

QC GOV'T REVOKES ALL TRUCK BAN EXEMPTIONS

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As Metro Manila mayors enter the final stretch of the interior department's 60-day deadline for clearing all public roads, the Quezon City government announced on Monday two policies meant to ease traffic in the country's largest city.

City traffic czar Ariel Inton said all exemptions to the truck ban issued under the previous administration were now revoked after several truck operators enjoying the privilege, supposedly to help them carry out public works projects, were caught deploying the vehicles for private purposes.

Inton added that all traffic enforcers in Quezon City were now banned as well from moonlighting as escorts for funeral processions, a lucrative line of work given the large number of funeral parlors in the city.

Over the past month, local chief executives have ramped up efforts not just to clear their roads of obstructions but to introduce at times aggressive policies in the hope of guaranteeing sustainability.

"If they [truck drivers] will be apprehended and they show an exemption I didn't sign, it will not be honored," said Inton, head of the Task Force for Transport and Traffic Management created by Mayor Joy Belmonte.

Revoked indefinitely

Inton told the Inquirer the exemptions would be revoked indefinitely until the concerned government agencies could confirm that these truck operators were indeed involved in public projects.

For instance, those supposed to be working on the MRT [Metro Rail Transit] line should present a certification from the Department of Transportation, Inton said, adding: "In the meantime, no exemptions."

According to him, traffic enforcers were now also banned from escorting funeral services, ending a longtime practice in the city.

He observed that the practice had proliferated to the point where more enforcers were watching the dead rather than monitoring traffic.

"Now if they request, I will allow them if they promise me they will accompany the dead to their grave," Inton said in jest.

Other cities like Marikina and San Juan have recently instituted policies aimed at reducing traffic, such as opening up gated communities to the public and banning pay parking on all streets.