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**A Year in Lockdown in the Philippines: Timeline of the Pandemic  
and Conditions of Living under Quarantine Rules (Part 1.)**

**Abstract:** The article examines the course of the spread of the coronavirus infection epidemic in the Philippines during the first year, 2020, from the moment of the first confirmed cases of infection to the present time. The author pays attention to how the epidemic developed from May to December 2020, what measures were taken by the country's national government to combat the coronavirus, in which tightly regulated framework people were forced to live. We are considering 4 types of quarantines that were introduced by the Philippine government in different regions of the country during the specified period.

**Keywords:** Covid-19, cases of infection, deaths, quarantine, employees, basic necessity goods, transport

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**ГОД ЖИЗНИ В ЛОКДАУНЕ НА ФИЛИППИНАХ:  
ХОД ПАНДЕМИИ И УСЛОВИЯ ЖИЗНИ В КАРАНТИНЕ  
(Часть 1.)**

**Аннотация:** Статья рассматривает ход распространения эпидемии коронавирусной инфекции на Филиппинах в течение первого – 2020 – года с момента первых подтвержденных случаев заражения до нынешнего времени. Автор уделяет внимание тому, как развива-

лась эпидемия с мая по декабрь месяц 2020 г., тому какие меры принимались национальным правительством страны для борьбы с коронавирусом, в каких жестко регулируемых рамках вынуждены были жить люди. Рассматриваются 4 типа карантина, которые вводились правительством Филиппин в разных областях страны в течение означенного периода.

**Ключевые слова:** COVID-19, случаи заражения, случаи смерти, карантин, работники, товары первой необходимости, транспорт

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Year 2020 turned out to be full of hardships throughout the whole world due to the beginning and fast spread of the Covid-19 pandemic, which both plainly killed millions of people worldwide and also revealed and accentuated numerous social and economic problems in a number of countries in different regions. Among the South-East Asian states, the Philippines became one of the most unfortunate, so to say, due to the fact that it has had a bunch of grave and essential issues which are still on their way to be solved in order to improve the standard of living in the country in general. That is why, briefly speaking, the prognosis for further Covid-19 epidemic development and its results for the country look rather pessimistic as for now. In order to either prove it right or prove it wrong this article is to analyze the whole situation with the Covid-19 era life in the Philippines. Going along with the process of the pandemic here, looking through the contra-measures taken by the government and examining how permanent Filipino problems “bloomed” under the influence of the coronavirus situation I aim to give my own view and conclusion on the topic.

**Timeline of the Covid-19 pandemic in the Philippines.** According to the WHO statistics up to date there were 538,995 confirmed cases of Covid-19 and 11,231 resulting deaths in the Philippines. Judging by the diagrams showing dynamics of the pandemic in case of transmission

it began worsening starting with late May – early June, whereas the death rate skyrocketed in early July. Pick day in a matter of transmission turned out to be August 11, when there were registered 6,725 confirmed cases, daily increase of 3,697 cases, which made up to 122.09% of daily change. Pick day in a matter of death rate came about later, on September 15, when 259 deaths were registered. It made a daily increase of 180 deaths or 227.85% of daily change<sup>1</sup>.

Comparing with China – the source of the pandemic – in the Philippines it started a bit later, namely in late January – early February, quite similar to other countries of the region. The first non-Filipino case on the territory of the country was confirmed on January 30 and that was also the date when The Research Institute for Tropical Medicine began conducting confirmatory tests for the disease. Before this date, confirmatory tests were conducted abroad<sup>2</sup>. Further on, on March 6 first two cases of Filipino citizens contaminated with Covid-19 were fixed (being the fourth and the fifth cases in the general count)<sup>3</sup>. When on next day the sixth case was confirmed, which turned out to be the first local transmission of Covid-19<sup>4</sup>, the Department of Health raised a Code Red Sub-Level 1 as a precautionary measure<sup>5</sup>.

Since then, the situation has been almost constantly escalating and changing in the following way:

- **March 9** – President Duterte formally declared a state of public health emergency in the Philippines<sup>6</sup>. It presumed the suspension of all classes, in public and private, in Metro Manila from March 10 to 14<sup>7</sup>.
- **March 12** – President Duterte announced a partial lockdown on Metro Manila covering 16 cities and one municipality and beginning on March 15. Land, domestic air, and domestic sea travel to and from Metro Manila was suspended until April 14, 2020, and only international departures were permitted. Entry travel restrictions were imposed upon those traveling from countries with localized Covid-19 transmissions, except for Filipino citizens (including their foreign spouse and children) or holders of Permanent Resident Visas and Diplomat Visas. Mass transportation within Metro Manila continued to operate with social distancing guidelines<sup>8</sup>.
- **March 15** – The National Capital Region and the municipality of Cainta in Rizal was placed under "community quarantine" or a partial lockdown till April 14.
- **March 16** – President Duterte announced the placement of the entire island of Luzon including its associated islands on "enhanced community quarantine," practically imposing a lockdown on the island<sup>9</sup>.

- **March 17** – President Rodrigo Duterte signed Proclamation No. 929 that placed the entire Philippines under the state of calamity on account of Covid-19<sup>10</sup>.
- **March 23** – President Duterte was granted emergency powers to handle Covid-19 under the "**Bayanihan to Heal as One Act of 2020**"<sup>11</sup>.
- **March 28** – the number of confirmed Covid-19 cases leaped both the 900 and 1000th mark, bringing the Covid-19 cases in the Philippines to 1,075<sup>12</sup>.
- **March 30** – President Rodrigo Duterte announced an **allotment of ₱200 billion** to help low-income households affected by the implementation of the enhanced community quarantine to prevent the spread of the coronavirus disease 2019<sup>13</sup>.
- **April 1** – protesters demanding food aid were arrested by Quezon City police<sup>14</sup>. President Duterte ordered soldiers to protect themselves from violent unruly protesters and quarantine violators<sup>15</sup>.
- **April 12** – the Philippine government now required public disclosure of personal information of Covid-19 patients to further contain the spread of the virus<sup>16</sup>.
- **April 14** – President Rodrigo Duterte approved the **Small Business Relief Program** to help some 1.6 million small businesses and their 3.4 million employees affected by the implementation of the enhanced community quarantine in Luzon and other areas of the country<sup>17</sup>.
- **April 24** – Duterte announced another extension for the enhanced community quarantine until May 15, 2020, but only for selected provinces that are considered as high-risk areas. Other provinces were placed under general community quarantine effective May 1, 2020<sup>18</sup>.
- **April 30** – President Duterte issued Executive Order No. 112, s. 2020 – placing ECQ in NCR, Central Luzon (except Aurora), CALABARZON, Benguet, Pangasinan, Iloilo, Cebu, Bacolod City, and Davao City; and GCQ for the rest of the country May 1–15, 2020<sup>19</sup>.
- **May 6** – the country breached the 10,000-mark in its tally Covid-19 cases with 320 fresh cases recorded, bringing the total to 10,004<sup>20</sup>.
- **May 14** – The government lifted restrictions on Filipino departures for overseas employment<sup>21</sup>.
- **May 16** – Metro Manila, the cities of Angeles and Bacoor, and the provinces of Laguna, Bataan, Bulacan, Nueva Ecija, Pampanga, and Zambales were placed under modified enhanced community quarantine (MECQ), which is more lenient than an ECQ but stricter than a

GCQ. Cebu City and Mandaue City were placed under ECQ while the rest of the country was placed under GCQ<sup>22</sup>.

- **May 26** – All mayors of Metro Manila cities agreed that the National Capital Region would be placed from MECQ to GCQ effective June 1. The local government units may still place certain barangays or villages under lockdown if they see it fit to do so<sup>23</sup>.
- **May 31** – The Enhanced community quarantine in Luzon ends, as most localities downgrade to either general community quarantine or modified general community quarantine.
- **June 1** – President Duterte downgraded NCR to GCQ together with Davao City, Cagayan Valley, Central Luzon, Calabarzon, Pangasinan, and Albay from June 1–30, 2020<sup>24</sup>.
- **June 28** – WHO data reported that the Philippines had fastest Covid-19 cases rise in Western Pacific region<sup>25</sup>.
- **July 8** – Philippines breached the 50,000-mark of Covid-19 cases recorded with thousand five hundred thirty-nine new cases were confirmed, bringing the Covid-19 cases in the country to 50,359<sup>26</sup>.
- **July 14** – several Metro Manila hospitals reached full capacity, making the region classified under "danger zone" in terms of bed capacity<sup>27</sup>. Four regions, namely Central Visayas, Calabarzon, Davao Region, and Central Luzon are classified under "warning zone"<sup>28</sup>.
- **July 16** – Cebu City shifted to MECQ. Metro Manila remained under GCQ for another two weeks. Provinces and cities under GCQ included: Laguna, Cavite, Rizal, Mandaue City, Lapu-Lapu City, Ormoc City, Southern Leyte, Zamboanga City, Butuan City, Agusan del Norte, Basilan, and Talisay, Minglanilla, and Concepcion in Cebu Province. The rest of the country shifted to MGCQ<sup>29</sup>.
- **July 21** – President Duterte allowed limited face-to-face classes in MGCQ areas<sup>30</sup>. The Philippine government aimed to have 10 million Filipinos, or 10 percent of the total current population, tested by 2021<sup>31</sup>.
- **July 23** – free Covid-19 testing was launched at Vicente Sotto Memorial Medical Center, Cebu City. It became the first free testing outside of Metro Manila<sup>32</sup>.
- **August 1** – Cebu City downgraded to GCQ. Metro Manila still remained under GCQ. Provinces and cities under GCQ included: Batangas, Bulacan, Cavite, Laguna, Rizal, Lapu-Lapu, Mandaue, Talisay, Minglanilla, Consolacion, and Zamboanga City. The rest of the country was under MGCQ<sup>33</sup>.

- **August 2** – the country breached 100,000-mark on the number of Covid-19 cases with five thousand thirty-two new cases were confirmed, bringing the Covid-19 cases to 103,185<sup>34</sup>. President Duterte made a decision to revert Metro Manila, Bulacan, Cavite, Laguna, and Rizal back on MECQ starting August 4 until August 18.
- **August 6** – the country had the most number of total Covid-19 cases, surpassing Indonesia in terms of cases in Southeast Asia<sup>35</sup>.
- **August 18** – President Duterte approved recommendation to place NCR, Bulacan, CALABARZON, Nueva Ecija, Iloilo City, Cebu City, Lapu-Lapu City, Mandaue City, Talisay City, Minglanilla and Consolacion under GCQ, while the rest of the country under MGCQ from August 19–31, 2020<sup>36</sup>.
- **August 26** – Covid-19 cases in the country breached 200,000 mark, with 202,361 total confirmed cases after reporting 5,277 additional cases<sup>37</sup>.
- **August 31** – President Duterte set NCR, Bulacan, Batangas, Tacloban City, and Bacolod City under GCQ and Iligan City under MECQ from September 1–30, 2020<sup>38</sup>.
- **September 26** – Cases in the country breached 300,000 mark, with 2,727 new COVID-19 cases bringing the total of 301,256 infected individuals<sup>39</sup>.
- **September 28** – Whole Metro Manila goes under General Community Quarantine (GCQ) together with Batangas, Tacloban City, Bacolod City, Iligan City, and Iloilo City from October 1–31, 2020. Lanao del Sur including Marawi City set under modified general community quarantine (MGCQ) and rest of the country under modified general community quarantine (MGCQ)<sup>40</sup>.
- **October 5** – Department of Education officially opened school year 2020–2021 in over 47,000 public schools in the country through blended learning. For the first time in Philippine education system history, school opened in the homes of 22.44 million public school students<sup>41</sup>.
- **October 16** – Indonesia surpassed the Philippines in the number of confirmed cases and related deaths due to Covid-19, highest in Southeast Asia. Indonesia reported 365,200 cases and 12,600 deaths, meanwhile the Philippines had over 359,100 infected patients and 6,600 death record<sup>42</sup>.
- **October 30** – Malacañang announced that Metro Manila, Batangas, Iloilo City, Bacolod City, Tacloban, Iligan City, and Lanao del Sur

would be placed under GCQ for the month of November. Meanwhile, the rest of the country under MGCQ<sup>43</sup>.

- **November 4** – President Duterte issued Executive Order No. 118, s. 2020, mandating DOH and DTI, to determine price ranges and to ensure accessibility and affordability of Covid-19 tests and test kits<sup>44</sup>.
- **November 11** – The country breached the 400,000 mark, with 1,672 new cases making the total of 401,416 confirmed cases<sup>45</sup>.
- **November 24** – Bloomberg Survey placed Philippines at 43th out of 53 countries in Covid-19 Resilience Ranking, dropped behind compare to Asian neighbours<sup>46</sup>.
- **November 26** – The Senate approved P4.5-T 2021 national budget which includes increased funding for Covid-19 vaccines, continued contact tracing operations, RITM, and budgets of regional public hospitals including bed capacity and equipment and facilities upgrade<sup>47</sup>.
- **November 30** – President Duterte announced GCQ on NCR, Batangas, Iloilo City, Tacloban City, Lanao del Sur, Iligan, Davao City, and Davao del Norte from December 1–31, 2020. The rest of the country will be under MGCQ.
- **December 1** – President Duterte signed Executive Order No. 121, s. 2020, granting authority to FDA to issue emergency use authorization for Covid-19 drugs and vaccines<sup>48</sup>.
- **December 17** – World Bank approved \$900-million loan for the country's Covid-19 recovery projects<sup>49</sup>. A businessman confirmed that unauthorized Covid-19 vaccination activities are happening in few undisclosed locations in the country without any government approval<sup>50</sup>.
- **December 21** – Foreign Affairs secretary Teodoro Locsin Jr. revealed that the country is expected to receive 30 million doses of Covid-19 vaccine from Novavax as confirmed by Serum Institute of India, the world's largest vaccine producer<sup>51</sup>. House Bill No. 8280 was filed by Ang Probinsyano Party-list Representative Ronnie Ong that aims to provide vaccine passports for Covid-19 and other infectious diseases<sup>52</sup>.
- **December 23** – Malacañang suspended incoming flights from the UK from December 24–31, 2020, over the fear of the new and more infectious coronavirus variant, VOC-202012/01.
- **December 26** – Malacañang revealed that Pfizer-BioNTech had applied for an emergency use authorization (EUA) for its vaccine, to allow its availability in the country<sup>53</sup>. Meanwhile, President Duterte declared that the country will terminate VFA if US fails to deliver

Covid-19 vaccines<sup>54</sup>. Malacañang canceled its order that allows face-to-face classes on January 2021 over the threat of the new variant<sup>55</sup>.

- **December 27** – President Duterte revealed that many already received Sinopharm vaccine, including military men despite it has yet to get approval from FDA<sup>56</sup>. The Philippines logged 883 new cases, the lowest total number of daily cases in 5 months since July 14, 2020 when the country reported 634 cases. This increased the total number of cases to 469,886<sup>57</sup>.
- **December 28** – President Duterte announced new quarantine classifications from January 1–31, 2021 – places under GCQ are Metro Manila, Isabela, Santiago City, Batangas, Iloilo, Tacloban City, Lanao del Sur, Iligan City, Davao City, and Davao del Norte, while the rest of the country under MGCQ<sup>58</sup>.
- **December 29** – FDA approved Johnson & Johnson's COVID-19 Janssen vaccine for clinical trial application<sup>59</sup>. The country expanded travel ban to 20 countries namely – Australia, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Hong Kong, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Lebanon, Netherlands, Singapore, South Africa, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and United Kingdom amid the threat of Variant of Concern 202012/01<sup>60</sup>.
- **December 30** – PhilHealth announced that agency's premium rate is set increase in 2021 amid the pandemic to 3.50% of monthly basic salary from the present 3.00%. Individuals earning below P10,000 will have fixed rate of P350 per month while those earning P70,000 monthly or more is fixed at P2,450 per month. Based on the Republic Act No. 11223 or Universal health care (UHC) Law of 2018, the rate shall increase to increments of 0.5% annually, starting next year until will be peaked at 5% limit by 2025<sup>61</sup>.
- **December 31** – At the end of the year, the country recorded 1,541 new cases adding to the 474,064 total; The number of cases was lower than estimated data by OCTA Research Group<sup>62</sup>.

The timeline of Covid-19 pandemic development in the Philippines shows the whole picture quite well, still there are some particular points here interesting for analyzing. These points will be specifically examined further on while speaking on the results of the first Covid-19 year in the Philippines.

And here in order to fully understand in what conditions the Filipino people had to live throughout last year it is necessary to first define all types of quarantine used in the country at different times. Needless to say, that all the states in the world had to face more or less similar re-



strictions, but in reality these restrictions could be rather different from country to country. Let us look into how it was in the Philippines.

**Продолжение: Том II, № 2 (51), 2021.**

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