

## Minors banned outside homes in Metro Manila

### Over 3,000 arrested on first day of unified curfew

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Starting Wednesday, March 17, minors will be banned anew from going outside their residences amid the alarming rise of active coronavirus disease (COVID-19) cases in Metro Manila.

A Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) advisory Tuesday, March 16, bared that the Metro Manila Council (MMC) is drafting a resolution prohibiting minors, particularly aged 15-17, to go outdoors for a period of two weeks. This will be implemented in all the 17 cities and lone municipality comprising the National Capital Region (NCR).

This means that only individuals aged 18-65 years old are allowed to go outside their homes.

MMDA Chairman Benhur Abalos said the move has been agreed upon by the NCR (Metro Manila) mayors in a bid to contain the transmission of the virus in the metropolis.

“We are implementing age restrictions because of the increase in our COVID-19 cases. We encourage everyone to strictly observe and practice the minimum health protocols, and be extra careful and follow stringent measures particularly when around vulnerable family members, as there have been reports of transmission among family members,” he said.

“As I've said before, the metro mayors and MMDA are regularly monitoring the COVID-19 numbers and we will implement calibration and changes on our directives depending on the figures that we have,” Abalos added. Last month, Abalos said NCR mayors agreed to ease age restrictions as the government sought to encourage economic activities.

But the sudden jump in active cases this month has made the MMC – the policy-making body of the MMDA – more cautious. It even led to the implementation of a uniform, metrowide curfew of 10 p.m. to 5 a.m., which began Monday.

#### Over 3,000 arrested

On the first day of the unified curfew, more than 3,000 people were either arrested or warned during the first day of the implementation of the uniform curfew hours in Metro Manila, police reported on Tuesday, March 16. Based on the data of the National Capital Region Police Office (NCRPO), a total of 547 people were also warned and were advised not to violate the curfew hours from 10 p.m. to 5 a.m.

The Manila Police District (MPD) recorded the most number of arrest with 1,139 followed by the Southern Police District (SPD), with 310. SPD covers Makati, Taguig, Parañaque, Las Piñas, Pasay, and Pateros. There were no reported arrests in other parts of Metro Manila.

The Eastern Police District (EPD), which covers Marikina, San Juan, Mandaluyong and Pasig, reported that they fined 139 people while the SPD reported that 521 violators were fined. The **Quezon City Police District**, on the other hand, has the most number of violators fined at 668. Only EPD and SPD reported that they just warned some violators – 251 violators in EPD and 296 in SPD.

More than 9,000 police personnel were deployed in the streets of Metro Manila to man hundreds of checkpoints and conduct patrol operations to compel people not to go out for unnecessary movement from 10 p.m. to 5 a.m. The uniform curfew hours was implemented amid the rising number of coronavirus disease (COVID-19) cases in the past days.

Lt. Gen. Guillermo Lorenzo Eleazar, officer-in-charge of the Philippine National Police (PNP), earlier appealed to the Metro Manila residents and workers to cooperate to prevent any unnecessary confrontation with the police.

He said the policemen were already advised to observe maximum tolerance and to respect the rights of the public.

But he also appealed to the public to respect the rules on curfew and minimum health safety standard protocols and to respect the authorities enforcing the rules and protocols in order to ensure the smooth implementation. PNP spokesman Brig. Gen. Ildebrandi Usana described the first day of the uniform curfew hours implementation as successful.

“There were no significant incidents reported so I think the first day of the implementation is successful, peaceful and orderly one,” said Usana.

Stay home if it’s not necessary to go out Meanwhile, Cabinet Secretary Karlo Nograles is encouraging the public to stay at home and away from others if it is not necessary for them to go out.

Nograles has urged people to keep their guard up against the coronavirus, saying the vaccine arrival in the country was not a reason for complacency.

“Relaxing of travel standards around the country and the arrival of the vaccines should not make us complacent.

Dapat on guard pa rin, dapat i-observe pa rin ang health protocols, ang strict na pagsuot ng face mask at face shield, ang social distancing, at hand-washing (We should stay on guard, observe health protocols, the strict wearing of face mask and face shield, social distancing and handwashing),” he said in a statement sent to the Manila Bulletin.

“If we do not need to go out, stay home,” he added.

Nograles said observing health protocols would keep oneself and others safe from acquiring the coronavirus. He said everyone would benefit from each person’s “abundance of caution.” “We need to remember that it is not only ourselves we benefit by being cautious, but also those around us – in this pandemic, we truly are our kababayan’s keeper,” he said.

“Pag nagtulungan lahat – ang gobyerno, mga LGUs, ang pribadong sektor, at ang taumbayan – magtatagumpay tayo sa pandemya at makakabangon ang bansa (When we all cooperate – the government, local government units, private sector and the nation – we will triumph over the pandemic and country can recover),” he said.

As of March 16, the country has recorded 631,320 cases of infections with 12,848 deaths. Health authorities have reported an increase in cases following the recent detection of new coronavirus variants in the country.

President Duterte had earlier blamed the case spike on the abandonment of health precautions by some Filipinos. He has appealed anew to the public to wear masks, keep safe distance from others, among others, to avoid getting infected. (With a report from Genalyn D. Kabiling)