



Cimatu 'outraged' by unlawful arrest of eight DENR employees in Puerto Princesa

Updated June 13, 2020, 2:00 PM

By Ellalyn De Vera-Ruiz

<https://news.mb.com.ph/2020/06/13/cimatu-outraged-by-unlawful-arrest-of-eight-denr-employees-in-puerto-princesa/>

Environment and Natural Resources Secretary Roy Cimatu was “outraged” by the unlawful arrest and detention of eight employees of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and two others while they were doing field work at Barangay Iwahig in Puerto Princesa City last June 10.



Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu
(DOT / MANILA BULLETIN FILE PHOTO)

“It is totally unacceptable that these environmental enforcers who continue to perform their duties despite the COVID-19 pandemic have to suffer violence at the hands of the police, who should be assisting them in their operations,” Cimatu said.

He has called for the swift resolution of the case involving the illegal arrest and police brutality suffered by its team at the hands of Puerto Princesa City Police Director Col. Marion Balonglong.

Cimatu, however, believes it was just an isolated case and would not affect the partnership between the DENR and the Philippine National Police (PNP) in enforcing environmental laws.



Cimatu 'outraged' by unlawful arrest of eight DENR employees in Puerto Princesa

“As much as I’m furious at what happened to my men, I hope this incident won’t affect the cordial relationship and collaborative partnership the DENR has with the PNP in the fight against environmental crime,” he said.

The DENR chief also said he has already brought the matter to Interior and Local Government Secretary Eduardo Año, who has supervisory authority over the PNP.

According to reports reaching the DENR Central Office in Quezon City, the DENR workers—together with a representative from the city government’s Bantay Bakawan and a barangay watchman—were conducting an investigation on the illegal occupation and massive mangrove cutting at Sitio Bucana when they were intercepted by Balonglong and his men.

The DENR employees, who are assigned at the Community Environment and Natural Resources Office in Puerto Princesa City, consisted of three foresters, four forest rangers and one forest protection officer.

At first, the DENR team thought Balonglong’s group was the police security they requested to assist them in their operation until they were suddenly subjected to full body search and told to lie down on the ground.

Balonglong allegedly kicked and punched at gunpoint one of the forest rangers, Roldan Alvarez, whom he accused of stealing galvanized iron sheets.

After the body search, they were supposedly ordered to board a police service vehicle which brought them to a vacant lot where they were again asked about their purpose of going to the mangrove site.

They were later brought to the police station in Barangay San Pedro where Community Environment and Natural Resources Officer Felizardo Cayatoc, who approved of the DENR operation, asked for their release.

Balonglong allegedly ordered their release after Cayatoc agreed to sign a document stating that the DENR personnel were in good mental and physical condition when they were turned over to him.



Following mauling incident of DENR employees Puerto Princesa police chief sacked

It was then when Balonglong allegedly kicked, punched and pointed a gun towards one of the forest rangers, identified as Roldan Alvarez, whom he accused of stealing galvanized iron sheets.

June 14, 2020 01:40 AM

By Kristina Maralit

<https://tribune.net.ph/index.php/2020/06/14/following-mauling-incident-of-denr-employees-puerto-princesa-police-chief-sacked/>



Philippine National Police (PNP) Chief PGen. Archie Gamboa on Saturday ordered the administrative relief of Puerto Princesa City Police director PCol. Marion Balonglong over his alleged involvement in the illegal arrest and mauling of Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) personnel last week.

Gamboa's directive to immediately relieve Balonglong from his post was coursed through PGen. Nicerio Obaob, PRO-MIMAROPA regional director, who gave assurance that all allegations against Balonglong will be thoroughly investigated based on evidence and verified accounts of witnesses.

"The allegations against Balonglong are serious and his relief is an administrative action to preclude any possibility of undue influence in the ongoing investigation," Gamboa said in his statement.

Reports reaching the DENR headquarters in Quezon City stated the Community Environment and Natural Resources Office (CENRO) personnel, along with a representative from the city government's Bantay Bakawan and a barangay watchman, were in the middle of conducting an investigation on the reported illegal occupation of land and cutting of mangrove trees in Sitio Bucana, Barangay Iwahig on 10 June when they were accosted by Balolong and his subordinates.

The group initially thought Balonglong's group was the police security they requested to assist them in the operation, but were caught off guard when they were subjected to a full body search and ordered to lie face down on the ground.



Following mauling incident of DENR employees Puerto Princesa police chief sacked

It was then when Balonglong allegedly kicked, punched and pointed a gun towards one of the forest rangers, identified as Roldan Alvarez, whom he accused of stealing galvanized iron sheets.

They were brought to the police station and released only after CENRO Officer Felizardo Cayatoc, who directed the DENR operation, was coerced into signing a document stating that those arrested were in good physical and mental condition upon their release.

Alvarez, who sustained wounds and bruises due to Balonglong's beating, went to the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) in Palawan to report the mauling.

DENR Secretary Frank Cimatú condemned the incident but said that it was an isolated case and that it should not affect the relationship between the DENR and the PNP.



Gamboa orders Puerto Princesa police chief relieved

Published June 13, 2020 3:17pm

<https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/news/regions/742496/gamboa-orders-puerto-princesa-police-chief-relieved/story/>

Philippine National Police chief Police General Archie Francisco Gamboa has ordered the administrative relief of the city director of Puerto Princesa City Police Office over the officer's alleged involvement in a maltreatment incident of Environment personnel and barangay officials.

A news release from the PNP national headquarters identified the official as Police Colonel Marion Balonglong.

“The allegations against Balonglong are serious and his relief is an administrative action to preclude any possibility of undue influence in the ongoing investigation,” the news release quoted Gamboa's written instructions on Balonglong.

PNP's information office said Gamboa's instructions were transmitted to PRO-MIMAROPA Regional Director, Police Brigadier General Nicerio Obaob, saying the relief order should immediately take effect.

Obaob assured the PNP chief that all allegations against Balonglong will be thoroughly investigated based on evidence and verified accounts of witnesses.

A report on a local news daily indicated that on June 10, Balonglong arrested some personnel of the Department of Environment of Natural Resources, and two barangay officials investigating the mangrove logging operations in Barangay Matahimik-Bucana.

According to the report, Balonglong, at gunpoint, ordered the victims to lie face down on the ground, and kicked them before having them arrested. — LBG, GMA News



Hepe ng Puerto Princesa police na pinaaresto ang mga empleyado ng DENR, balak kasuhan

Diana Lat, ABS-CBN News

Posted at Jun 13 2020 11:37 PM | Updated as of Jun 14 2020 02:14 AM

<https://news.abs-cbn.com/news/06/13/20/hepe-ng-puerto-princesa-police-na-pinaaresto-ang-mga-empleyado-ng-denr-balak-kasuhan>

PUERTO PRINCESA CITY—Maluha-luhang ikinuwento ng barangay tanod na si Steve Ferrer kung paano sila pinadapa at tinakot ng hepe ng Puerto Princesa City PNP Miyerkoles ng umaga.

Patapos na ang kanilang grupo sa ginawang assessment ng mga bakawan na pinasok ng informal settlers sa Sitio Bucana, Barangay Matahimik, nang dumating si Police Col. Marion Balonglong, kasama ang ilang mga pulis.

Kuwento ni Ferrer: “Bumaba siya sa patrol car, sumaludo pa ako, ‘Good morning, sir.’ Sabi niya, ‘Dapa, dapa!’ Sabay tutok ng kaniyang armas. Dumapa kami. Habang nakadapa kami, may hinahanap siyang pangalang (Roldan) Alvarez. Sinugod niya si Alvarez. Nu’ng [nahanap] niya si Alvarez, kung ano anong mga P.I. niya na . . . basta pini-i siya. ‘Magnanakaw ka! Saan mo dinala ‘yung yero ko? Hindi mo ba alam kung ilan ‘yun?’ ”

Matapos ang nasa umano’y pitong minutong pagpapadapa sa kanila ay nilipat sila sa nilinis na lote na inaangkin umano ni Balonglong.

Dito umano nagpatuloy ang pananakit ng dating hepe sa isang tauhan ng DENR-Community Environment and Natural Resources (CENRO).

“Sa isip-isip ko kung kami, doon kami dinatnan, ubos kami lahat. ‘Yun na talaga sa aking isip na nu’ng nakarating kami sa area niya at walang tao doon,” ani Ferrer.

Naka-full battle gear pa si Balonglong, dagdag ng tanod.

“Pagdating doon, itong si Roldan Alvarez pinaluhod niya doon. Sabi niya, ‘Lagay mo nga kamay mo sa batok.’ Nakaluhod. Naghanap siya ng posas, pinapoposasan. Sabi niya, ‘May itatanong ako sa ‘yo, isang mali, isang sipa o tadyak,’” kuwento ni Ferrer.

“Nakailang sipa na siya agad. Tapos ginaganoon-ganoon (dinuduro). ‘Sino ba’ng pinagyayabang mo? Sabi mo sa akin walang pulis-pulis sa iyo!’ Tapos P.I. na naman. Sabi niya (ni Alvarez), ‘Sir, wala akong alam sa sinasabi mo, kahit patayin mo ako.’ ”

Matapos silang kwestyunin ay dinala sila sa istasyon ng pulis at mag-aalas-singko ng hapon ay pinakawalan na rin sila matapos na kausapin ni officer-in-charge ng CENRO na si Felizardo Cayatoc si Balonglong.

Nitong Biyernes, naglabas ng official statement ang DENR ukol sa pangyayari.



Hepe ng Puerto Princesa police na pinaaresto ang mga empleyado ng DENR, balak kasuhan

Ayon kay Secretary Roy Cimatu: “It is totally unacceptable that these environmental enforcers who continue to perform their duties despite the COVID-19 pandemic have to suffer violence at the hands of the police, who should be assisting them in their operations.”

Pinag-aaralan na umano ng DENR kung ano ang mga kasong isasampa laban kay Balonglong.

Dagdag ni Henry Adornado, regional executive director ng DENR-MIMAROPA: “Of course, we wanted him to get the legal and possible consequences of his actions. Tinitingnan natin d’yan ‘yung kasong administratibo at kriminal.”

Biyernes ng hapon nang ibaba ng PNP-MIMAROPA ang direktibang i-relieve sa puwesto si Balonglong habang nagsasagawa ng imbestigasyon ang PNP.

“Relieved siya so, somebody else is replacing (him) there. Relieved siya dahil mayroong bago. (In) the meantime, dito lang muna sa regional headquarters kasi mayroon kaming investigation panel to look into the incident. And we will wait for the result of that panel,” paliwanag ni Police Brig. Gen. Nicerio Obaob, regional director PNP MIMAROPA.

Samantala, dismayado naman si PNP chief Police General Archie Gamboa sa insidente.

Sinubukang tawagan ng ABS-CBN News si Balonglong sa numerong laging ginagamit sa mga dating panayam sa kaniya pero sa pagkakataong ito, ayon sa lalaking sumagot ng tawag, wrong number umano ito.

Kahit na ni-relieve na sa puwesto si Balonglong ay gusto ni Ferrer na masibak ito sa serbisyo.

“Hindi sapat na ma-relieve, dapat sa kanya masibak siya sa serbisyo,” ani Ferrer.

Bukod sa kasong isasampa ng DENR kay Balonglong, sasampahan din ng kaso ang iba pang pumuwesto sa bakawan sa paglabag sa Presidential Decree 705 o Forestry Code of the Philippines.

Kinondena rin ng DENR Lawyers Guild Inc. ang ginawa ni Balonglong.

“This attack against our own DENR employees and environmental defenders should not be countenanced,” pahayag ng grupo.

“Making these abusers of power within the PNP and other law enforcement agencies accountable and getting rid of misfits will reinforce the rule of law to all.”



Puerto Princesa police chief relieved from post, faces probe on alleged maltreatment of DENR personnel

By [CNN Philippines Staff](#)

Published Jun 13, 2020 2:23:14 PM

<https://cnnphilippines.com/news/2020/6/13/marion-balonglong-relief-denr-allegations.html>

Metro Manila (CNN Philippines, June 13) — Puerto Princesa's top cop has been ordered on administrative leave following allegations that he was involved in the maltreatment of several personnel of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

Philippine National Police (PNP) Chief Archie Gamboa ordered the relief of Pcol. Marion Balonglong.

"The allegations against Balonglong are serious and his relief is an administrative action to preclude any possibility of undue influence in the ongoing investigation," said Gamboa in a statement released by the PNP.

Balonglong reportedly arrested and held at gunpoint eight employees of the DENR and two others, who were doing their field work at a coastal village at Barangay Iwahig in Puerto Princesa City, Palawan on June 10.

According to reports, the DENR personnel were conducting an investigation on the illegal occupation and massive mangrove cutting at Sitio Bucana when they were intercepted by Balonglong and his men.

Balonglong allegedly kicked and punched at gunpoint one of the forest rangers identified as Roldan Alvarez.

On Friday, [The DENR denounced](#) the reported illegal arrest and police brutality endured by a team of environmental law enforcers at the hands of Puerto Princesa City police on Wednesday.

PBGen Nicerio Obaob gave his assurance that the allegations against Balonglong would be thoroughly investigated.

In a separate statement, the DENR Lawyers Guild, Inc. said they strongly condemn the acts committed against the environment officials.

"It is unfortunate that the PNP is supposed to be the DENR's partner in enforcing environmental laws, and not its adversary or protector of violators of environmental laws. What is more distressing is that this incident happened on June 10, the DENR's 33rd anniversary," the statement said.



Strategic Communication
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Puerto Princesa police chief relieved for ‘maltreatment’ of DENR personnel

By: Consuelo Marquez - Reporter / @CMarquezINQ

INQUIRER.net / 04:52 PM June 13, 2020

<https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1291086/puerto-princesa-police-chief-relieved-for-maltreatment-of-denr-personnel>

MANILA, Philippines — The chief of Puerto Princesa City Police Office has been relieved from his post over the alleged “maltreatment” of personnel from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

PNP chief Gen. Archie Gamboa said he already ordered Mimaropa police director Brig. Gen. Nicerio Obaob to relieve Col. Marion Balonglong as Puerto Princesa police chief in Palawan.

“The allegations against Balonglong are serious and his relief is an administrative action to preclude any possibility of undue influence in the ongoing investigation,” Gamboa said in a statement Saturday.

Obaob, meanwhile, vowed to investigate the accusations against Balonglong.

Sought for more details on the allegations against Balonglong, PNP spokesman Brig. Gen. Bernard Banac said they are still probing the specifics of the report.



Puerto Princesa police head fired for harrassing DENR staff

By [Darwin Pesco](#)

June 14, 2020

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2020/06/14/news/regions/puerto-princesa-police-head-fired-for-harrassing-denr-staff/731619/>

THE Puerto Princesa City Police chief has been relieved from service on Saturday over alleged maltreatment and arrest of environment personnel.

Philippine National Police chief Gen. Archie Francisco Gamboa announced the administrative relief of Col. Marion Balonglong for his alleged involvement in a maltreatment incident of the Department of Environment and National Resources (DENR) personnel on Wednesday.

The DENR team was in Barangay Bucana-Matahimik to notify residents at the mangroves area to vacate to pave way for an investigation on the cutting of mangroves in the area.

But police arrested them and reportedly pointed their guns at the DENR personnel.

While relieved, Balonglong remains under investigation.

“The allegations against Balonglong are serious and his relief is an administrative action to preclude any possibility of undue influence in the ongoing investigation,” Gamboa said in a statement.

Gamboa instructed BGen. Nicerio Obaob, director of Police Regional Office-Mimaropa, to immediately effect the relief of Balonglong.

Moreover, Obaob assured Gamboa that all allegations against Balonglong would be “thoroughly investigated” based on evidence and verified accounts of witnesses.



Ilegal na pag-aresto, police brutality sa environmental law enforcers sa Palawan, kinondena ng DENR

June 13, 2020 @ 9:38 AM

<https://remate.ph/iligal-na-pag-aresto-police-brutality-sa-environmental-law-enforcers-sa-palawan-kinondena-ng-denr/>

Manila, Philippines – Kinondena ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) ang naiulat na ilegal na pag-aresto at police brutality na naranasan ng team ng environmental law enforcers sa kamay ng Puerto Princesa City police noong Miyerkoles.

Sinabi ni Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu na galit siya at nanghihingi ng “swift resolution of the case” kung saan kaugnay dito si Puerto Princesa City Police Director Col. Marion Balonglong at kanyang mga tauhan.

“It is totally unacceptable that these environmental enforcers who continue to perform their duties despite the COVID-19 pandemic have to suffer violence at the hands of the police, who should be assisting them in their operations,” ayon kay Cimatu sa isang pahayag.

Naiulat na inaresto at tinutukan ng baril ng Puerto Princesa City police director ang walong empleyado ng DENR at dalawang iba pa, na nagsasagawa ng field work sa coastal village sa Barangay Iwahig sa Puerto Princesa City, Palawan noong Hunyo 10.

Ayon sa mga ulat, nagsasagawa ng imbestigasyon ang mga tauhan ng DENR sa ilegal na paninirahan at pagpuputol ng mangrove o bakawan sa Sitio Bucana nang pigilan sila ni Balonglong at ng kanyang mga tauhan.

Sinasabing sinipa at pinagsusuntok ni Balonglong at tinutukan pa ng baril ang isa sa forest rangers na kinilalang si Roldan Alvarez.

Naulat ding dinala ang environmentalists sa police station sa Barangay San Pedro, at pinalaya kasunod ng pag-uusap ni Balonglong at Felizardo Cayatoc, isang officer ng Community Environment and Natural Resources Office (CENRO), na nag-apruba sa DENR operation.

Nang tanungin tungkol sa insidente, sinabi ni Philippine National Police spokesperson Brigadier General Bernard Banac na kumukuha pa ng opsiyal na ulat ang pulisya mula sa police regional office sa MIMAROPA tungkol sa kaso.

Ibinigay na ni Cimatu ang usapin kay Interior and Local Government Secretary Eduardo M. Año, na may supervisory authority sa PNP.

“As much as I’m furious at what happened to my men, I hope this incident won’t affect the cordial relationship and collaborative partnership the DENR has with the PNP in the fight against environmental crime,” ayon kay Cimatu. RNT/MM



Puerto Princesa police, pinasisibak ni Gamboa

June 13, 2020 @ 4:14 PM

<https://remate.ph/puerto-princesa-police-pinasisibak-ni-gamboa/>

Manila, Philippines – Iniutos ni Philippine National Police chief Police General Archie Francisco Gamboa ang administrative relief ng city director ng Puerto Princesa City Police Office dahil sa sinasabing pagkakasangkot ng opisyal sa pagmamaltrato sa environment personnel at mga opisyal ng barangay.

Sa isang news release mula sa PNP national headquarters, kinilala ang opisyal bilang si Police Colonel Marion Balonglong.

“The allegations against Balonglong are serious and his relief is an administrative action to preclude any possibility of undue influence in the ongoing investigation,” ayon sa news release.

Ayon sa information office, naibigay na ang utos ni Gamboa kay PRO-MIMAROPA Regional Director Police Brigadier General Nicerio Obaob, at sinabing epektibo ito kaagad.

Siniguro ni Obaob sa PNP chief na mabusising iimbestigahan ang lahat ng alegasyon laban kay Balonglong batay sa ebidensya at verified accounts ng mga saksi.

Ayon sa isang ulat sa pahayagan, Hunyo 10 nang arestuhin ni Balonglong ang ilang tauhan ng Department of Environment of Natural Resources, at dalawang opisyal ng barangay na nag-iimbestiga sa mangrove logging operations sa Barangay Matahimik-Bucana ng naturang lungsod.

Ayon din sa ulat, iniutos ni Balonglong sa mga biktima na dumapa at sinipa ang mga ito bago arestuhin. RNT/MM



JUNE 14, 2020 5:00AM

https://web.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=2034510836705660&id=163550757135020&fs=0&focus_composer=0&_rdc=1&_rd



News5

13 hrs ·

The DENR Lawyers Guild condemns the alleged unlawful arrest and detention made by the Philippine National Police to some of its forest protection officers on June 10. 📷 |: DENROfficial / Twitter

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DENR LAWYERS GUILD, INC. CONDEMNS THE UNLAWFUL ARREST, ILLEGAL DETENTION OF FOREST PROTECTION OFFICERS IN PUERTO PRINCESA, PALAWAN AND UNLAWFUL OCCUPATION OF FOREST AREAS

The DENR Lawyers Guild, Inc. (DLGI) strongly condemns the unlawful arrest and illegal detention of the employees of the DENR Community Environment and Natural Resources Office (CENRO) Puerto Princesa City, a representative from the City Government Bantay Bakawan, and an official from Brgy. Matahimik Resettlement Area, who were investigating the unlawful occupation and illegal cutting of mangrove trees at Sitio Bucana, Brgy. Iwahig, Puerto Princesa City, Palawan on June 10, 2020 by the members of the Philippine National Police (PNP).

The DENR Team was in the performance of its task in investigating the unlawful occupation of forestlands and cutting of mangrove trees when they were, without any warrant, accosted by the police officers led by Director of PNP Puerto Princesa Marion Balonglong. Despite introducing themselves as employees of the DENR and Puerto Princesa City Environmental and Natural Resources Office, the Team was subjected to full body search, ordered to drop on the ground for 10 minutes, and one of them received blows and kicks, and interrogated at gunpoint. The DENR Team was then brought to the PNP Station in Brgy. San Pedro where they were detained for hours before they were released.

It is unfortunate that the PNP is supposed to be the DENR's partner in enforcing environmental laws, and not its adversary or protector of violators of environmental laws. What is more distressing is that this incident happened on June 10, the DENR's 33rd Anniversary.

As an organization of lawyers advocating environmental justice, this attack against our own DENR employees and environmental defenders should not be countenanced. We call on the PNP to investigate the matter and cleanse its ranks of police law-breakers, unfitting to implement the laws. Making these abusers of power within the PNP and other law enforcement agencies accountable and getting rid of misfits will reinforce the rule of law to all. No one is above the law.

More than that, the DENR Lawyers Guild, Inc. extends its full support to DENR MIMAROPA Region and CENRO Puerto Princesa City to file the appropriate cases against those involved in the incident.

Today, as we celebrate the country's independence, we join the call to be truly independent and rid of corrupt officers. May we never cease to protect our Motherland and Mother Nature! Protection of the environment is a shared responsibility. Let us remain vigilant in protecting our home!

ATTY. CAMILO D. GARCIA
President
DENR Lawyers Guild Inc.

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Cimatu: Task force on track to complete Boracay rehab by May 2021

June 13, 2020

<https://ptvnews.ph/cimatu-task-force-on-track-to-complete-boracay-rehab-by-may-2021/>

The inter-agency task force led by Environment Secretary Roy A. Cimatu remains on track to complete the rehabilitation of Boracay by May next year despite the setback brought about by the island's closure as a preemptive measure against COVID-19.

Cimatu said the one-year extension given to the Boracay Inter-Agency Task Force (BIATF) was enough to achieve all its targets and lay the groundwork for a permanent government body that would manage the world-famous resort island.

President Rodrigo Roa Duterte recently issued Executive Order (EO) 115 extending the term of the Cimatu-chaired BIATF by one year or until May 2021. The task force was originally set to end on May 8, 2020, or two years after it was created under EO 53.

"The new EO gives us another year and directs us to finish the rehabilitation of Boracay," Cimatu said during the BIATF Principals' Meeting held in Boracay on June 11. "We aim to do that as we propose a bill in Congress that would create a permanent management group for the island."

The environment chief was referring to the proposed legislative measure creating the Boracay Island Development Authority or BIDA, an independent body that would oversee implementation of sustainable development activities on the island and ensure the continuity of BIATF's accomplishments.

"We want to preserve all the good things that resulted from rehabilitation of Boracay and which brought it back to its rightful place as one of the best islands in the world," Cimatu said.

In the meantime, Cimatu said the task force will focus on its priority rehabilitation activities for completion before May 2021, including the enforcement of easement laws to clear the beachfront and roads of obstructions. As of June 8, the 25+5-meter beach easement is 69 percent cleared while the 12-meter road easement is 73 percent done.

The task force will also continue to enforce carrying capacity regulations in Boracay to ensure that only 6,405 tourists will enter the island per day once it reopens. Boracay, along with other tourism destinations in the country, has been closed to tourists since March with the imposition of the enhanced community quarantine to contain the spread of COVID-19.

The island reopens on June 16, but only to residents of Western Visayas as the region shifts to a more relaxed modified general community quarantine.



Cimatu: Task force on track to complete Boracay rehab by May 2021

The BIATF also plans to impose moratorium on the construction of residential and commercial establishments to further address physical carrying capacity issues in Boracay.

To maintain the island's good water quality, the Environmental Management Bureau will continue its regular environmental compliance monitoring for water quality and construct more sewage treatment plants (STPs).

Water quality of the beaches taken from the monitoring stations in the last six months shows it is within the standard limit of 100 most probable number (mpn) per 100 milliliters (ml). Readings range from less than one mpn/100 ml to 7.1 mpn/100ml.

Most commercial establishments have complied with the requirement to have their own STPs or to connect to the sewage line of their water service providers. However, residential areas need to install clusterized STPs.

Completion of road projects of the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) and drainage projects of the Tourism Infrastructure and Enterprise Zone Authority (TIEZA) are also primary concerns.

Only Phase 3 of the DPWH road project is yet to be started. Phase 1 is completed and Phase 2 is 70 percent finished. The TIEZA drainage project is 93 percent completed for Phases 1 and 2, and 47 percent for Phases 1A, 3, 4, and 5.

The BIATF will also push for the completion of wetland rehabilitation by its corporate "adoptors"—Energy Development Corp. for Wetland No. 2, Aboitiz and TIEZA for Wetland No. 4, Boracay Tubi System Inc. for Wetland No. 6, and JG Summit for Wetland No. 8.

The task force seeks to revalidate forestland occupants on the island and to determine if they can be granted tenurial instruments.



Pagsasaayos sa Boracay, target tapusin ng task force sa Mayo 2021 – Cimatú

By Bombo Bam Orpilla

-June 13, 2020 | 8:26 PM

<https://www.bomboradyo.com/pagsasaayos-sa-boracay-target-tapusin-ng-task-force-sa-mayo-2021-cimatu/>

Target umano ng Boracay Inter-Agency Task Force (BIATF) na tapusin ang isinasagawang rehabilitasyon sa sikat na isla sa Mayo ng susunod na taon.

Ito’y kahit pansamantalang isinara ang isla bilang pag-iingat na rin sa coronavirus pandemic.

Ayon kay Environment Sec. Cimatú, ang isang taong ibinigay na “extension” sa BIATF ay sapat na para matapos ang mga naantalang trabaho at maibalik ang ganda ng tinaguriang “world-famous resort island.”

Batay sa Executive Order (EO) 115 na pinirmahan ni Pangulong Rodrigo Duterte, binibigyan ng “extension” ang BIATF na pinamumunuan ni Cimatú na tatagal hanggang Mayo 2021 na dapat sana ay natapos nitong Mayo 8, 2020 o dalawang taon matapos itong buuin sa pamamagitan ng EO 53.

“We want to preserve all the good things that resulted from rehabilitation of Boracay and which brought it back to its rightful place as one of the best islands in the world,” wika ni Cimatú.

Sinabi pa ni Cimatú na tututukan ng task force ang mga prayoridad nito para sa rehabilitasyon ng Boracay hanggang Mayo 2021 kabilang na ang pagpapatupad ng “easement laws” upang tuluyang maialis ang mga nakasagabal sa beachfront at iba pang road obstruction.

Sisiguruhin din ng task force na masusunod ang “capacity regulations” sa Boracay na hanggang 6,405 na turista lamang kada araw ang papahintulutang makapasok sa isla kapag binuksan itong muli sa turista.

Sa darating na Hunyo 16 ay muling bubuksan ang isla ngunit para ito lamang sa mga residente ng Western Visayas matapos itong isailalim sa mas maluwag na modified general community quarantine.

Ayon pa sa DENR, balak din ng BIATF na ipatupad ang moratorium sa konstruksiyon ng mga residential at commercial establishments upang matiyak ang pagsunod sa “physical carrying capacity” na inilabas sa Boracay.

Kaugnay nito, regular ang isasagawang environmental compliance monitoring para sa tubig ng Environmental Management Bureau at maglalagay din ng mas maraming sewage treatment plants upang matiyak ang maayos na water quality sa isla.



Boracay rehab to be completed next year

[Rhodina Villanueva](#)

June 14, 2020 - 12:00am

<https://www.philstar.com/nation/2020/06/14/2020717/boracay-rehab-be-completed-next-year>

MANILA, Philippines — The Boracay Inter-Agency Task Force (BIATF) led by Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu has expressed optimism that the rehabilitation of Boracay will be completed by May next year.

Cimatu said the one-year extension given to the BIATF would allow the task force to achieve its targets.

President Duterte extended the term of the task force until May 2021 under Executive Order 115.

“We want to preserve all the good things that resulted from the rehabilitation of Boracay, which brought it back to its rightful place as one of the best islands in the world,” Cimatu said.

He said the task force would focus on priority rehabilitation efforts, such as enforcement of easement laws to clear the beachfront and roads of obstructions.

Cimatu said they would also enforce carrying capacity regulations to limit the number of people who can enter the island per day once it reopens.

He said the BIATF also plans to impose a moratorium on the construction of residential and commercial establishments to address physical carrying capacity issues in Boracay.

The island will reopen on Tuesday, but only to residents of Western Visayas.



Rehabilitation of Boracay to be completed by May 2021 despite delays, says BIATF

Updated June 13, 2020, 3:27 PM

By Ellalyn de Vera-Ruiz

<https://news.mb.com.ph/2020/06/13/rehabilitation-of-boracay-to-be-completed-by-may-2021-despite-delays-says-biatf/>

The Boracay Inter-agency Task Force (BIATF) remains confident that it will be able to complete the rehabilitation of the resort island by May 2021 despite delays due to limited activities during the community quarantine.

Environment and Natural Resources Secretary and IATF head Roy Cimatu said the one-year extension given to the task force was enough to achieve all its targets and lay the groundwork for a permanent government body that would manage Boracay.

President Rodrigo Duterte recently issued Executive Order (EO) 115 extending the term of the BIATF by one year or until May 2021. The task force was originally set to end on May 8, 2020, or two years after it was created under EO 53.

“The new EO gives us another year and directs us to finish the rehabilitation of Boracay,” Cimatu said during the BIATF Principals’ Meeting held in Boracay on June 11.

“We aim to do that as we propose a bill in Congress that would create a permanent management group for the island,” he added.

The DENR chief was referring to the proposed legislative measure creating the Boracay Island Development Authority (BIDA), an independent body that would oversee implementation of sustainable development activities on the island and ensure the continuity of BIATF’s accomplishments.

“We want to preserve all the good things that resulted from rehabilitation of Boracay and which brought it back to its rightful place as one of the best islands in the world,” Cimatu said.

COMPLETION OF TASK

In the meantime, he said the task force will focus on its priority rehabilitation activities for completion before May 2021, including the enforcement of easement laws to clear the beachfront and roads of obstructions.

As of June 8, the 25+5-meter beach easement is 69 percent cleared while the 12-meter road easement is 73 percent done.

The task force will also continue to enforce carrying capacity regulations in Boracay to ensure that only 6,405 tourists will enter the island per day once it reopens.



Rehabilitation of Boracay to be completed by May 2021 despite delays, says BIATF

Boracay, along with other tourism destinations in the country, has been closed to tourists since March with the imposition of the enhanced community quarantine to contain the spread of COVID-19.

The island will be reopened on June 16, but only to residents of Western Visayas as the region shifts to a more relaxed modified general community quarantine.

The BIATF also plans to impose moratorium on the construction of residential and commercial establishments to further address physical carrying capacity issues in Boracay.

SUSTAINING BORACAY GAINS

To maintain the island's good water quality, the Environmental Management Bureau will continue its regular environmental compliance monitoring for water quality and construct more sewage treatment plants (STPs).

Water quality of the beaches taken from the monitoring stations in the last six months shows it is within the standard limit of 100 most probable number (mpn) per 100 milliliters (ml).

The readings range from less than one mpn/100 ml to 7.1 mpn/100ml.

Most commercial establishments have also complied with the requirement to have their own STPs or to connect to the sewage line of their water service providers.

However, residential areas need to install clusterized STPs.

The completion of road projects of the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) and drainage projects of the Tourism Infrastructure and Enterprise Zone Authority (TIEZA) are also primary concerns.

Only Phase 3 of the DPWH road project is yet to be started.

Phase 1 is completed and Phase 2 is 70 percent finished.

The TIEZA drainage project is 93 percent completed for Phases 1 and 2, and 47 percent for Phases 1A, 3, 4, and 5.

The BIATF will also push for the completion of wetland rehabilitation by its corporate "adoptors"—Energy Development Corp. for Wetland No. 2, Aboitiz and TIEZA for Wetland No. 4, Boracay Tubi System Inc. for Wetland No. 6, and JG Summit for Wetland No. 8.

The task force seeks to revalidate forestland occupants on the island and to determine if they can be granted tenurial instruments.



Boracay rehab on track amid pandemic

posted June 14, 2020 at 12:10 am

by Rio N. Araja

<https://manilastandard.net/mobile/article/326000>

Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu says he remains on track to complete the rehabilitation of the world famous Boracay Island in Aklan by May 2021.

The one-year extension given to the Boracay Inter-Agency Task Force (BIATF) was enough to achieve all its targets and lay the groundwork for a permanent government body that would manage the island, he said.

“The new executive order gives us another year and directs us to finish the rehabilitation of Boracay. We aim to do that as we propose a bill in Congress that would create a permanent management group for the island,” he noted.

President Rodrigo Duterte issued Executive Order No. 115, extending the term of the BIATF by one year or until May 2021.

The task force was originally set to end last May 8, or two years after it was created under EO 53.

Cimatu was referring to the proposed legislative measure creating the Boracay Island Development Authority or BIDA, an independent body that would oversee implementation of sustainable development activities on the island and ensure the continuity of BIATF’s accomplishments.

“We want to preserve all the good things that resulted from rehabilitation of Boracay and which brought it back to its rightful place as one of the best islands in the world,” he said.

The task force would focus on its priority rehabilitation activities for completion before May 2021, including the enforcement of easement laws to clear the beachfront and roads of obstructions.

Boracay Island and other tourist destinations were closed to tourists due to the enhanced community quarantine to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

The island reopens on June 16, but only to residents of Western Visayas as the region shifts to a more relaxed modified general community quarantine.



Boracay, bubuksang muli sa regional tourism sa June 16; mga negosyo, humiling ng health protocols

Published June 13, 2020 2:14pm

By JUN AGUIRRE

<https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/news/ulatfilipino/742492/boracay-bubuksang-muli-sa-regional-tourism-sa-june-16-mga-negosyo-humiling-ng-health-protocols/>

BORACAY ISLAND - Muli nang bubuksan sa regional tourism ang Boracay simula Hunyo 16, ilang buwan matapos magpatupad ng community quarantine sa iba't ibang bahagi ng bansa.

Ayon kat Tourism Secretary Bernadette Romulo-Puyat ito ang napagkasunduan sa isinagawang meeting ng Boracay Inter Agency Task Force naisinagawa sa Boracay noong Huwebes.

Handa na diumano ang Boracay sa unti-unting pagbubukas ng lugar sa mga turista dahil wala na diumanong kaso ng COVID-19 sa isla.

Matapos ang meeting, nagsagawa ng inspection si Puyat kasama si Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu at Interior Secretary Eduardo Ano sa baybayin ng Boracay.

Ayon naman kay Elena Brugger, presidente ng Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry-Boracay, bagaman ilang araw na lang ay June 16 na, hindi pa rin diumano malinaw sa business community ang mga health protocols na nais ipatupad ng inter Agency Task Force sa Boracay.



Western Visayas cops ready for Boracay reopening

By Gail Momblan June 13, 2020, 3:58 pm
<https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1105799>



NEW NORMAL. Tourists bound for Boracay Island last March 12. Western Visayas' regional police said on Saturday (June 13, 2020) that it is ready for the reopening of the world-famous Boracay Island on June 16. (PNA file photo by Gail Momblan)

ILOILO CITY – The Police Regional Office (PRO) 6 (Western Visayas) is prepared for the reopening of the world-famous Boracay Island on June 16.

Brig. Gen. Rene Pamuspusan, PRO-6 director, said in a statement on Saturday that security preparations have been set to welcome local tourists.

Boracay's inter-agency task force has approved the reopening of the popular beach destination to Western Visayas travelers.

"We are now ready to secure Boracay Island but we will ensure strict implementation of protocols and guidelines established by the inter-agency task force," Pamuspusan said, noting that they recently established the Boracay Operation Command Center with 25 CCTVs to centralize security measures and monitor the area on top of regular police visibility.

He added that the Malay municipal police, in coordination with other law enforcement and emergency response team, also conducted a series of training sessions in preparation for the opening and implementation of the health protocols for the new normal.

On Thursday, the local police also launched the "e-Reklamo" to reduce the people's risk of exposure to the coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19).



Western Visayas cops ready for Boracay reopening

“(The) Malay Municipal Police Station is now accepting complaints without having you to physically appear in the police station. Just login to your Facebook account and reach us through our Facebook Messenger,” the police said in its advisory.

The PRO-6 also reminded the public that local tourists below 21 years old and above 60 years old are still prohibited from visiting the island.

The regional police appealed for the public’s cooperation and discipline amid the threat posed by the pandemic. **(PNA)**



Petition seeks Mt. Guiting-guiting road works stoppage

Being compared several times with the Galapagos Islands for its rich biodiversity, Mt. Guiting-guiting boasts of having at least 700 vascular plant species, including 54 species that can only be found in the province.

June 14, 2020 01:00 AM

By [Trina Ibarle Orquiza](#)

<https://tribune.net.ph/index.php/2020/06/14/petition-seeks-mt-guiting-guiting-road-works-stoppage/>



Jagged little peaks Mt. Guiting-guiting, considered by mountaineers as one of the toughest to climb in the country, is at the center of a non-government organization's campaign to halt a road project to be built in its protected area as construction works is said to affect the park's rich and diverse flora and fauna. / PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF MYTRAVELDIGEST.COM

A non-government organization (NGO) of Romblon natives protecting the Sibuyan Islands' ecology and culture drew up an online signature campaign to halt the resumption of construction works on the Magdiwang-San Fernando National Road as it encroaches on the protected area of Mt. Guiting-guiting, the highest mountain in the Romblon province.

Bayay Sibuyanon addressed the petition to President Rodrigo Duterte, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), Mt. Guiting-guiting Natural Park Protected Area Management Board and the local government units of Sibuyan Island to stop the construction of the road as it would destroy the natural flora and fauna in the protected area.

"We were able to stop this project in 2018, we will do this again this year, and beyond," said the group in their petition, which has already reached 3,111 signatures as of this writing.

In April 2018, the DPWH halted clearing operations for the planned road works on the Magdiwang-San Fernando National Road, a 3.8-kilometer cross-country road which leads to the Magdiwang Port, following similar appeals of several NGO opposing its commencement.



Petition seeks Mt. Guiting-guiting road works stoppage

In the petition, Bayan Sibuyanon demanded to investigate the process on how the project was included in the 2020 General Appropriations Act without any feasibility study or allegedly any kind of consultation with proper agencies as the project was already previously halted by the DPWH itself.

It also demanded the prioritization and funding of unfinished infrastructure projects such as the circumferential and farm to market roads, bridges, ports and the airport.

The group also cited the importance of the violation of Republic Act 11038 or the Expanded National Integrated Protected Areas System Act of 2018 and Proclamation 746 series of 1996 which declares Mt. Guiting-guiting as a protected area.

Mt. Guiting-guiting, named after a Rombloanon word to describe its jagged peaks, is a popular destination for daredevil mountaineers as one of the technically difficult mountains to climb in the country. Being compared several times with the Galapagos Islands for its rich biodiversity, Mt. Guiting-guiting boasts of having at least 700 vascular plant species, including 54 species that can only be found in the province.



Aboitiz unit's commitment to greening drive lauded

By [Leander C. Domingo, TMT](#)

June 13, 2020

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2020/06/13/business/green-business/abotiz-units-commitment-to-greening-drive-lauded/731359/>

THE Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) in Mountain Province has recognized Aboitiz Power Corp. (AboitizPower) run-of-river hydro business unit Hedcor Inc. as an active partner in the National Greening Program.



This photo shows an area that hosts Hedcor's 14-megawatt Sabangan Hydropower Plant that delivers 55 gigawatt hours of 'Cleanergy' to the Luzon grid annually. The company has so far planted over 300,000 trees in the area. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

It also recognized the Aboitiz-led power firm in establishing, maintaining and protecting the forest plantations in Upper Sabangan and Upper Bauko in the province.

Andy Faelnar, Hedcor Group assistant vice president, said that to date, Hedcor has planted over 300,000 trees in Mountain Province alone, majority of which are fruit-bearing trees that not only help in carbon sequestration, but also serve as source of food and livelihood for locals.

All the trees planted also serve as water aquifers or part of measures for soil stabilization, he added.

"In total, Hedcor has planted more than 3 million trees with an 89-percent survival rate since 2004," Faelnar said.

Besides reforestation initiatives, Hedcor and its community partners are also engaged in other environmental sustainability programs. These are watershed management, river clean-up drive, information education campaign, farmers' training and biodiversity conservation.



Aboitiz unit's commitment to greening drive lauded

"Hedcor takes pride in its continuing commitment to advancing business and communities while protecting the environment," Faelnar said.

He also said that, for the Sabangan Hydropower Plant, the first of its kind in the province, the DENR's recognition highlights Hedcor's contribution to the community.

The 14-megawatt plant delivers 55 gigawatt hours of "Cleanergy" to the Luzon grid annually.

Cleanergy is AboitizPower's brand for clean and renewable energy. The company has several hydroelectric, geothermal and solar power-generation facilities. It also has thermal power plants in its generation portfolio to support the baseload and peak energy demands of the country.

For AboitizPower, environmental sustainability is more than just providing Cleanergy, because it has a long-standing commitment to taking good care of the environment through responsible business operations and strong partnerships with its host communities.

AboitizPower is the holding company of the Aboitiz Group's investments in power generation, distribution, and retail electricity services. It advances business and communities by providing reliable and ample power supply at a reasonable and competitive price, and with the least adverse effects on the environment and host communities.

The company also owns distribution utilities that operate in high-growth areas in Luzon, the Visayas, and Mindanao, including the second- and third-largest private utilities in the country.



Quarantine life offsets gains in drive vs plastic waste

By: [Jhesset O. Enano](#) - Reporter / [@JhessetEnanoINQ](#)

[Philippine Daily Inquirer](#) / 05:38 AM June 14, 2020

<https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1291291/quarantine-life-offsets-gains-in-drive-vs-plastic-waste>

MANILA, Philippines — The past few months have been extra frustrating for Marko Yambao, who, under normal circumstances, consciously keeps his carbon footprint low and his activities environment-friendly.



BAGGED The community quarantine prompted by the coronavirus pandemic has seen an increase in the use of plastic packaging for food items and other goods delivered via courier. Plastic materials are also used to make protective clothing for medical front-liners. —MARIANNE BERMUDEZ

With the community quarantine due to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) compelling him and millions of other Filipinos to stay home, the 27-year-old content producer found himself relying on online shopping and deliveries for his needs. This, however, came with the deluge of single-use plastics which he had long sought to avoid.

“Online deliveries overdo their packaging all the time,” he lamented. “There’s just so many layers of plastic: three layers, at the very least. Even unboxing a package can get tiring.”

Yambao is not alone. As lockdown measures continue to limit movement and access to goods and services, consumers have turned to deliveries for both essential and nonessential purchases. And even as restrictions begin to ease, disposable plastics appear poised to dominate life under the shadow of the coronavirus.

To think that not too long ago, the Philippines was making some headway in the arduous shift from single-use plastics. The clamor for swift action was warranted: According to a 2015 report by the international group Ocean Conservancy, the country generates 2.7 million metric tons of plastic garbage yearly, and is the world’s third biggest marine plastic polluter.



Quarantine life offsets gains in drive vs plastic waste

Some policy actions to cut back on the use of plastics — from proposed legislation to actual ordinances — had been laid on the table. But COVID-19 effectively turned the tide, forcing the battle against plastic pollution off the front burner.

“The pandemic has definitely caused a lot of disruptions in our progress moving away from plastics,” said Marian Ledesma, Greenpeace Philippines zero waste and sustainable food campaigner. “The increase of deliveries for food and online shopping introduced another way for society to produce waste. Cities and provinces coming out with ordinances against plastic use had to backtrack.”

Overwhelming waste

Pre-pandemic, the Philippines had already been contending with overwhelming plastic waste. A five-year trash audit by the Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives revealed in 2019 that Filipinos were throwing away 48 million plastic shopping bags, 45 million thin-film bags and 163 million plastic sachets every day.

While numbers are still to be validated, overall waste generation during the lockdown is seen to have dropped because of the massive slowdown of economic activity, said Crispian Lao, vice chair of the National Solid Waste Management Commission.

Still, with the majority restricted to their homes, household waste is expected to balloon even if people are not ordering takeaways and deliveries daily, Lao said.

According to the commission’s solid waste status report in 2014, the biggest chunk of municipal solid wastes comes from households (56.7 percent), followed by commercial sources, such as general merchandise stores and restaurants.

Beyond takeouts and deliveries, plastic has surfaced as a go-to material for the safety of the general public.

In hospitals and healthcare facilities, front-line medical workers are clad in personal protective equipment often made of plastic. The use of disposable masks and gloves has exploded exponentially even among ordinary citizens, causing shortages.

As the economy reawakens, plastic has also become commonplace in certain vital areas. Separators made of plastic sheets are now installed in supermarkets, pharmacies and similar establishments. Some public utility vehicles have also been retrofitted to include these.

While the use of plastic in the context of public health cannot be avoided, the challenge lies in managing the discards and ensuring that these do not end up in the streets, waterways and oceans.



Quarantine life offsets gains in drive vs plastic waste

“The difficult thing is if it is infectious medical waste, it is very hard to say that we are going to replace them with reusables, because right now, there is no way we can compromise the health of the people in need of these tools,” said Anna Oposa, cofounder of the marine conservation group Save Philippine Seas.

“But there is also waste that we have more control over, such as e-commerce packaging,” Oposa said.

Quezon City’s case

Another setback stemming from the pandemic is the freeze in measures geared to minimize plastic waste.

For example, Quezon City implemented its ordinance banning plastic bags in January but has since decided to step back.

“In the interest of health and safety, the use of plastic bags was temporarily allowed ... to lessen the risk of virus transmission and protect both the front-liners and the buying public,” said Andrea Villaroman, head of Quezon City’s environmental protection and waste management department.

In a memorandum issued in May, the city government encouraged residents to reuse plastic bags as lining for their garbage bin instead of immediately disposing of them. It also encouraged food establishments to adopt a “by-request” protocol for single-use cutlery and condiment sachets for takeaway food and deliveries.

Due to the virus, the department is also mulling the deferment of the ban on single-use plastic/disposable material, which was scheduled for implementation in July.

“As gathered from businesses themselves, full compliance with the [ordinance] would require proper transition and adjustment through procurement of reusable dining materials and washing and disinfection equipment,” Villaroman said, adding:

“The city government recognizes that the pandemic caused significant financial loss for businesses and that requiring full compliance with the ordinance by July 2020 would be untimely.”

Even and especially as COVID-19 continues to rage, environmentalists urge the government, private businesses and ordinary consumers to still keep their eyes on the plastic waste problem.

“As we are transitioning to this new normal, governments and businesses should proceed according to science,” Ledesma said. “And what science tells us is good practices in hygiene and sanitation are still the key actions to protect public health.”



Quarantine life offsets gains in drive vs plastic waste

Legislation

At the House of Representatives, the proposed “Better Normal for the Workplace, Communities and Public Spaces Act of 2020” seeks the strict monitoring of the implementation of Republic Act No. 9003, or the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000, in relation to the proper disposal and management of waste relating to the “new normal.”

House Bill No. 6864, recommended to substitute for the earlier “New Normal” bill, proposes that the government regulate the manufacture, importation, use and recycling of single-use plastics; conduct research on and develop alternatives to single-use plastic packaging; and provide incentives to plastic industries that will shift to other manufacturing activities.

“The use of plastics right now may be solving another [problem], but we need to really recognize that this will create a longer problem in the future,” said Dr. Deo Florence Onda, marine scientist at the University of the Philippines’ Marine Science Institute and founding member of Plastics Research Network Philippines.

Environmentalists say that with the Philippines still adjusting to the new reality, ordinary citizens should consciously reduce their plastic use, reusing what they consume and recycling what they can.

Reusables, such as cloth bags and personal water tumblers, should still be part of people’s lives moving forward.

“Bringing your own is better because you know where that came from,” Oposa said. “If you bring your own, you know that it was touched by your own hands.”

Ledesma said businesses should also rethink and offer alternative delivery systems and allow customers to have a say in their purchases.

“With online shopping and delivery now the norm, it’s made the excessive amount of plastic sort of an acceptable price to pay for our convenience,” she said. “Deliveries make purchases and ordering so easy that it sort of feeds into needless consumption. It can create bad habits that eventually become lifestyles.”

And Yambao? He has realized that getting back to his old practices won’t happen anytime soon.

But at the very least, he’ll reach out to the online shops to hold back on that added layer of plastic, he said.



'Zero-waste management facility' na balak itayo sa Albay, inulan ng batikos

By [Bombo Radyo Legazpi](#)

June 13, 2020 | 8:34 PM

<https://www.bomboradyo.com/zero-waste-management-facility-na-balak-itayo-sa-albay-inulan-ng-batikos/>

LEGAZPI CITY – Pinawi ng pamahalaang panlalawigan ng Albay ang pangamba ng mga kababayan sa planong pagtatayo ng “zero-waste management facility” sa Ligao City-Oas boundary.

Una rito, ilang residente ang nagpahayag ng pagkontra sa hakbang sa pangamba sa aspetong pangkalusugan at epekto sa kalikasan lalo na’t hazardous wastes ang ipoproseso sa lugar.

Ayon kay Danny Garcia, tagapagsalita ni Gov. Al Francis Bichara sa panayam ng Bombo Radyo Legazpi na taliwas sa kuro-kuro ng ilan, walang mangyayari pagbuga ng mapanganib na usok o anupaman mula sa itatayong planta.

By-product na aniya na magiging kapaki-pakinabang sa mga tao ang lalabas matapos na dumaan sa pasilidad ang mga toxic wastes.

Malaking tulong rin umano ito para sa mga local government units na walang landfill habang aprubado na rin ng mga government agencies kagaya ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

Depensa pa ng opisyal na hindi pasisimulan ang proyekto hangga’t hindi natatapos ang konsultasyon sa concerned sector ukol sa mga bentaheng dala nito.



12 opisyal, kawani ng 2 developers kinasuhan sa pagputol ng 45 pine trees

[Raymund Catindig](#)

June 14, 2020 - 12:00am

<https://www.philstar.com/pilipino-star-ngayon/probinsiya/2020/06/14/2020707/12-opisyal-kawani-ng-2-developers-kinasuhan-sa-pagputol-ng-45-pine-trees>

TUGUEGARAO CITY, Cagayan, Philippines - Isinampa ng piskalya kamakalawa ang kasong kriminal laban sa 12 opisyal at kawani ng dalawang real estate developer na umano'y sadyang nilason hanggang mamatay ang 45 na pine trees sa Baguio City kamakalawa.

Sinabi ni Baguio City Mayor Benjamin Magalong na nilabag ng Gateluck Corporation at Greatzone Enterprises ang Environment Code ng lungsod na nagbabawal ng sadyang pagkitil sa mga pamosong nilang pine tree.

Ayon kay Magalong, nakitaan ng piskalya ng ebidensiya ang ginawang pagbutas at pagsaksak ng lason ng mga kawani ng dalawang developers sa mga puno sa kahabaan ng Legarda road.

Ito ay upang unti-unting mamatay ang mga puno na nagsisilbing balakid sa proyekto ng dalawang kompanya.

Sinabi ni Magalong na may halos P1 milyon na halagang danyos ang inabot dulot ng pagkakasira ng mga puno.



Batangas City named Philippine winner of WWF challenge

[Rhodina Villanueva](#)

June 14, 2020 - 12:00am

<https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2020/06/14/2020752/batangas-city-named-philippine-winner-wwf-challenge>

MANILA, Philippines — The capital city of Batangas province has been named the Philippine winner in the latest edition of the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF)'s One Planet City Challenge (OPCC), joining national winners from 22 countries worldwide.

WWF-Philippines executive director Joel Palma said the city's comprehensive climate mitigation and adaptation plan, which includes interventions based on city-specific climate vulnerabilities, impressed the urban sustainability experts from across the globe that compose the OPCC jury.

He added that Batangas City also reported an ambitious target for carbon neutrality by 2030 and its vision to be the first carbon-neutral city in the Philippines.

In a letter from the OPCC team in Stockholm, the jury acknowledged the city's aggressive efforts in promoting climate risk assessment.

"Batangas City showed particularly strong performance related to its vision. The city scored well across different indicators, especially political action and climate risk assessment and evidence of action, especially related to adaptation."

Together with Batangas City, fellow finalists Muntinlupa and Santa Rosa, Cagayan de Oro, Davao, Dipolog, La Carlota, Pasig, San Carlos, Tagum, Malolos, Parañaque and Quezon City were included in the country's roster of qualifiers for OPCC 2019-2020.

Palma praised the City of Batangas, as well as the other local qualifiers, for representing the Philippines well.

"I would like to commend the Batangas City local government unit (LGU) and all the other LGUs who have taken part in the OPCC. I would like to commend their efforts in finding solutions to ensure that development is made sustainable by putting into the equation the environment and people.

The challenges we are facing now, particularly the pandemic, proves that there is a direct link between the health of the environment and the health and well being of people," Palma pointed out.



Renewable energy to play big role in power stability

[Danessa Rivera](#)

14, 2020 - 12:00am

<https://www.philstar.com/business/2020/06/14/2020669/renewable-energy-play-big-role-power-stability>

MANILA, Philippines — Renewable energy will play a key role in improving the country's power stability as Yuchengco-led PetroEnergy Resources Corp. (PERC) has produced steady power generation from its renewable portfolio during the lockdown.

PERC expects demand for reliable and efficient electricity supply to increase as businesses shift to digital and technological processes for contactless transactions heading toward the “new normal.”

“Post-COVID, we anticipate that businesses will start their recovery activities and the public will continue to adjust to the new normal, and having a more resilient power supply can make this happen faster and easier. This is why we ensured that our RE facilities continue to operate despite the health crisis,” said Dave Gadiano, head of energy trading and marketing of PERC subsidiary PetroGreen Energy Corp.

PERC and PGEC's power plants remained operational since the community quarantine in March, generating a total of 26.81 gigawatt-hours of power from March 16 to May 31.

Despite the 30 percent drop in energy demand due to decreased economic activities, RE facilities continued to export power to the grid.

This is because under the RE Act of 2008, RE power plants are considered “must dispatch,” which helped stabilize power supply even if most RE facilities have variable output and many huge coal power plants were on shutdown due to repairs and fuel supply disruptions during the quarantine.

Most RE facilities have simpler operations, allowing work efficiency and resilience despite the lockdowns as they are reliant on indigenous fuel, PGEC assistant vice president Paul Elmer Morala said.

“Compared to fossil-fueled power plants, which are reliant on imported coal or petroleum, RE power plants utilize indigenous resources and its operation is generally less dependent on global supply chain, which has been severely disrupted by COVID-19,” he said.

Moving forward, Morala said RE projects have more potential to grow beyond this health crisis.

“There is a growing global consensus that renewable energy is the way to a sustainable power sector. The COVID-19 pandemic has undoubtedly emphasized the benefits of having a significant RE share in the country's supply mix. Among other sources, RE is in a



Renewable energy to play big role in power stability

better position to adapt to the new normal or post-pandemic scenario because of its resiliency, indigenous nature and emissions-free characteristics vital in a healthy and clean environment,” he said.

RE now accounts for 85 percent of PERC’s business and revenue.

In 2019, the company successfully put online its newest and fifth RE power facility, the 20-megawatt (MW) Tarlac-2 solar power plant.

This is in addition to the company’s 20-MW Maibarara-1 and 12-MW Maibarara-2 geothermal power plants in Batangas, the 36-MW Nabas wind power plant in Aklan, and the 50-MW Tarlac-1 solar power plant in Tarlac.



Makukulay na 'Eco-Masks' sa Negros Occidental layon na protektahan din ang kalikasan

ABS-CBN News

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<https://news.abs-cbn.com/news/06/13/20/makukulay-na-eco-masks-sa-negros-occidental-layon-na-protektahan-din-ang-kalikasan>



Abala ang mahahani na gumawa ng "Eco-Mask. *Larawan mula kay Bro. Jaazeal Jakosalem*

Nagtulong-tulong ang mga local artist, Augustinian Recollect brothers at sisters pati na ang mga boluntayong mga mananahi sa Negros Occidental para makagawa ng mga makukulay at ecologically-friendly face mask o "Eco-Mask."

Layunin nilang mabigyan ng dagdag na proteksiyon ang mga marginalized sector na naapektuan ng COVID-19 pandemic, bukod sa magpahatid ng mensahe sa sinumang magsusuot ng mga ito.

Ang advocacy na ito ay pinangunahan nina Bro. Jaazeal Jakosalem ng Augustinian Recollect Solidarity Network International at ang kaniyang kapatid na si Jazer Jude na nagmamay-ari ng printery at apparel store.

Ilan sa mensaheng ipinahahatid ng mga artistically designed eco-mask ay ang pagpapahalaga sa kapaligiran at karapatang pangtao.

Ito ay ilan sa mga disenyo ng "Eco-Mask" na tinatahi ngayon sa Negros Occidental. *Larawan mula kay Bro. Jaazeal Jakosalem*

Ayon kay Jakosalem, milyong disposable face mask ang itinatapon kada araw, bagay na nakadaragdag sa problema sa polusyon. Dagdag pa nila, nagiging sanhi rin ito ng pagbaha dahil bumabara ang mga itinapon sa mask sa waterways.

"Imagine that we are currently producing globally 15 billion or more of these disposable face masks. The rising demand is equal to rising pollution. This is totally immoral and a t

otal disaster to nature. We cannot add to the growing human crisis of the COVID pandemic with another ecological disaster. May our initiative in making eco face masks be able to inspire others to make their own reusable face mask," aniya.

Sabi ni Jakosalem, ang Eco-mask ay isang global campaign ng Augustinian Recollect Solidarity Network International para masawata ang masamang epekto ng disposable mask sa kapaligiran.



Makukulay na 'Eco-Masks' sa Negros Occidental layon na protektahan din ang kalikasan

Ayon naman sa kaniyang kapatid na si Jazer Jude, magandang oportunidad ito sa mga lokal na mananahi lalo na at naapektuhan ng pandemya ang garments industry.



Ang paggawa ng Eco-Mask ay naging kabuhayan na rin ng ilang mananahi sa Negros Occidental. Larawan mula kay Bro. *Jaazeal Jakosalem*

Aniya, nag-shift muna siya sa eco-mask manufacturing para matulungan niya ang kaniyang mga mananahi na kumita at makatulong sa kanilang advocacy.

“We try to provide our sewers some work during the lockdown. We give them materials like cotton cloth which are residue or cuts from our garments project. So, we let them make a mask at home. We donated around 400 to the Provincial Government and some barangays in Bacolod,” sabi ni Jazer Jude.



Nagsimula silang manahi ng mga eco-mask noong maisailalim ang Bacolod City at Negros Occidental sa Enhanced Community Quarantine noong Marso.

Sa ngayon, nakapagdonate na sila ng mahigit 2,000 eco-masks sa provincial government at mga barangay lalo na sa mga sektor na hindi makabili ng sariling face mask. -- **ulat ni Yasmin Pascual-Dormido, ABS-CBN News**



Lockdown fate in Digong's hands

June 14, 2020 12:05 AM

By [Elmer N. Manuel @tribunephilmer](mailto:Elmer.N.Manuel@tribunephilmer)

<https://tribune.net.ph/index.php/2020/06/14/lockdown-fate-in-digongs-hands/>



Presidential spokesman Harry Roque on Saturday revealed that the fate of community quarantine in the Philippines is in the hands of President Rodrigo Duterte as the inter-agency body will let the Chief Executive decide the next steps to contain the spread of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19).

In a radio interview, Roque said that the President is taking into consideration the factors in deciding the fate of the community quarantines while balancing public health and the economy.

“There is already a recommendation, and it’s up to the President to review it,” he added.

The Palace official also disclosed that Metro Manila and other areas under general community quarantine (GCQ) may transition to modified general community quarantine (MGCQ), return to modified enhanced community quarantine, or remain under GCQ.

Roque added that the President will announce his decision tomorrow (Monday, 15 June), the same day when the GCQ in Metro Manila, Central Luzon, Cagayan Valley, CALABARZON, Central Visayas, Pangasinan, Zamboanga City and Davao City expires.

But while there is already a recommendation, the Palace official expressed doubt that Metro Manila and Cebu City will shift to a more relaxed MGCQ.

“The numbers of infection in Metro Manila and Cebu are still going up, so I think it’s best to maintain status quo,” Roque said. “But we will leave it up to the President to balance the economy and the response to the pandemic.”

“It’s a gamble that we will let the President decide on it,” he added.



Lockdown fate in Digong's hands

Roque explained that while public health is important, it is equally important to consider that Metro Manila's staying under quarantine is costly for the economy and stressed that "no one can predict how the President decides."

To recall, Department of the Interior and Local Government Secretary Eduardo Año on Friday said the National Capital Region will most likely remain under GCQ after 15 June.

However, Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana also on Friday said if he would have his way, Metro Manila would be under a more relaxed MGCCQ.

Repatriated OFW cleared

Meanwhile, The Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) announced on Saturday that it has released the names of 1,611 repatriated overseas Filipino workers and returning Filipinos who were cleared by the Sub-Task Group for the Repatriation of OFW after they tested negative for the COVID-19.

The PCG said that the repatriated Pinoys and OFW have tested negative based on their RT-PCR tests and the sub-task group cleared the said names from 12:06 a.m. to 8:14 p.m. of Friday, 12 June.

The Coast Guard added that starting Saturday, it will release additional lists of those who tested negative in their RT-PCR tests, instead of updating the master list.

"Returning overseas Filipinos who are included in the list are advised to coordinate with the PCG or OWWA (Overseas Workers Welfare Administration) personnel at the quarantine facility to process their return to their respective home province or home city," the PCG said.

It also said quarantine clearances will be issued to returning overseas Filipinos either at the Parañaque Integrated Terminal Exchange or at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA) Terminal 2.

This came following reports that around 400 OFW and locally stranded individuals have been forced to camp out in front of NAIA and under the airport's elevated expressway while waiting for their flights to their respective destinations.

The government's ad hoc task force had earlier said that domestic flights were allowed subject to approval of the destination local government unit (LGU).

However, airlines contended with conflicting LGU guidelines governing incoming flights, resulting in several booked flights canceled or rescheduled and most of the stranded workers spent days and nights sleeping there, hoping to catch a flight home, before officials finally swept them up on Friday.

While the last batch of OFW and probinsyanos stranded for two weeks at NAIA were finally transported on Friday to a quarantine facility here in Manila, their sorry ordeal brought to the fore anew vague and contradictory policies for these stranded individuals.



Task force health expert laments delayed COVID-19 data: DOH has 'lost focus'

By [CNN Philippines Staff](#)

Published Jun 14, 2020 12:20:00 AM

<https://cnnphilippines.com/news/2020/6/14/tony-leachon-on-DOH-data-covid-19.html?fbclid#.XuT->

Metro Manila (CNN Philippines, June 13) — Dr. Tony Leachon, Special Adviser to the National Task Force on COVID-19, expressed disappointment at the Department of Health on Saturday, as it continues to present delayed data on the country's cases.

"Forgive me, I think the lead agency has lost focus in everything. Risk communication, priorities, data management and execution of all plans," he tweeted.

Leachon said he was "deeply bothered" by the agency's latest case report that said 504 people have been recently infected with COVID-19 while 22 have died.

He added further that the task force needs "real time" information on the situation in order to come up with sound decisions.

"[A]ll of the efforts are wasted if the data churned out each day are not real time, credible and granular," he later told CNN Philippines in a text message. "Lives are at stake."

The DOH in recent weeks has been reporting COVID-19 infections that include part of its validation backlog, classified as "late cases." Prior to Leachon's Saturday tweet, the agency had said that delayed reporting on some cases was due to a number of issues in gathering data, such as insufficient staff, duplicated names and encoding errors. The department had assured that it had since taken steps in addressing these flaws, such as [digitizing its data monitoring system](#).

However, testing laboratories would still have to submit their daily accomplishment reports on time in order for the agency to [clear its backlog](#) and release only real-time data, the DOH earlier mentioned.

The Inter-agency Task Force on the Management of Emerging infectious Diseases is set to send its policy [recommendation to the President](#) recommendation to the President before he addresses the public on Monday. Metro Manila and other high-risk areas are currently under general community quarantine with limited business operations, while the rest of the country is under more relaxed restrictions.



House panel OKs bill to protect informal workers

[Edu Punay](#)

June 14, 2020 - 12:00am

<https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2020/06/14/2020755/house-panel-oks-bill-protect-informal-workers>

MANILA, Philippines — A House panel has approved a bill providing protection for some 16 million workers in the informal sector.

The committee on labor and employment passed on first reading the House Bill (HB) No. 3465 or the proposed Magna Carta for Workers in the Informal Economy authored by Deputy Speaker and Camarines Sur Rep. LRay Villafuerte before Congress adjourned sine die last week.

The panel consolidated the measure with six other similar bills that seek protection of informal workers who were severely affected by quarantine measures during the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic.

Villafuerte explained that the proposed measure is in line with the Duterte administration's efforts to transition them to the formal sector so that their rights can be protected under the law.

He lamented that workers in the informal sector have been hit hard by the work stoppages during the quarantine as they subsist on the no-work, no-pay arrangement.

Villafuerte stressed that the measure is necessary to assure informal workers of job security, health care services and other benefits that employees in the formal sector enjoy.

“The fact that informal sector workers were among the primary beneficiaries of the Social Amelioration Program of the government during the lockdown imposed by the government to shield us from the coronavirus pandemic highlights the inequality that they have to endure especially in times of crisis,” he said.

“Our proposed Magna Carta for Workers in the Informal Economy, which will mostly benefit those under the no-work, no-pay setup, aims to correct this inequality. Protecting their rights and providing them access to the work-related benefits that workers in the formal sector enjoy is the simplest but most effective way of introducing them to the economic mainstream,” he added.

Apart from protecting informal workers, Villafuerte said the proposed measure will also help achieve President Duterte's goal of financial inclusion.

“In the advent of modern technology that empowers connectivity and mobility, as well as progressive legislation that encourages work-from-home schemes and increased flexibility, development thinkers predict that the informal economy shall be the accepted norm in the future. We would like to ensure that when such time comes, our



House panel OKs bill to protect informal workers

workers have ample legal protection in place and our State likewise benefits by their monitored contributions to the gross national product,” he pointed out.

Villafuerte said his bill encourages the formation of organizations among marginalized farmers, fisherfolk, women and workers in the informal economy or employment whether in manufacturing, agriculture, transport, retail, services or home-based enterprises.

This will ensure that informal workers have a unified body to represent them in all dialogues with government or in seeking redress for grievances, he said.

Villafuerte’s bill mandates government agencies such as the Departments of Labor and Employment (DOLE) and of Social Welfare and Development to, among others, consolidate social welfare efforts to address the needs of the workers in the informal economy, including direct assistance, policy development and community engagement for workers.

The bill also mandates the DOLE to engage in labor market interventions to provide adequate protection for the workers in the informal economy and ensure timely and immediate action for labor concerns as well as security of tenure, job generation and other pertinent concerns, he said.

Villafuerte also called for easier access by informal sector workers to social security and medical health insurance coverage, as well as protection in designated workplaces against eviction and demolition, and special budget allocation for development programs.

HB 3465 also aims to ensure, among others, gender equity, non-discrimination, the right to self-organization, just and humane conditions of work and access to social protection programs and services of informal sector workers.

Villafuerte’s proposal also includes the creation of a database of informal sector workers in every local government unit so they can be issued identification cards that they can use to avail of services and benefits.

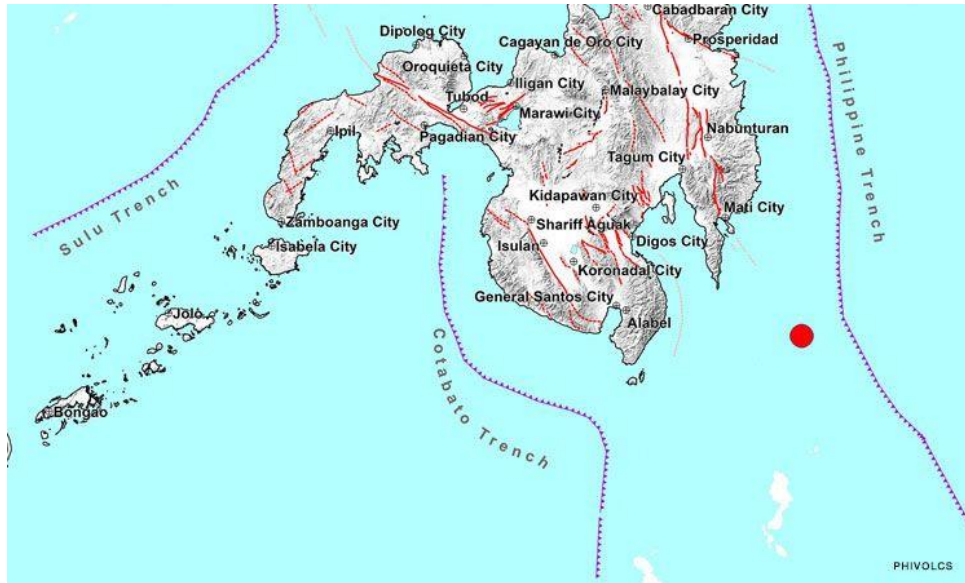


Magnitude-4.9 quake hits Davao Oriental

By [CNN Philippines Staff](#)

Published Jun 13, 2020 11:13:40 AM

<https://cnnphilippines.com/regional/2020/6/13/Davao-Oriental-town-earthquake.html>



Metro Manila (CNN Philippines, June 13) — A magnitude-4.9 earthquake jolted a town in Davao Oriental province, the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology [said Saturday](#).

The first reported magnitude was 5.

The quake at Governor Generoso town, which was 10 kilometers deep, was recorded at 10:11 a.m., Phivolcs said.

It added aftershocks may occur, but it did not expect damage.

Shaking was also felt in Malungon, Sarangani.



Temperature spike: Earth ties record high heat May reading

[Associated Press](#) / 03:32 PM June 13, 2020

<https://technology.inquirer.net/100764/temperature-spike-earth-ties-record-high-heat-may-reading>

A boy stands on the shore of the Ganges River during a hot summer day in Prayagraj, India. Image: AP/Rajesh Kumar Singh

Earth's temperature spiked to tie a record high for May, United States meteorologists reported Friday.

Last month the global average temperature was 60.3 degrees (15.7 degrees Celsius), tying 2016 for the hottest May in 141 years of record-keeping, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

That's 1.7 degrees (nearly 1 degree Celsius) higher than the 20th century average for Earth.

The temperature on land set a heat record, while ocean temperatures ranked second.

Parts of Africa, Asia, Western Europe, South and Central America had record warmth.

"We continue to warm on the long term and in any given month we're likely to be knocking on the door, close to a record in the era that we're in," NOAA climate monitoring chief Deke Arndt said.

The last seven Mays, from 2014 to 2020, have been the seven warmest Mays on record.

This past spring was the second hottest on record, behind 2016. And this year so far is the second hottest five-month start of a year.

Arndt said it's highly likely that 2020 will be one of the two hottest years since 1880. **CL**



Mutation could make coronavirus more infectious, study suggests

By Maggie Fox, CNN

Published Jun 13, 2020 7:05:56 PM

<https://cnnphilippines.com/world/2020/6/13/coronavirus-mutation.html>

(CNN) — Researchers in Florida say they believe they have shown that the new coronavirus has mutated in a way that makes it more easily infect human cells.

They say more research is needed to show whether the change has altered the course of the pandemic, but at least one researcher not involved in the study says it likely has, and the changes may explain why the virus has caused so many infections in the United States and Latin America.

It's a mutation that scientists have been worried about for weeks.

The researchers at the Scripps Research Institute in Florida said the mutation affects the spike protein — a structure on the outside of the virus that it uses to get into cells. If the findings are confirmed, it would be the first time someone has demonstrated that changes seen in the virus have significance for the pandemic.

"Viruses with this mutation were much more infectious than those without the mutation in the cell culture system we used," Scripps Research virologist Hyeryun Choe, who helped lead the study, said in a statement.

Just this week, the World Health Organization said the mutations seen so far in the new coronavirus would not affect the efficacy of vaccines under development. Last week, WHO said mutations had not made it more easily transmissible, nor had they made the virus more likely to cause serious illness.

A more stable spike protein

Choe and colleagues ran a series of experiments in lab dishes that show a mutation called D614G gives the virus many more spikes, and makes those spikes more stable. That in turn make it easier for it to get into cells. The researchers will post their findings on a preprint server called BioRxiv. That means the work has not been reviewed by other experts in the field.

But Choe and colleagues did send their paper to William Haseltine, a virologist, biotechnology entrepreneur and chairman of Access Health International. Haseltine believes the findings explain the easy spread of the coronavirus across the Americas.

"It is significant because it shows the virus can change, does change to its advantage and possibly to our disadvantage," Haseltine told CNN. "It has done a good job so far of adapting to human culture," he added.

"You can see in some places it doesn't get very far and in other places it has a field day."



Mutation could make coronavirus more infectious, study suggests

Scientists have been freely sharing the sequences of the virus which, like all viruses, mutates constantly. "Sometime in the middle of January, there was a change that allowed the virus to become more infectious. It doesn't mean it's more lethal," Haseltine said. "It makes it about 10 times more infectious."

Other researchers have suspected this. In April, Bette Korber of Los Alamos National Laboratory and colleagues published their concerns, also on BioRxiv, calling the D614G mutation "of urgent concern" because it had become by far the most common strain spreading in Europe and the US.

Dominant strain

"It began spreading in Europe in early February, and when introduced to new regions it rapidly becomes the dominant form," they wrote.

But more work was needed to show that it just wasn't an accident that caused viruses with the D614G mutation to become the most common forms.

Haseltine said the Scripps team showed this in three separate experiments.

"They measured this in three very elegant ways, not just one," he said.

The mutation allows the virus not only to attach to cells more easily, but to enter them more easily.

When viruses infect, they hijack their victim's cells and turn them into viral factories, pumping out copy after copy of viruses. They first must find a way into cells to do this.

Korber, who has a different analysis under consideration for publication, said "it was nice to see the result," but did not comment further to CNN.

Haseltine said the implications are important. Other researchers had hoped that the coronavirus would not prove to be as prone to mutation as other viruses that use RNA instead of DNA as their genetic material. Influenza, notorious for its mutations, is an RNA virus.

"It means that we have to be on the alert for constant change," Haseltine said.

"This virus is going to respond to whatever we do to control it. We make a drug, it is going to resist it. We make a vaccine, it is going to try to get around it. We stay at home, it is going to figure out how to hang around longer," he said.