Belmonte urges Arayat, Pampanga LGU to lift entry restriction on QC residents

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QUEZON City Mayor Joy Belmonte on Monday strongly denounced the Arayat, Pampanga local government's decision to restrict the entry of Quezon City residents to their municipality, stressing that the move is "totally without basis, can cause undue panic, and is tantamount to discrimination."

In a news statement, Belmonte said "for the enlightenment of the Arayat local government unit, who obviously did not refer to official news reports and health experts, we would like to emphasize the following points again:"

The traveler who tested positive for the UK variant of Covid-19 did not foot in Quezon City at any time upon his return to the country from Dubai last January 7.

The said patient stayed in a quarantine hotel as part of the 14-day mandatory quarantine period. He was tested on January 7 upon arrival. The day after, it was confirmed he was Covid-19 positive. His sample was sent to the Philippine Genome Center. On the night of January 13, the city government and the City Health Department were informed by the Department of Health (DOH) that he has the socalled UK variant. Since January 8, he has been staying at a facility where he remains up to this day for treatment.

A total of 143 individuals who are considered contacts have been identified, quarantined and are closely being monitored. Among them are more than 30 health-care workers and barangay workers who assisted and cared for the patient when he was transferred from the quarantine hotel in Manila to the isolation facility in Quezon City after he was tested positive for the virus.

All but one of the traveler's eight close contacts are now in quarantine while awaiting their test results while there are intensified efforts to contact the last one.

"For the above-mentioned reasons, we appeal to the Arayat Pampanga LGU to reconsider its earlier order and allow QC residents to enter its jurisdiction," Belmonte stressed.