



Enforce 10-day quarantine for arriving international travelers – health expert

By JHON ALDRIN CASINAS

A molecular biologist and priest has recommended that authorities should enforce a 10-day hotel quarantine for international travelers arriving in the National Capital Region (NCR) and Cebu.

"The science shows that this [10-day] quarantine is 99.7 percent effective at preventing vari-

ants from entering a country," Rev. Fr. Nicanor Austriaco O.P. said in a public briefing Thursday, June 17.

Austriaco emphasized the need to protect the country from the Delta variant of coronavirus disease (COVID-19), which swept across India recently, triggering a "tsunami" of new infections and deaths.

"There is no scientific evidence that a seven-day

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quarantine would protect us enough from the Indian variant," he said.

"And if it [Delta variant] enters Cebu, it will enter the entire country and it will be catastrophic because we will get another surge and it would destroy Christmas this year," he added.

He said that other countries have more strict arrival protocols in place such as in Thailand, United Kingdom, New Zealand, and Australia where international travelers are required to undergo a 14-day hotel quarantine.

He also pointed out that Hong Kong requires a 21-day hotel or home quarantines for foreign travelers, saying that such measures were "100 percent effective" in preventing the variants from entering its borders.

"We must protect the Filipino peo-

ple from new variants of COVID-19 especially the Indian variant, because the Indian variant is 50 percent more transmissible the current variant we have today, the UK variant," he said.

Instead of shortening the quarantine days for arriving travelers, Austriaco, who is also one of the fellow in independent research group OCTA Research, urged the government to seek other ways to verify the "vaccine status for returning Filipinos."

"I know how incredibly burdensome and expensive the 10-day quarantine is," said Austriaco who returned to the country from the United States last month.

"It is very expensive, it is difficult but it is a sacrifice for the Philippines because we must protect the country against the Indian variant," he added.