

No politics in granular lockdowns – Belmonte

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Quezon City Mayor Joy Belmonte assured residents that politics does not play a role in the declaration of special concern lockdowns (SCLs) in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. “The lockdown is not a political act. It’s a decision of our city epidemiology and surveillance unit (CESU),” she said in an interview with “The Chiefs” on Signal TV’s One News on Wednesday night.

“Here in Quezon City, the people can be assured that lockdowns are all purely medical interventions to prevent COVID-19,” she added.

Belmonte noted that politicians do not interfere with the decisions of the local health officials, saying she does not even sign the letter informing the Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases.

“I assign the city administrator to do it because I do not want to be involved in anything that has to do with the lockdown, to prevent any speculations that this might be something that is political,” she added.

The mayor was responding to a question on the possibility that lockdowns may be used to prevent voters from taking part in next year’s elections.

According to her, the city has clear policies and guidelines to prevent this from happening. Last month, she issued new guidelines on the pilot implementation of Alert Levels in the city, which included details on how the SCL system would be implemented.

“The city may implement SCLs not only when vital to contain COVID-19 outbreaks, but also when preemptively necessary in areas with high risk of disease transmission due to widespread health protocol violations and other relevant factors,” it read.

“The city government, in coordination with the barangay concerned, shall determine the precise area covered by each SCL on a case-to-case basis,” it added.

Forty-seven areas in Quezon City are currently under SCL, which is seen as an effective measure to prevent further transmission of the virus. It covers only specific areas within communities and not entire barangays.

All residents in areas under lockdown undergo swab testing, with the city government providing food packs and other essential kits.