

## Belmonte to QCPD: Explain blocking SONA protesters

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The Philippine Star · 28 Jul 2021 · 16 · – Janvic Mateo

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Quezon City Mayor Joy Belmonte yesterday directed the head of the city's police force to explain the reported breach of an agreement made by the city government with organizers of the protests held during President Duterte's final State of the Nation Address (SONA). Belmonte asked Quezon City Police District chief Brig. Gen. Antonio Yarra to submit a written explanation on why barriers were set up along Commonwealth Avenue, blocking the protest march earlier agreed upon by the parties.

Former Bayan Muna representative Teddy Casiño, in a series of tweets during the protests last Monday, said a police official decided to put up the barriers.

"Protesters are only asking that the orange barriers be removed and the march allowed to reach its destination in Tandang Sora Avenue, as earlier agreed" upon with the city government and police, he added.

Last Friday, Belmonte consented to the SONA-related activities after the organizers committed to strictly implement health protocols to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

Among the activities allowed was a march along a portion of Commonwealth Avenue, provided that it will not extend beyond the intersection of Tandang Sora Avenue.

According to the city government, the police and the Department of the Interior and Local Government, through Belmonte, approved the detailed plans submitted by rally organizers.