

## 12 QC barangay staff axed for protocol violation

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AT least 12 personnel of Barangay Batasan Hills in Quezon City were axed for holding a Christmas party in violation of local and barangay (village) guidelines, as well as all the mandatory health protocols.

According to Barangay Chairman Jojo Abad, sacked were Leticia Samar, Michelle Saragcon, Ma. Elena Olesco, Nora Elizaga, Meann Ubang, Rowena Almonicar, Jocelyn Leonero, Ritchie Ancero, Manilyn Mejia, Gemma Relata, Marizen Misolas and Alejandro Cabello as barangay staff, effective immediately.

“This termination of appointment is issued against the above-mentioned names from the Office of the Chairman due to disrespect of office protocols and insubordination,” Abad said in his letter to **Mayor Josefina Belmonte** dated Dec. 23, 2020.

Abad likewise ordered them to turn over all barangay properties in their possession for proper inventory such as uniform, frontliner ID and barangay radio.

Informed about the action of the Batasan chairman, Belmonte praised Abad for his quick action, which came to fore after some netizens called out the barangay staff for failing to observe social distancing based on the pictures posted by Misolas on social media.

“Nagpapasalamat tayo kay Kapitan Abad sa mabilis niyang pagkilos sa isyung ito na napakaseryosong bagay, lalo pa’t may kinalaman ito saating kalusugan (We are thankful to Chairman Abad for his quick action on this serious matter, especially when it involves our health),” Belmonte said.

She said Abad’s action of removing his barangay staff over protocol violations must serve as a lesson to other public servants in the city to always follow the government guidelines amid the coronavirus pandemic.

In a social media post, Misolas admitted she was the one who invited a team of barangay employees and volunteers for some dinner and drinks.

But Misolas insisted that they followed the necessary health protocols, especially the 30-percent venue capacity as indicated in the localized guidelines issued by the city government.

It should be noted, however, that the city’s guidelines were referring to essential work-related gatherings such as conferences, training and workshops.

As for social distancing, Misolas admitted they failed to exercise social distancing for several moments during the picture-taking.