin sa akin ng kasama ko ‘pare marami kang anak, dalhin mo tong great taste white’. 'Yun lang po ang pinapainom namin 'pag naubos na 'yung gatas... kasi iyak nang iyak wala naman kaming pambili ng gatas, dahil bawal mangalahig,” he said.

The landfill area in Barangay San Isidro remains free from coronavirus, Hernandez said. It has been a challenge, however, to support the needs of an estimated 118,000 residents in the barangay, where 60 to 70 percent are indigent families.

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Barangay San Isidro has the second biggest population in Rodriguez, Rizal, and majority of them are the so-called relocatees, or families relocated from another area.

But the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) will only be covering 13,586 families under the social amelioration program subsidy, barangay officials said. Under the program, poor families may get P5,000 to P8,000 in cash aid for two months.

According to Hernandez, the barangay chairman, she has been informed that the fund was already downloaded by the DSWD to the Rodriguez local government. But the local social welfare department has decided to prioritize distributing the funds to smaller villages first before the share of the two largest barangays in the municipality, specifically San Jose and San Isidro. She feared an extension of the lockdown would bring graver effects to their communities.

“Talaga pong hindi madali, napakahirap po ng sitwasyon ngayon sa COVID,” Hernandez said.

She also said she would continue to appeal to their local officials and the DSWD to consider covering all their communities who are all in need of assistance.

Her appeal to the national government: support poor families in her barangay steadily so they would survive the impact of the COVID-19 crisis.

“Hindi naman po sapat ang pagbibigay ng bigas, ng canned goods lalo na sa malalaking pamilya... Kung ano po ang puwede pang maitulong after ng COVID, kasi 'yun po ang pinakamahirap sa lahat... ano po puwede nilang pagkakitaan,” she said.

# Priest points to environmental destruction as cause of pandemic

Published April 23, 2020, 10:13 AM

By **Christina Hermoso**

“We must look at environmental destruction as the root cause of the global pandemic,” a Catholic Church leader said.



Fr. Edwin Gariguez (CBCP/ MANILA BULLETIN)

In his message for Earth Day, Rev. Fr. Edwin Gariguez, executive secretary of Caritas Philippines, the priest stressed the relationship between environmental degradation and the corona virus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. “We must look at environmental destruction as the root cause of the global pandemic,” Gariguez said in a Catholic Bishops’ Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) News post.

“The pandemic not only calls for a deep social and structural conversion but a very intimate ecological conversion. The fight against disease outbreaks in the future will require a change in our ways toward the environment,” the priest stressed.

Countries, including the Philippines, observed Earth Day on April 22, through online activities that call for environmental protection and preservation as well as awareness on environmental destruction including climate change.

Gariguez said, the occurrence of another pandemic in the future is possible if man continues to abuse the environment.

“Our fight against the COVID-19 pandemic is in the hands of all of us but to prevent more pandemics and crises in the future will depend on how we take care of our common home,” he said.

Gariguez cited several human activities that violate the environment. These include, among others, how humans take wildlife out of their natural habitats and exploit finite resources. Equally destructive, he said, are activities such as mining, coal projects, and large-scale logging that destroy biodiversity.

The Church leader urged the public to act now and help protect and preserve the environment for future generations.

ON EARTH DAY

# Catholic bishop asks big banks: Stop funding coal-fired power plants

Published April 23, 2020 9:50am

Archdiocese of Manila apostolic administrator Bishop Broderick Pabillo on Wednesday—observed worldwide as Earth Day—called on the country's big banks to stop funding coal-fired thermal plants in the Philippines.

In his message on Earth Day, Pabillo said that while governments, civil society, members of the private sector, and other stakeholders play a part in ending the reign of this dirty, destructive, and non-renewable energy source, banks and other financial institutions are in "most unique position" to drastically create meaningful change" in the coal energy regime.

In the past, he said, two of the biggest banks in the country "chose to use their financial power to sustain the lifeline of the coal industry instead of cutting it off."

He said, "From 2017 to the third quarter of 2019, thirteen Philippine banks provided over P319 million worth of financial services to coal developers. The Philippines' two largest local banks, have made the biggest contribution.

Taking off from the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines' (CBCP) Pastoral Letter on Ecology, Pabillo pointed out in his message that "the environment is groaning in pain" due to our destructive economic activities.

Likewise, he said, "The cause of the coronavirus pandemic has been linked by many experts to the disturbance of wildlife, as well as different forms of environmental exploitation -- all of which point to the failure to protect our Common Home as lovingly as it was created."

While Filipinos are in a lockdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and are breathing relatively fresher air due to the significant halt of the engines economic activities, Pabillo asked the faithful to pray for the poor and vulnerable communities living near and around coal-fired power plants.

Coal's poison continues to burden these families, even as decades of exposure have already severely damaged their health and have now rendered them as among those most vulnerable to COVID-19.

"There is much talk today of what must be done not only to immediately respond to the problems that the coronavirus has brought upon us, but we must also ensure that decisions made today will help us move towards a future that is better for all. —LBG, GMA News

# BARMM residents told to protect nature, do backyard farming

By Albashir Saiden April 23, 2020, 9:39 am



Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao executive secretary Abdulraof Macacua, concurrent minister of the Ministry of Environment, Natural Resources, and Energy (Photo by BPI-BARMM)

**COTABATO CITY** – Amid the global pandemic, protecting the environment, and preserving nature should continue, an official of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) said Wednesday.

"While our utmost priority now is to help the national government in flattening the curve and preventing the spread of the Covid-19 virus, we should not ignore our duty in preserving Mother Earth," said Minister Abdulraof Macacua of BARMM's Ministry of Environment, Natural Resources, and Energy (MENRE) and concurrent regional executive secretary.

Over the past several weeks, MENRE-BARMM has been promoting the "Kayod sa Bangsamoro" program that encourages the public to engage in backyard farming.

The program aims to provide "survival" gardens that promote food sustainability especially in these times when most areas are on lockdown to curb the spread of the coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-10).

The so-called "palaw" or forest rangers composed mostly of former Moro Islamic Liberation Front members are also at the forefront of implementing such initiatives by coordinating with local government units in ensuring that environmental sanitation activities are in place, especially with several relief programs taking place.

Despite the pandemic, the BARMM on Wednesday joined the rest of the country and the world in celebrating Earth Day this year.

Macacua urged communities under quarantine to protect the environment by practicing inventory of plastic use in offices and at home, proper use of energy, and the use of eco-friendly bags when going to the market.

"In a way, this crisis has revealed to us that pollution and other environmental hazards can be avoided if we have enough political will to do so," he said. (PNA)

# BARMM observes Earth Day, calls for environment protection

Published April 23, 2020, 10:16 AM

By **Ali Macabalang**

**COTABATO CITY** -The Bangsamoro autonomous government observed on Wednesday Earth Day and renewed its advocacy for environmental preservation and promotion of public awareness on natural ecology in tandem with agricultural productivity amid the prevailing coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic.



Photo courtesy of facebook.com/samwel.hassan

BARMM Executive Secretary and Environment Minister Abdulraof Macacua led Earth Day observance on Wednesday in Cotabato City. (File Photo)

“While our priority now is to help the national government in flattening the curve and preventing the spread of the COVID-19 virus, we cannot sideline our duty in preserving Mother Earth,” Bangsamoro Executive Secretary Abdulraof Macacua said in a virtual press conference on the observance of Earth Day.

Earth Day is an annual event celebrated around the world every April 22 to demonstrate support for environmental protection. First celebrated in 1970, it now includes events coordinated globally by the Earth Day Network in more than 193 countries.

The COVID-19 crisis “has revealed (to) us that pollution and other environmental hazards can be avoided if we have cohesion and the political will to do so,” said Macacua, who is concurrent Minister of Environment, Natural Resources, and Energy (MENRE).

The Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM), which officially turned one year old last March 29, covers Maguindanao, Lanao del Sur, Basilan, Sulu and Tawi-Tawi provinces, the cities of Cotabato, Marawi and Lamitan, and 63 barangays in North Cotabato.

BARMM has two major lakes — Lanao and Dapao — in Lanao del Sur, major rivers and marshes in Maguindanao, and vast forest covers as well as rich aqua-marine resources in Basilan, Sulu, and Tawi-Tawi.

Macacua called for intensified BARMM collaboration with other regions on rivers’ protection, on one hand, and with the national government on preservation of lakes. The management and supervision of lakes in BARMM are still vested with the national government.

While the BARMM bureaucracy is still in its transition and adjustment period, Macacua said his ministry’s skeletal workforce “will not falter in services to Mother Earth.”

He cited as an example the agency’s infant “Kayod Ka Bangsamoro” program which taps forest rangers in opening “survival gardens” in denuded lands in preparation for possible food supply shortage in case of a prolonged COVID-19 crisis.

“Our Palaw Rangers (Forest Rangers) have also been working closely with our local government units in making sure that our environment sanitation activities are in place, especially with several relief programs taking place,” he added.

Macacua urged other BARMM ministries and offices, civil society organizations, and the entire Bangsamoro people to continuously take part in environmental sustainability programs.

“We have only one Mother Earth,” he said.



# A culture of care for nature

By [Gab Meija](#)

April 24, 2020

ABOUT 300 scientists, conservationists, thought leaders and organization heads across the country are urging our present and future leaders to prioritize the protection and conservation of nature in the Philippines.

Every April 22, we collectively celebrate Earth Day around the world. This year, on its 50th anniversary, leaders of our country have written an open letter declaring a leadership that nurtures nature with new ways of business that prioritizes the planet and its people rather than profit; educational systems and media that are geared toward a culture of caring; and a more aggressive enforcement of our environmental laws.

Our lives as Filipinos have always been shaped and intertwined with the forces of nature. From typhoons like “Yolanda” (“international name: “Haiyan”) that have wreaked havoc on our coastal communities, to the continually occurring landslides due to deforestation of mountains in the Cordillera and the Sierra Madre ranges. But as we live today in such an unprecedented and uncertain time, we face a far more insidious threat — the coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19) pandemic that has halted the world as we know it. But it is in this time of great adversity when we must realize that we have to act urgently as lives and nature are placed in the stake of our inaction and indifference, the ending of which we could ultimately change, depending on what we do today.



So, with different leaders standing together from across the nation, we speak out and speak louder for a culture of care for nature. As environmental leader and executive director Nella Lomotan of Eco Explorations, a nature-based travel group, put it:

“The Philippines is considered as one of the 18 mega-biodiverse countries in the world. Let that sink in. What are you doing to protect our natural treasures and all forms of life in the Philippines? No matter what sector and industry you are in, employee or owner, are you taking an active solution in the preservation of our natural resources? If you do not have an answer, start reflecting now.”

There is no other time for us to think about the actions we are making for our environment in the Philippines that will ultimately shape the future we want to see in the coming years. We want to give hope for the future and a voice for us Filipinos today. And with this, I give this voice to Ann Dumaliang, founder of Masungi Georeserve, who has helped in pushing this urgent call;

“My hope is that we seize the devastation that this health crisis has already brought us and use it to reevaluate our priorities and approaches as a society. As a friend from the National Geographic Society has said, ‘normal’ brought us to this. We need to think of a new normal founded in science and planetary health, and we need to do it fast. We know that this crisis is rooted in our disregard for planetary boundaries and carrying capacities, our frenzied pillage of the very ecosystems we rely on, and our hardheadedness in coming to terms with the

fact that we, our neighborhoods and cities are part of the natural world. How can we make nature a priority in our national agenda? How can we heal, not just Covid-19, but also our ecological amnesia? Which things truly are essential? How can we reshape sectors and industries to play their role in conservation and sustainability? My hope for the Philippines, our dear mega-diverse country, is that it soon wakes up to the truth that nature isn't just connected to us, it is also our shared home and one of our greatest opportunities as a nation. Only then can we be ready and competitive enough as a country to take our place in the global stage.”

Earth Day should be for everyone every single day of our lives!

# Sunog sumiklab sa bundok sa Aklan

Cherry Palma, ABS-CBN News

Posted at Apr 23 2020 02:45 PM



Mahigit 20 oras nang nasusunog ang bundok na bahagi ng ilang barangay sa bayan ng Malay, Aklan. *Kuha ni Ritchel Casidsid*

MALAY, Aklan - Mahigit 20 oras nang nasusunog ang bundok na sakop ng ilang barangay sa bayan ng Malay, Aklan, na nagsimula Miyerkoles ng hapon.

Nagsimula sa Barangay Cogon ang sunog at kumalat sa mga katabing barangay ng Cubay Sur, Balusbos at Nabaoy, ayon kay Sr. Insp. Lorna Parcellano, fire marshal ng Malay Fire Station.

Naglagay na ang mga awtoridad ng fire line sa bundok sa pamamagitan ng pagtabas ng mga damo para hindi na kumalat ang apoy, ayon kay Parcellano.

Dagdag niya, nahirapan silang abutin ang sunog dahil matarik ang daan.

"Dahil sa sobrang init ng panahon, posibleng biglang masunog ang mga tanim," aniya.

Sa ngayon, maliit na bahagi na lang ang may apoy ngunit balot pa rin ng usok ang bundok.

Wala namang nai-ulat na kabahayang nadamay sa sunog.

# Taal remains on Alert Level 1, Phivolcs says recent tremors part of volcano's 'day-to-day seismic activity'

Published April 23, 2020, 3:48 PM

By **Alexandria San Juan**

Alert Level 1 remains in place over Taal Volcano on April 23, Thursday, despite a series of minor earthquakes felt in the province of Batangas, the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs) said.



The main crater of the Taal Volcano is seen during an aerial survey done by government officials, more than a week after the eruption of Taal Volcano in Batangas. (Mark Balmores / MANILA BULLETIN)

According to Phivolcs, at least 23 earthquakes with a magnitude range of 1.2 to 3.7 were recorded in Mabini, Batangas and adjacent areas of Balayan Bay on April 22 by the Philippine Seismic Network (PSN).

The largest of these events, Phivolcs said, occurred at 11:19 a.m. and was felt at Intensity III in Mabini; Intensity II in Taal and Lemery; and Intensity I in Agoncillo, Batangas province.

In a statement, Phivolcs pointed out that these tremors were categorized under a new classification of earthquakes called "volcano-tectonic," which the agency said "should not be interpreted by default as being related to the renewal of magmatic unrest; rather, day-to-day seismic activity in Taal Volcano."

Phivolcs described volcano-tectonic earthquakes as quakes associated with failure or breakage of rock material along faults and fractures beneath active volcanoes.

"The mechanism that produces tectonic earthquakes is similar, although the root causes are different. Volcano-tectonic earthquakes are normally triggered by excess heat and pressure from, or adjustment of, the crust around a magmatic body beneath the volcano, whereas purely tectonic earthquakes are driven by regional tectonic plate motion," the agency added.

Other earthquakes can be classified as "tectonic," which is produced by sudden movement along faults and plate boundaries, or "volcanic," which is caused by the movement of magma or magmatic fluids or rock-fracturing beneath volcanoes.

Meanwhile, Phivolcs explained that at Alert Level 1, sudden steam-driven or phreatic explosions, volcanic earthquakes, minor ashfall, and lethal accumulations or expulsions of volcanic gas can occur and threaten areas within the Taal Volcano Island.

With this, the bureau reiterates its strong recommendation that entry into the volcano, which is a permanent danger zone, especially within the vicinities of the Main Crater and the Daang Kastila fissure, must remain "strictly prohibited."

Local government units are also advised to continuously assess previously evacuated barangays around Taal Lake for damages and road accessibilities, and to strengthen preparedness, contingency, and communication measures in case of renewed unrest.

The public is also urged to observe precautions due to ground displacement across fissures, possible ashfall, and minor earthquakes.

Source: <https://news.mb.com.ph/2020/04/23/taal-remains-on-alert-level-1-phivolcs-says-recent-tremors-part-of-volcanos-day-to-day-seismic-activity/>

## Taal stays at Alert Level 1 -- Phivolcs

*posted* April 23, 2020 at 11:00 pm

by [Rio N. Araja](#)

Alert Level 1 has been maintained at Taal Volcano in Batangas, according to the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology.

“(The) Department of Science and Technology-PHIVOLCS reminds the public that at Alert Level 1, sudden steam-driven or phreatic explosions, volcanic earthquakes, minor ash fall and lethal accumulations or expulsion of volcanic gas can occur and threaten areas within the Taal Volcano island,” it said.

At least 23 earthquakes struck the towns of Bauan, Mabini, Lemery, Agoncillo and San Nicolas in Batangas on April 22.

Taal Volcano erupted three months ago, displacing over 300,000 families in Batangas, Cavite and other nearby provinces. Rio N. Araja

PHIVOLCS chief Renato Solidum said earthquakes were felt due to the movement of the Mabini fault which was triggered by the nearby Taal caldera.

“The movement of the fault has something to do with the caldera,” he said.

# PH to defend sovereignty amid Covid-19 pandemic

By Azer Parrocha [April 23, 2020, 7:43 pm](#)



**MANILA** – The Philippines will continue to defend its sovereign rights at the West Philippine Sea (WPS) even as it grapples with the coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19) health crisis, Malacañang said on Thursday.

In a virtual presser, Presidential Spokesperson Harry Roque expressed support for the move of the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) to file two diplomatic protests against China for violating international law and Philippine sovereignty.

“Yung filing of diplomatic protest, *ginagawa po ‘yan basta kinakailangan gawin. Ke Covid, ke wala, tayo po ay mananatili na poprotektahan at itataguyod ang ating national territory at ang ating sovereign rights* (The filing of diplomatic protest, we will file them if they need to be filed. With or without Covid, we will continue to protect and defend our national territory and sovereign rights),” Roque said.

On Wednesday afternoon, Foreign Affairs Secretary Teodoro Locsin Jr. said the Philippines filed two protests against China for pointing a radar gun at a Philippine Navy ship and declaring a Philippine territory as part of Hainan province near the Philippine-occupied Rizal Reef in the Kalayaan Island Group on Feb. 17.

Roque defended the government’s move amid criticism questioning the timing of the filing of two diplomatic protests amid the pandemic.

“*Kung kinakailangan mag protesta gagawin po natin ‘yan* (If there is a need to file a protest, we will do that). We need to do the correct thing even if it’s unpopular. *Hindi po popularity contest kung anong dapat gawin ng DFA pagdating po sa usaping national territory* (What the DFA does when it comes to national territory should not be a popularity contest),” he said.

He said he has not heard of reports of reclamation in the disputed territories but expressed hope China would fulfill its promise to stop reclamation activities in the disputed waters.

“*Wala po akong nakalap na balita na gumagawa po sila ng mga bagong imprastruktura pero uulitin ko po na ang pangako po ng Tsina na tayo po ay umaasa na tutuparin nila, wala pong bagong reclamation na gagawin* (I have not heard of reports that they’re constructing new infrastructure but I am hopeful that China will fulfill its promise that there should be no further reclamation activities),” he said.

In 2016, the Permanent Court of Arbitration in the Hague, Netherlands invalidated China's nine-dash line, a geographical marker Beijing invoked to assert its extensive claims in the strategic waters.

The tribunal decided in favor of the Philippines’ arbitration case filed against China in 2013 but Beijing rejected it as null and void.

## No proof China violated international law

Roque, meanwhile, shrugged off Senator Risa Hontiveros' call asking China to shoulder Philippine expenses in responding to the Covid-19 pandemic.

He said there is "no proof" that China should be liable to pay reparations to injured states over its failure to promptly notify the world of the outbreak as required by the International Health Regulations of the World Health Organization (WHO).

*"Bilang isang propesor din ng international law, yung issue po ng state responsibility depende po 'yan kung mapapatunayan na merong nilabag na obligasyon ang Tsina either be it treaty-based or customary-based na obligasyon sa international law (As a professor of international law, the issue of state responsibility will depend on whether there is proof that China violated obligations either be it treaty-based or customary-based obligations in international law)," he said.*

Roque also pointed out that China would most likely reject any possible arbitration to take place concerning the Covid-19 pandemic.

*"Ang pinaka importanteng katanungan, sinong tribunal ang magdedesisyun ng ganyan dahil ang world court po, ang International Court of Justice, ay may hurisdiksyon lang 'yan sa mga bansa na tumanggap ng hurisdiksyon ng korteng ito at hindi po tinatanggap ng Tsina ang hurisdiksyon ng ICJ at hindi rin tingin ko papayag ang Tsina sa kahit na anong arbitration (The most important question is which tribunal would make the decision because the International Court of Justice only has jurisdiction in states that accept their jurisdiction and China doesn't. I think China would not allow any arbitration)," he said.*

Asked if the Philippines would hold China accountable for Covid-19, Roque said it would depend on whether there is enough evidence.

*"Depende kung merong napatunayang paglabag sa obligasyon ang Tsina. Sa ngayon po, wala pa akong nalalaman na paglabag ng obligason ng Tsina (It would depend on whether there is proof that China violated international obligations. At present, I do not know of any obligation violated by China)," he said.*

Hontiveros said China should pay the Philippines' Covid-19 response as reparation for the country's losses due to China's damage of Philippine reef ecosystems for over six years now, estimated at over PHP200 billion.

She said the money, which is past due, could go to government efforts in fighting the pandemic.

The Chinese Embassy, however, dismissed Hontiveros' statement as "ridiculously absurd and irresponsible" as China and the Philippines are both working to curb transmission of the highly-infectious disease. **(PNA)**



## Palace backs filing of protest vs China

[Christina Mendez](#) (The Philippine Star) - April 24, 2020 - 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — Malacañang supports the move of the foreign affairs department to file two diplomatic protests against China for pointing a radar gun at a Philippine Navy ship and declaring a Philippine territory as part of Hainan province.

"It is necessary for the government to protest against China's moves," said presidential spokesman Harry Roque Jr., regardless of President Duterte's pivot to Beijing since the start of his administration in 2016.

"We do it if it is necessary, with or without the COVID-19. We will continue to protect and push for the integrity of our national territory and our sovereign rights," Roque said.

He noted that the protest highlighted the Philippines' serious concern on China's move to establish the Paracel (Xisha) and Spratly (Nansha) in the South China Sea as districts under Sansha City.

He said China declared its commitment that it would not conduct any reclamation activities in the South China Sea.

Foreign Affairs Secretary Teodoro Locson Jr. said the contents of the diplomatic protests filed by the Philippines are "strictly confidential."

In a tweet yesterday, Locsin said he does not want to hear any comment from colleagues on the diplomatic notes.

"And colleagues. I don't want to hear any comment from any of them. Diplomacy is for top diplomats and heads of state only," Locsin said.

Former foreign affairs secretary Albert del Rosario also supported the filing of protests against China.

"We fully concur with the filing of diplomatic protests against China by the Secretary of Foreign Affairs covering the threats to a Philippine Navy ship and the declaration by China of Philippine territory as part of Hainan province in violation of international law," del Rosario said in a statement.



“We further condemn that China has predictably been relentless in exploiting the COVID-19 pandemic as it pursues its illegal and expansive claims in the (South China Sea) to the prejudice of Filipinos, the ASEAN states and the international community,” he said.

Meanwhile, an encroaching Chinese warship directly threatened a Philippine Navy (PN) patrol ship on maritime and sovereignty patrol in the West Philippine Sea, the Palawan-based Armed Forces of the Philippines-Western Command reported yesterday.

Wescom commander Vice Admiral Rene Medina said the “close maritime encounter” took place when a Chinese corvette was monitored by Filipino sailors to have directed its gun control director (GCD) at the PN vessel BRP Conrado Yap (PS39) while inside Philippine waters off the coast of Palawan last Feb. 17.

“The GCD can be used to designate and track targets and makes all the main guns ready to fire in under a second,” Medina said. – **With Pia Lee-Brago, Jaime Laude, Roel Pareno**

Wescom says Chinese warship readied guns vs PH

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# Wescom says Chinese warship readied guns vs PH Navy ship in PH territory

By: [Frances Mangosing](#) - Reporter / [@FMangosingINO](#)

[INQUIRER.net](#) / 12:43 PM April 23, 2020

MANILA, Philippines—A warship of the Chinese People’s Liberation Army (PLA) readied its guns for firing at a Philippine Navy ship near the Philippine-occupied Rizal (Commodore) Reef in the West Philippine Sea last February, according to a ranking Philippine military official on Thursday (April 23).

The Philippine Navy ship, BRP Conrado Yap (PS-39), was on a sovereignty patrol mission when it encountered the Chinese corvette, with bow No. 514, on Feb. 17, said Vice Admiral Rene Medina, Western Command (Wescom) chief.

The Philippine ship radioed the Chinese vessel and got this response: “The Chinese government has indisputable sovereignty over the South China Sea, its islands and its adjacent waters.” The Chinese vessel received another radio contact from the Philippine ship, instructing the Chinese ship to proceed directly to its next destination, Medina said. The Chinese vessel, however, repeated its response and maintained its course and speed.

Medina said the crew of the BRP Conrado Yap “visually observed” that the Chinese ship’s gun-firing mechanism was being aimed at the Philippine Navy vessel.

Medina described it as a “gun control director.” “This gun control director can be used to designate and track targets and make all the main guns ready to fire in under a second,” he said.

## No ESM

Although according to the Joint Task Force West, the BRP Conrado Yap does not have electronic means, called electronic support measures or ESM, to confirm that the Chinese vessel’s gun control director was readying guns for aiming and firing at the Philippine Navy ship, “the visual identification confirms this hostile intent.”

The Philippine Navy has previously tagged the BRP Conrado Yap as its “most powerful warship” to date.

The BRP Conrado Yap is a Pohang-class corvette donated by South Korea which entered service in the Philippine Navy only last year.

On the West Philippine Sea incident, the Chinese and Philippine vessels went on their respective voyages after the encounter. The Wescom reported it to higher authorities.

“This hostile act on the part of Chinese government and encroachment in the Philippines’ EEZ [exclusive economic zone] is perceived as a clear violation of international law and Philippine sovereignty,” Medina said.

He vowed that the Wescom, the military unit mainly in charge of the West Philippine Sea, would continue to protect Philippine sovereignty.

Medina said Wescom “will never be intimidated nor will we let our guards down in protecting the sovereignty and integrity of the Philippines.”

Wescom says Chinese warship readied guns vs PH

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He said his unit “will support any future capability upgrade of our ships patrolling our Philippine waters.”

The incident was one of the basis of two diplomatic protests filed by the Philippine government against Beijing on Wednesday (April 22).

The other basis of the diplomatic protest was China’s declaration of a section of the Philippine-claimed territory in the West Philippine Sea as part of Hainan province.

China recently announced that it had established two administrative units, akin to local governments, in the South China Sea as part of its latest move to establish full control of the disputed waters.

The actions were “both violations of international law and Philippine sovereignty,” said Foreign Affairs Secretary Teodoro Locsin Jr.

The 2016 decision by the United Nations-backed arbitral tribunal in the Hague ruled that Beijing’s claims have no basis and its South China Sea construction frenzy was illegal.

China in recent years had transformed reefs and islands into outposts fitted and equipped with harbors, airstrips, missile shelters, communications facilities which expanded its ability to monitor its and rivals’ activities in the South China Sea, which Beijing claims to almost entirely own.

The protest filed by the Philippines came as China has started using the coronavirus crisis for diplomacy by donating supplies and medical equipment.

*Edited by TSB*

# Chinese ship had 'hostile intent' in pointing radar gun at PH vessel: military

ABS-CBN News

Posted at Apr 23 2020 04:23 PM

MANILA - A Chinese warship had "hostile intent" when it pointed a radar gun at a Philippine Navy ship in February, the military said Thursday.

The incident was the subject of diplomatic protests Manila sent Beijing on Wednesday.

On Feb. 17, Philippine vessel BRP Conrado Yap (PS39) was on its way to Rizal Reef Detachment in the West Philippine Sea when it detected "a radar contact of a gray colored vessel," according to the Armed Forces' Western Command, tasked to protect the country's sovereignty in the disputed sea.

The West Philippine Sea is the country's exclusive economic zone in the South China Sea, which China claims in near entirety.

The Philippine ship identified the Chinese vessel as a small warship with bow number 514, equipped with a "gun control director" that can "track targets and makes all the main guns ready to fire in under a second."

"While PS39 does not have the electronic support measures to confirm that PLAN Gun Control Director was directed towards her, visual identification confirms this hostile intent," the WesCom said in a [statement](#).

"This hostile act on the part of [the] Chinese government and encroachment within the Philippines' EEZ is perceived as a clear violation of international law and Philippine sovereignty."

The WesCom said the Philippine ship issued a radio challenge to the vessel, which responded, "The Chinese government has imputable sovereignty over the South China Sea, its islands and its adjacent waters."

"PS39 again challenged the vessel and then instructed to proceed directly to its next destination. That vessel repeated its response and maintained her course and speed," it added.

Both vessels continued their respective voyage after the incident, according to WesCom, which vowed to "never be intimidated nor let our guards down in protecting the sovereignty and integrity of the Philippines."

It added that it would "support any future capability upgrade of our ships patrolling our Philippine waters."

Beijing claims nearly all of the resource-rich South China Sea and has rejected a UN-backed international tribunal ruling that favored the Philippines and invalidated China's sweeping claims in the disputed waters.

It has continued expansion in the South China Sea, recently establishing two administrative districts in the waters, even as the world was focused on responding to a pandemic of the coronavirus disease, which came from one of its cities.

## AFP: Chinese ship may have targeted Navy vessel at WPS

By **BusinessMirror**

-April 23, 2020

By Rene Acosta & Recto Mercene

It was the gun of a Chinese People's Liberation Army-Navy (PLAN) war ship that moved and was aimed at a Philippine Navy vessel while the latter was patrolling the country's maritime waters in the West Philippine Sea (WPS) last week, a Navy official said on Thursday.

The clarification was made by Armed Forces Western Command (Wescom) chief Vice Admiral Rene Medina following the revelation on Twitter of Foreign Affairs Secretary Teodoro Locsin Jr. that the government has filed diplomatic protests against China over the recent incident at the WPS.

Locsin said the diplomatic protests covered the "pointing of a radar gun at a Philippine Navy ship in PH waters" and "declaring parts of Philippine territory as part of Hainan province—both violations of international law & Philippine sovereignty."

When sought for a comment, Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana initially said he has no idea "what a radar gun is," and he would have to "ask the experts: Navy and PAF [Philippine Air Force]."

Later, he stated in separate statement released through Department of National Defense spokesman Arsenio "Popong" Andolong that he had already ordered Navy officials to provide him a detailed report about the incident, which as the Navy said, happened on April 17.

"I have instructed the Philippine Navy to give me a detailed briefing on the incident. As announced by Secretary Locsin, the Department of Foreign Affairs filed a diplomatic protest which was received by the Chinese embassy today, 22 April," Lorenzana said on Wednesday night.

Medina, while confirming the incident, said it was not a laser gun but the Gun Control Director (GCD) that was directed by the Chinese Navy ship against the BRP *Conrado Yap*, a refurbished corvette that the Navy has acquired from South Korea.

"The Western Command confirms that the incident happened on February 17, 2020, through the report received from the Joint Task Force West [JTFW] and as revealed by the Commanding Officer of BRP *Conrado Yap* [PS39]," he said.

According to Medina, the BRP *Conrado Yap* left Puerto Princesa City on February 15 to conduct territorial defense operations and sovereignty patrol at Malampaya Natural Gas to Power Project and at the Kalayaan Island Group in the WPS.

Two days later and while the warship was sailing on its way to the Rizal Reef detachment, the vessel detected a radar contact of a "gray colored vessel."

Citing the report of the Joint Task Force West, the BRP *Conrado Yap* was the first to issue radio challenge for which the Chinese Navy ship responded "the Chinese government has imputable sovereignty over the South China Sea, its islands and its adjacent waters."

"PS39 again challenged the vessel and then instructed to proceed directly to its next destination. That vessel repeated its response and maintained her course and speed," Medina said.

The Wescom commander said that PS39 was able to identify the Chinese ship as "PLAN Vessel bearing a bow number 514 [Corvette warship]."

AFP: Chinese ship may have targeted Navy vessel at

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“There, PS39 was able to visually observed that the Gun Control Director, an equipment that gives information in obtaining a fire control solution of said PLAN vessel was directed towards PS39,” Medina said.

“This Gun Control Director can be used to designate and track targets and makes all the main guns ready to fire in under a second,” he added.

The military commander said that “according to Joint Task Force West, while PS39 does not have the Electronic Support Measures [ESM] to confirm that PLAN Gun Control Director was directed towards her, visual identification confirms this hostile intent.”

“This hostile act on the part of Chinese government and encroachment within the Philippines’ EEZ [exclusive economic zone] is perceived as a clear violation of international law and Philippine sovereignty,” Medina said.

Medina said that after the incident, both vessels continued their respective voyage and the Wescom reported the incident to “higher headquarters.”

The hostile action taken by a Chinese corvette against the BRP *Conrado Yap* within the country’s territorial waters was just among the provocations carried out by China in the waters that it disputes against its neighbors followed by the sinking of a Vietnamese fishing boat by a Chinese vessel within Vietnam’s maritime waters and the tailing of a Malaysian research vessel within its waters by another Chinese vessel.

## Twin protests filed—Locsin

Foreign Affairs Secretary Teodoro Locsin Jr., late Wednesday afternoon confirmed that the Chinese embassy has received two diplomatic protests he filed.

“One, on the pointing of a radar gun at a Philippine Navy ship in Philippine waters and two, declaring parts of Philippine territory as part of Hainan province. Both are violations of international law and Philippine sovereignty,” Locsin said in his official Twitter account.

“At 5:17 p.m. today [Wednesday] the Chinese embassy received 2 diplomatic protests: 1. on the pointing of a radar gun at a Philippine Navy ship in PH waters and 2. declaring parts of Philippine territory as part of Hainan province—both violations of international law and Philippine sovereignty.”

Expecting the usual barrage of questions from the media to clarify what he said, Locsin said: “We worked on this the whole day. And that is all that will be said on it because diplomatic notes are strictly confidential between the two states parties. Period.”

“I expect that no one else in the government will comment on it because they are not competent to do it. Only the President himself can reveal these notes of his alter ego, the Secretary of Foreign Affairs and rule thereon,” Locsin said.

Following his tweet about the diplomatic protests he filed, Locsin said that “China created Nansha district under the jurisdiction of Sansha City, akin to something we already protested in 2012.”

“Old hat but bears repeating the protest,” he added.

In 2016, the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague dismissed as illegal China’s historical claim to the whole South China Sea (SCS), part of which is the Philippines’s West Philippine Sea.

Source: <https://businessmirror.com.ph/2020/04/23/afp-chinese-ship-may-have-targeted-navy-vessel-at-wps/>

# Congress must oppose Chinese incursions in West PH Sea – Bayan Muna

By: [Gabriel Pabico Lulu](#) - Reporter / [@GabrielLuluINQ](#)

[INQUIRER.net](#) / 08:20 PM April 23, 2020

MANILA, Philippines — Congress should take a stand against China’s latest aggressions in the West Philippine Sea, even as the Department of Foreign Affairs already filed diplomatic protests against Beijing hostile actions within Philippine territory.

Bayan Muna Rep. Carlos Zarate made this call on Thursday, stressing that the leadership of Congress could seek the support of the Asian Parliamentary Association (AIPO) and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) to denounce the Asian superpower’s expansion in the disputed region.

“As standing members of the [AIPO] and the [IPU], we should use these venues to gather international support to oppose Chinese expansionism and militarization of the West Philippine Sea,” he said in a statement.

“We may not win through military might but certainly we are strong in the legal, moral, and diplomatic arenas,” he added.

Earlier, Western Command (Wescom) chief Vice Admiral Rene Medina said the Navy’s ship BRP Conrado Yap (PS-39) was on a sovereignty patrol mission when it encountered the Chinese corvette, with a bow No. 514, on February 17.

After the Navy ship warned the Chinese vessel about its presence on Philippine waters, the foreign vessel replied by saying that “the Chinese government has indisputable sovereignty over the South China Sea, its islands and its adjacent waters”.

Medina said the crew of the BRP Conrado Yap “visually observed” that the [Chinese ship’s gun-firing mechanism was being aimed at the Philippine Navy vessel](#).

Zarate, who was present during a House hearing on the West Philippine Sea concerns before the Luzon-wide lockdown due to COVID-19 started, neither confirmed nor denied if the issue was tackled.

This revelation comes on the heels of [Beijing’s move to name two administrative units as part of Hainan province](#), which included islands within the Philippine territory. Both issues have been addressed by the Philippine government in their [diplomatic protests](#), which was filed Wednesday.

Previously, Zarate and Bayan Muna chair Neri Colmenares called on the government to participate in possible joint-border patrol operations with Vietnam, Malaysia, and Brunei — countries that also claims stakes in the contested maritime region, and which have voiced their opposition to China’s militarization of the resource-rich area.

Colmenares also scored Beijing for pushing its agenda while countries are focused on fighting the COVID-19 pandemic — which originated in China’s Wuhan City, Hubei province.

But aside from China, Zarate said that Asian countries should also watch out for other provocative actions, including those from the United States. Recently, [American and Australian warships were spotted in the South China Sea for joint sea drills](#).

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“Congress has the duty to look into the reported Chinese military build-up as well as the equally provocative actions of countries like the US with the end in view of defending our territory and EEZ (exclusive economic zone),” Zarate said.

“We should be at the forefront of finding ways to de-escalate tensions and demilitarize the region. We should also explore possible solutions that may require legislation or even diplomatic initiatives involving members of the legislative branches in the other claimant countries,” he added.

China and the Philippines have enjoyed renewed ties, largely due to President Rodrigo Duterte’s move to align with the Asian superpower and enforce an independent foreign policy.

However, critics have slammed the government’s alleged inaction on several issues and supposed problems that came with the Duterte administration’s cozy relationship with Beijing.

KGA



# DFA filing diplomatic protest vs China backed

By **Butch Fernandez**

-April 23, 2020



Senator Riza Hontiveros hailed the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) Thursday for its prompt response in lodging a diplomatic protest against China over the latest incident in the West Philippine Sea.

“I really welcome the diplomatic protest filed by the DFA on behalf of the Philippines against China dahil napakaseryoso talaga nitong tuloy-tuloy na pag-angkin ng Tsina sa mga bahagi lalo na eksklusibong bahagi ng ating bansa sa West Philippine Sea,” the Senator said, adding: “itong patuloy na aggression at militarization nila sa West Philippine Sea ay isang halimbawa ng ugali talaga ng isang bully.”

In a statement, the lawmaker lamented China’s “bullying” tactics, saying: “Whether (acting as) bully in the playground or bully in such international affairs, bullying is an unwanted aggressive behavior that is done to take advantage because of an imbalance of power.”

She acknowledged the importance of filing a diplomatic protest over a series of incidents in Kagitingan Reef or Fiery Cross reef amid reports that China plans to install a “military base” well within the West Philippine Sea.

Sen. Hontiveros notes this was why she is also keen on prodding the Philippine government to make China pay for “the destruction of our marine ecosystems in the West Philippine Sea, estimated to add up to P200-billion in the last six years and counting.”

The Senator added: “And since nakapaggawa na rin ng diplomatic protest ang DFA kaugnay nitong aggressive actions ng Tsina sa bahagi ng West Philippine Sea ay pwede na ring tumuntong doon sa pagsingil ng damages, damages sa ating reef and other marine ecosystems sa West Philippine Sea na ayon nga sa isang peer-reviewed study on the cost per hectare of reefs so may environmental valuation dito ay mga P33.1 billion per year.”

# Intl. Red Cross: Officials must plan ahead to ensure proper handling of COVID-19 dead

By [Pilar Manuel, CNN Philippines](#)

Published Apr 23, 2020 2:58:53 PM

Updated Apr 23, 2020 4:04:00 PM

**Metro Manila (CNN Philippines, April 23)** — With the coronavirus having led to mass fatalities, the International Committee of the Red Cross on Thursday urged authorities to plan and prepare ahead to ensure bodies are handled properly.

Failing to get ready for mass casualties risks burials in mass graves, leading to few records and little understanding of who died and where the body is taken, the international humanitarian institution said.

"[I]t's imperative that plans are made and, if needed, carried out to help lower the pain that families and broader society feel in the face of a high death toll," said Oran Finnegan, the head of the ICRC's forensics unit.

The institution is currently working on body management issues in regions around the world including Asia, Central and South America, the Eur-Asia region, and the Middle East and North Africa.

It noted that funeral homes and morgues in countries not affected by conflict have still gotten quickly overwhelmed with the number of COVID-19 deaths.

"In conflict zones, the situation could be even more dire due to limited capacity to properly handle high numbers of deaths," said the institution.

With this, ICRC recommended that authorities ensure the safety and well-being of people handling coronavirus fatalities are of utmost priority. "[H]ealth care workers and staff handling the dead must use appropriate personal protective gear," it said.

Officials must also ensure they have physical structures needed to store bodies and enough burial space.

"For a mourning family, this means having a specific burial place to visit," said Stephen Fonseca, ICRC's head of forensics in Africa.

The institution added that proper burial or cremation with identification and documentation must be observed to ensure respect for the deceased and their families. These must also be performed according to cultural and religious needs.

The ICRC reported that in some countries in Asia, the dead have been cremated against their religious beliefs and that of their families.

The humanitarian institution called on authorities to adopt or incorporate international guidelines that "allow both cremation and burial and permit the observing of religious rites and ceremonies as much as safely possible."

It also called for implementation of preventive measures especially in "detention facilities, refugee camps, and large city slums, including dispelling myths and ensuring preparedness to deal with a higher than normal number of deaths than current capacity can handle."

COVID-19 has killed over 183,000 people worldwide, with the Philippines registering 462 confirmed deaths.

# US slams China's climate record on Earth Day

**Published** April 23, 2020 8:23am

President Donald Trump's administration has pulled out of the Paris climate accord and slashed environmental regulations, but on Earth Day Wednesday it pointed the finger at China.

On the 50th anniversary of the international day of environmental awareness, the Trump administration indicated the steady decline in US carbon emissions over the past decade.

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo noted that China, which has surpassed the United States as the top polluter, does not expect its emissions to plateau until 2030.

China is "offsetting the progress of countries all around the world in reducing global emissions," Pompeo told reporters.

He called on UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, who issued an Earth Day call for climate action, to take notice.

"I would urge Secretary Guterres to make sure we have the data right -- the facts right -- about who is actually delivering on the things that we all value," Pompeo said.

Carbon emissions, blamed for rising temperatures, fell some two percent in the US last year due mostly to declining consumption of coal, one of the dirtiest forms of energy, according to scientific surveys.

The decline came despite Trump's campaign promises to revive the coal industry.

The administration has been chipping away at regulations and this month dealt a major blow by weakening rules set under former president Barack Obama that would have compelled automakers to reduce pollution.

Under Trump, who frequently denounces scientists, the United States is the only country out of the Paris climate accord, which was negotiated by Obama.

China points to its heavy investments in renewable energy aimed at improving its dangerous air quality and reducing carbon intensity, although like many emerging economies it argues that it cannot cut emissions yet.

Guterres in his message warned that climate change posed a major danger to the world even as it is facing the coronavirus pandemic.

"Greenhouse gases, just like viruses, do not respect national boundaries," Guterres said.

"We must act decisively to protect our planet from both the coronavirus and the existential threat of climate disruption," he said.

The United States has gone on the offensive against China on a number of fronts, accusing the Asian power of failing to halt the spread of the COVID-19 coronavirus that has killed more than 180,000 people.

Swedish teenage climate activist Greta Thunberg in an Earth Day message said that action was not ultimately up to governments or businesses.

"It will come from the best available science and public opinion," she wrote on Twitter. —**Agence France-Press**

Source: <https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/news/world/735233/us-slams-china-s-climate-record-on-earth-day/story/>



PHOTOGRAPH BY ROY PELOVELLO FOR THE DAILY TRIBUNE

INCREASED presence and activity of birds observed in many subdivisions in Metro Manila during the lockdown period.

# Lockdowns lead to cleaner air

Except for London, which registered a drop of nine percent of PM2.5 during the study period, all other cities included in the study posted double digit percentage drop in the quantity of the deadly particulates, with Delhi in India experiencing the biggest reduction at 60 percent

BY ROY PELOVELLO

The lockdown and other restrictions imposed by various governments arising from the coronavirus epidemic has resulted in a dramatic drop in air pollutants, particularly of dangerous fine particles, in 10 major cities of the world.

In a report released coinciding with the 50th anniversary of Earth Day, Swiss-based clean air technology firm reported that nine of 10 key global cities experienced PM2.5 particulate reductions from the same period in 2019.

PM2.5 refers to atmospheric particulate matter (PM) having a diameter of less than 2.5 micrometers. Particles in this category are very small that they can only be detected with an electron microscope.

The report compares measurements of the world's deadliest air pollutant, PM2.5, prior to and during the pandemic in 10 major global cities under lockdown: Delhi, London, Los

Angeles, Milan, Mumbai, New York City, Rome, São Paulo, Seoul and Wuhan.

Except for London, which registered a drop of nine percent of PM2.5 during the study period, all other cities included in the study posted double digit percentage drop in the quantity of the deadly particulates, with Delhi in India experiencing the biggest reduction at 60 percent.

Other highlights of the study showed the following:

- Cities with historically higher levels of PM2.5 pollution witnessed the most substantial drops, including Delhi (-60 percent), Seoul (-54 percent) and Wuhan (-44 percent).

- During Wuhan's 10-week lockdown, the city experienced its cleanest February and March air quality on record.

- Delhi's 'unhealthy' and worse rated hours plummeted from 68 percent in 2019 to 17 percent during the lockdown period.

- Los Angeles experienced its longest stretch of clean air on record meeting the WHO air quality guidelines.

The data used in the study is based on a 3-week period for each city during lockdown conditions, comparing them to the same time period in 2019, 2018, 2017 and 2016.

The 3-week was chosen for each city to reflect either the period when the most stringent lockdown measures were in place or, during longer lockdown periods coinciding with the peak of daily reported COVID-19 cases.

Meanwhile, another report noted that nature experts in Lebanon observed cleaner and clearer air filled with migratory birds as Beirut Remains under lockdown during the coronavirus pandemic.

**The 3-week was chosen for each city to reflect either the period when the most stringent lockdown measures were in place or, during longer lockdown periods coinciding with the peak of daily reported COVID-19 cases.**

Observations of similar nature were reported in the Philippines. For instance, citing posts in social media, a report earlier said the windmills in Pillilla, Rizal have become visible from the heart of Metro Manila and even up to San Pedro City, Laguna.

There were also observations of increased presence and activity of birds in the metropolis.

# In the Pacific, Covid-19 is changing the way we think about waste management

By [Anupma Jain](#)

April 23, 2020

The pandemic is producing more household waste and increased amounts of dangerous medical waste. We need to manage these changes for our immediate safety and for the long-term welfare of our communities.



Trash found on the Pacific islands. Waste management, particularly for medical waste during the Covid-19 period, is important in fragile island communities. Image: [Barakbro, CC BY-ND 2.0](#)

The Covid-19 pandemic requires that we think differently about waste management, including the way we dispose of medical waste. Recent stay-at-home orders and social distancing have increased the amount of household waste being produced.

If the waste management industry is unable to keep pace, Covid-19 could set back our efforts to reduce and eliminate single-use plastics and recycling waste.

In the Pacific, where communities often live on remote islands with minimal resources, stay-at-home orders and social distancing measures are also prevalent. However, because supply chains and home delivery systems for groceries are limited, many people visit markets for food.

Municipalities coordinate the collection of solid and municipal waste collection with the help of local private sector partners such as beverage and bottling companies.

**In addition to the dual challenges created by Covid-19 and natural hazards, it remains equally important to integrate the disease into existing and future waste management and recycling initiatives.**

Health facilities are responsible for sorting, treating and disposing of medical waste; however, many continue to face logistical, financial and capacity challenges in overall waste management.

Institutions, such as the Pacific Region Environment Programme, are working with development partners to strengthen existing medical waste management protocols in the region through investments in health facility infrastructure, training and capacity building of healthcare workers, and equipment for proper handling and disposal of waste.

During Covid-19, while medical waste management continues to be an important area for support, routine household municipal waste collection is also essential to maintain a sanitary and safe environment. With the recent onset of Tropical Cyclone Harold, timely collection and disposal of debris is critical to maintain a healthy environment.

In addition to the [dual challenges](#) created by Covid-19 and natural hazards, it remains equally important to integrate the disease into existing and future waste management and recycling initiatives.

Some of these initiatives, which are relevant to the Pacific and other in low-resource settings, include:

### ***Increase awareness by educating households on disposal of plastic gloves and masks***

Just like syringes, these items need proper handling and disposal for two reasons—items cannot be recycled with other plastics, and the risk of contamination should be minimised by waste collectors handling waste in the formal or informal sectors.

A study by [The New England Journal of Medicine](#) found that the virus could remain viable and infectious on surfaces, such as cardboard, plastics and steel, for more than 24 hours.

### ***Package municipal waste properly***

Regardless of whether your household waste goes in a bin or down a trash compactor, disposing of waste properly is in everyone's interest (i.e., by placing it in a bag and securing it tightly). Our health and environment depend on it.

Recent articles have mentioned the displacement of rodents due to a lack of food waste from closed restaurants. An unsafe and unsanitary environment could lead to other potential diseases, including those transmitted by rats such as salmonella and e. coli.

### ***Protect frontline workers who collect, transport and manage waste***

Personal protective equipment or gear (PPE), and regular sanitisation of vehicles and equipment is required.

In India, people celebrate neighborhood sanitation workers with garlands made from monetary notes (in Punjab) and flower petals (in Ambala). If frontline workers get sick, our trash will not get picked up. This is an essential service.

### ***Develop preparedness and response plans***

The preparedness plans of utilities, municipalities and urban service companies must develop their emergency preparedness and response plans.

Part of the plan should include the health of their workforce. Access to PPE is one thing. Others may include planning for multiple staffing shifts and providing shelter and meals for field workers.

### ***Recycle, recycle, recycle***

Manufacturers have shared the need for recovered material feedstock through several testimonials—recycling is important for manufacturing, the economy and the environment. The principles of minimising, sorting, reusing and recycling are important.

Recycling programs provide essential services yet are in danger of closure due reduced workforce, budgetary concerns, increased disease and hygiene fears, and potentially lower oil prices. It is imperative to keep the waste and recycling facilities operational. This includes continuing efforts to reduce single-use plastics.

### ***Increase awareness by educating households on washing of reusable bags***

What appears to be common sense, is not. A 2011 study by the University of Arizona and the Loma Linda University School of Public Health found that reusable tote bags harbor bacteria and viruses, including fecal coliform bacteria.

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The study emphasised the importance of educating consumers on proper care of reusable bags. A tote bag is still more environmentally friendly as it can be washed to be re-used and to reduce bacteria by more than 99.9%.

### ***Break down silos: Collaborate with health, energy and private sector infrastructure investment specialists***

Work to build and strengthen medical waste management and prepare pandemic protocols. Medical waste management should not be delinked from an overall health system strengthening approach and disposal managed through a resilient sanitation system.

Opportunities for [modernising medical waste capacity](#) should also be explored. For instance, outdated facilities such as on-site incinerators can be modernised to avoid the emission of toxic gases and generate clean energy from waste (e.g., plasma gasification).

While social distancing and fear could derail recycling and proper waste management efforts, there are ways to remain diligent and stay the course.

Whatever the new normal will look like, livable cities must be clean cities—we must continue to promote proper waste disposal and management to reduce pressures on existing landfill capacity and protect our marine life.

Once Covid-19 is long gone, we will still want our cities and oceans to be safe, healthy, sanitary and livable.

*Anupma Jain is Senior Urban Development Specialist at the Asian Development Bank's Pacific Department. This article is republished from the [ADB Blog](#).*

# A scuba diving group is making face masks out of recycled ocean plastic

By Alicia Lee, CNN

Published Apr 23, 2020 12:23:48 PM



(CNN) - In a win-win for sea animals and humans, a scuba diving group is turning plastic water bottles that once polluted oceans into face masks for people to protect themselves against the coronavirus.

The face masks are made by the Professional Association of Diving Instructors (PADI), in partnership with Rash'R, a company that sells eco-friendly active wear. Each reusable mask costs \$20.40 and comes with five replacement filters. The price reflects the cost it takes to make each mask, PADI says on its website.

"We are not profiting from this product," Lisa Nicklin, vice president of consumer marketing at PADI Worldwide told CNN. "We're very much a heart-and-soul organization. We care about the ocean and our diver community, so we wanted to be able to put our hands on our hearts and say that we're not profiting off this difficult time."

The masks, currently available for pre-order, come in five different designs based on sea animals such as whale sharks, manta rays and great white sharks. There is even one made to fit children ages 4-10.

With 15,000 masks already pre-ordered, PADI and Rash'R have had to quickly ramp up production to meet demand.

"We underestimated how popular they would be," Nicklin said. "I think (consumers) just felt that it was a great thing to do for the ocean while also buying something that they need."

Based on the number of current orders, the masks have helped remove and reuse 1,267 pounds of ocean waste, according to Nicklin.

While the US government advised against buying face masks early on in the pandemic, it now recommends that people wear face masks and coverings in public. Research has shown that the coronavirus can spread by talking and possibly breathing. That guidance also includes practicing social distancing as much as possible.

Buying reusable face masks like the ones PADI sells allows people to protect themselves while reserving the N95 respirator masks and surgical masks for the health care workers on the front lines of the pandemic, Nicklin says.



## Birds in paradise: Albania's flamingos flourish in virus lockdown

posted April 23, 2020 at 05:00 pm

by [AFP](#)

With tourists home, boats docked and factories silenced under a coronavirus lockdown, Albania's pink flamingos and curly pelicans are flourishing in the newfound tranquility of lagoons dotting the country's western coastline.



The coronavirus lockdown has brought a welcome reprieve for Albania's flamingos. AFP

Beating their pink and black-lined wings, a growing flock of thousands of flamingos have recently been soaring over and splashing in the glistening waters of Narta Lagoon, an important site for migratory birds on the Adriatic coast.

Their numbers have increased by nearly a third up to some 3,000 since January, according to park authorities.

With humans kept home under lockdown, "wildlife have regained all of their absolute rights and are enjoying all the freedoms of nature," Nexhip Hysolakoj, the chief of the protected area, told AFP from the shores of the placid lagoon.

In recent years unchecked urbanisation, a growing tourism footprint and industrial activity have threatened ecosystems in the protected zone surrounded by scrubby hills.

The coronavirus lockdown imposed on March 9, however, has brought a welcome reprieve.

Gone are the churning engines of fishing boats and the dozens of ferries and other vessels that normally depart daily from the nearby port of Vlora.

Car traffic on a busy road only 500 metres away has also been reduced, adding to the quiet and protecting land animals.

And nearby factories who have come under scrutiny for polluting the waters with waste, such as a leather processing plant and an olive oil producer, are dormant.

- 'Time for love' -

Conservationists hope the quiet will encourage the graceful birds to take the next step and mate.

Over the past three weeks, couples have been "moving a little further into the lagoon and are now starting courtship rituals," said Hysolakoj.

The author of Albania's first bird guide, Mirjan Topi, said the conditions are perfect for the flamingos to start reproducing in the Balkan state.

The birds typically "travel for a few years in the different regions of the Mediterranean until they reach sexual maturity", he said.

Those frolicking in the lagoon today hail from Africa, Italy, Greece, Spain and France, according to a park survey.

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"It's time for love," Odise Celoaliaj, an environmental expert, said with excitement as he peered through binoculars to watch a flock of flamingos take flight.

"It is enough to see how the flamingos are enjoying the tranquility, they feed and dance on their own free will."

- Pelican nests -

Just under 100 kilometres (60 miles) to the north, officials in Albania's largest lagoon in Divjaka National Park also hope the calm will be a boon to a growing population of Dalmatian pelicans.

The "near threatened" species are known as curly pelicans for the ruffle of feathers on top of their heads.

Some 85 mating pairs are nesting on a tiny island in the centre of the lagoon, which is separated from the Adriatic by a sandy bar.

The population has been increasing in recent years and has now reached its highest number in the last three decades, according to Ardian Koci, the park's director.

But the area is also threatened by a growing tourist industry, with some 50,000 visitors a month.

Today silence reigns with restaurants and hotels, including dozens of illegally constructed buildings, closed.

The pelicans, plus flamingos, bald eagles and Ibis falcinella are enjoying the peace, gathering on deserted pathways normally teeming with tourists.

Koci hopes health crisis that has caused almost 30 deaths in Albania will be an opportunity to rebalance tourism and the protection of biodiversity in Albania. ,

"I would be selfish to say that only nature counts," he said.

But "urgent measures are needed to put an end to the abuses that have so badly damaged ecosystems".

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## New York cats tested positive

posted April 24, 2020 at 01:10 am

by [AFP](#)

Two cats in New York have become the first pets in the United States to test positive for the new coronavirus.



The cats live in separate areas of New York state, America's COVID-19 epicenter, the Department of Agriculture, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said in a joint statement.

"Both had mild respiratory illness and are expected to make a full recovery," they said.

The owner of one of the cats had earlier tested positive for the virus before their feline pet started showing symptoms, according to the officials.

The other cat lives in a household where no members were confirmed to be ill with COVID-19.

"The virus may have been transmitted to this cat by mildly ill or asymptomatic household members or through contact with an infected person outside its home," said the statement.

Another cat in the same house has not shown signs of having the illness, the press release added.

The departments stressed that while public health officials are still studying COVID-19's impact on animals "there is no evidence that pets play a role in spreading the virus in the United States."

Health officials recommend that cats and dogs socially isolate while they learn more about how the virus infects pets.

The CDC advises that cats be kept indoors when possible to avoid them interacting with other animals or humans.

It says that dogs should be kept on a leash while outside and should avoid busy areas such as dog parks.

The CDC also advises people who might have COVID-19 to avoid physical contact with their pets.

Earlier this month, a tiger at New York's Bronx Zoo was confirmed to have been infected by a caretaker who was asymptomatic at the time.

In late March a pet cat was discovered infected with the novel coronavirus in Belgium, following similar cases in Hong Kong where two dogs tested positive.

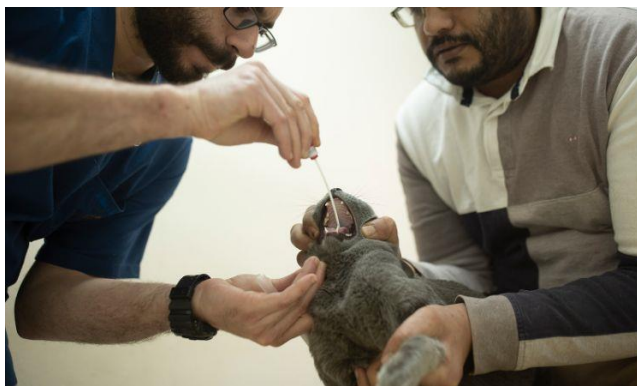
They were believed to have contracted the virus from the people they live with.

More than 15,000 people have been killed by COVID-19 in New York state.

# Two cats in New York are first pets known to have coronavirus in the US

By Arman Azad, CNN

Published Apr 23, 2020 5:01:46 AM



**(CNN)** — Two cats in New York have been infected with the novel coronavirus, federal officials announced Wednesday. Both had mild respiratory symptoms and are expected to make a full recovery.

"These are the first pets in the United States to test positive," the US Department of Agriculture said Wednesday in a joint statement with the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The agencies emphasized that there is no evidence pets play a role in spreading coronavirus in the United States. "There is no justification in taking measures against companion animals that may compromise their welfare," they said.

The two cats were tested after they showed respiratory symptoms, according to the agencies, and they join the ranks of a lion and a tiger in New York who were previously confirmed to be infected.

A veterinarian tested the first house cat after it showed mild respiratory signs, but none of the humans in its household were confirmed to have the virus.

It's possible, officials said, that the cat was infected by somebody outside the home. Someone inside the house, with mild or no symptoms, could have also transmitted the virus.

The second cat, in a separate area of New York, was also tested after it showed signs of respiratory illness. The owner of that cat tested positive for Covid-19 before the cat became ill, but another cat in the household has shown no signs of illness.

## Social distancing for cats and dogs, too

Officials are still learning more about coronavirus and pets, but the CDC is recommending that people limit interactions between their pets and people or animals outside the household.

Cats should be kept indoors when possible, the CDC said, and dogs should be walked on a leash, maintaining at least six feet from other people and animals.

The agency said dogs should also avoid public places where a large number of people and animals gather, such as dog parks.

If someone is ill with Covid-19 -- whether suspected or confirmed -- officials recommend having another member of the household care for pets.

If that's not possible, people should wear cloth face coverings around animals, making sure to wash their hands before and after any interactions.

And when people are sick, officials said they should refrain from petting or snuggling their pets -- and avoid being kissed or licked.

Source: <https://cnnphilippines.com/world/2020/4/23/Coronavirus-pet-cats.html>

# 8 big cats have tested positive for coronavirus at the Bronx Zoo

By Laura Dolan

Published Apr 23, 2020 3:12:55 PM



*A guard stands at the entrance to the Bronx Zoo on April 6 in New York City.*

**(CNN)** — Seven more big cats have coronavirus at the Bronx Zoo, in addition to a tiger that tested positive earlier this month, the Wildlife Conservation Society announced.

The nonprofit, which runs the famed zoo in New York City, said three tigers and three African lions began showing symptoms in early April, when the zoo announced a 4-year-old Malayan tiger named Nadia tested positive. The six big cats were tested and those results now show they are also infected. According to the zoo, they had been coughing.

One more tiger, who showed no symptoms, also tested positive.

The zoo said the cats were infected by a staff member who was positive but at the time showed no symptoms. In response, preventive measures are now in place for staff who are caring for cats across all four zoos run by the nonprofit in the state.

All four have been closed since mid-March, the nonprofit said.

The zoo said the animals are now behaving normally, eating well and are not coughing as much.



A horse is seen in a stable amid an outbreak of the African Horse Sickness (AHS), at Farm Mor Por stable in Khao Yai National Park, Nakhon Ratchasima, Thailand, April 20, 2020. *Jorge Silva, Reuters*

BEIJING - China's agriculture ministry said Thursday it would start taking samples from horses along its southern borders to check for African horse sickness after the deadly disease was detected in Thailand.

The highly infectious condition has killed more than 200 horses in Thailand - the first time it has appeared in Southeast Asia.

The disease that only affects horses, donkeys and other equine animals is endemic in sub-Saharan Africa.

China's Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs said there was a relatively high risk the disease would spread as the insects that carry it were already present in China and it had been detected less than 800 kilometers away from the border.

Agriculture departments in Yunnan province and Guangxi region will collect random samples from horses and other equine animals at border crossings and in areas where midges are active, the ministry said.

Thailand began vaccinating some 4,000 horses on Monday and has banned the import and export of horses, zebras and related animals.

# Dolphin dies after being abandoned in Japanese aquarium for 2 years

Published April 23, 2020, 12:01 PM

By **Gabriela Baron**

Two years after being abandoned inside a Japanese aquarium, the bottlenose dolphin called "Honey" died. Honey was left in a small pool at the Marine Park Aquarium in Choshi, east of Tokyo, Japan, along with 46 penguins and hundreds of fish and reptiles.



(Photo courtesy of Dolphin Project)

The park shut down in 2018 due to a decrease in visitors following the earthquake in 2011 and Fukushima nuclear crisis. The animals in the abandoned attraction were fed but otherwise left to fend for themselves as they spent two years in the same dirty water.

The Dolphin Project, an organization dedicated to the protection of wild and captive animals, made attempts to rescue Honey and the other animals but were not successful.

"In late February of this year, we reached out to our Japanese colleagues once again in attempts to purchase Honey in order that she could be retired in peace and dignity. These conversations ended in nearly March when it became apparent Honey was unlikely to survive," the Dolphin Project [said](#).

However, Honey's situation isn't unique.

"Dolphin Project has encountered dolphins in the United States, South Korea, Haiti, Indonesia, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Colombia, and Brazil whom were all in similar situations as Honey. In many instances, we were able to successfully rehabilitate and re-release these mammals," it added.

Honey was reportedly grabbed during one of Japan's controversial Taiji dive hunts in 2005.