

## QC barangay issues passes after 40 days

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Six weeks after the imposition of a Luzon-wide enhanced community quarantine, the officials of Barangay Maharlika in District 1, Quezon City has finally issued passes to its residents.

Barangay Maharlika officials issued last Friday afternoon a quarantine pass to each and every household within its area.

This, after residents complained that it was the only neighborhood in Quezon City to have failed from carrying out this protocol.

Some condoned the barangay's decision to withhold passes, saying it limits movement within the barangay and helps contain the spread of the virus. However, some found the system to be unfair and out of line.

Headed by barangay chairman Isaac Tan, the community officials said it only issued temporary passes during the past 40 days, since they believed this procedure better restricted movement within and without the barangay, which counts about 2,000 households under its jurisdiction.

Barangay Maharlika in Quezon City, headed by chairman Isaac Tan, had only been issuing temporary quarantine passes for the past 40 days.

"We limited the issuance of quarantine passes so that few residents would be coming in and going out of the barangay," Darwin Veron, the community's focal person, said.

"They are only issued temporary passes when they have to go to the wet market. However, they have to return them to us afterwards," he added.

To date, there has been five confirmed cases of coronavirus disease (COVID-19) in the barangay, with one death recorded and 30 more suspected of infection.

Victor Subilon, 50, a Barangay Maharlika resident and a freelance engineer, who is temporarily furloughed since the lockdown implementation, was worried over the situation and aired his grievances.

"Only 1,000 quarantine passes are available in the barangay. What about us who live far from there? We've been there three times already, and they've been telling us the same thing," Subilon said.

"What if we get arrested on our way to the barangay hall without a quarantine pass, especially now that they are stricter in its implementation?" he added.

On the other hand, Malou Duval, a mother of two, shared the same sentiment, as she criticized the cash aid being given out by the Department of Social Welfare and Development.

“We’ve been waiting for it, but it seems they have skipped us,” Duval said.

The national government recently announced the extension of the quarantine until 15 May in high-risk areas, including Metro Manila. With the newly-issued quarantine passes to its residents, this will at least allow one household member from each family to go out to purchase basic necessities and food provisions — with lesser hassle.