

## QC steps up drive against spas offering sex service

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Quezon City Mayor Joy Belmonte has stepped up the city government's campaign against massage parlors offering "extra service".

After ordering an intensified drive against illegal gambling, Belmonte has directed a crack down against erring spas and massage parlors as part of the efforts to end human trafficking, sexual exploitation, and the spread of sexually transmitted diseases like HIV in Quezon City.

On Friday, a composite team from the Quezon City Hall and the Quezon City Police District raided Epitome Z Spa in Barangay West Kamias and arrested three massage therapists who offer "extra service" to gay men.

The team was led by elements from the QCPD Station 9 and officials from the Women's Desk, Business Permit and Licensing Department (BPLD), Social Services Development Department, and doctors from the Quezon City General Hospital (QCGH).

The spa was raided after the PNP hotline received a text message regarding the spa's illicit operation. After conducting a thorough background check, the BPLD discovered that it had no business permit from the Quezon City Hall.

Belmonte said that after receiving confirmation about the illegal activity from an under cover policeman, the team raided the spa and apprehended 14 persons, including the therapists who failed to show any certification to the raiding team.

According to QCGH director Dr. Josephine Sabando, all those arrested were brought to the Q.C. Protection Center for physical examination.

She said two of the therapists have been tested positive for hepatitis B and syphilis. They are also awaiting confirmation if the other therapist is a person living with HIV (PLHIV).

For its part, the BPLD ordered the closure of the establishment.

Belmonte warned the public that engaging in illicit sexual adventures may lead to more grave medical issues like HIV and AIDS. She also called on concerned citizens to report massage parlors offering extra service to Hotline 122.