



Republic of the Philippines  
Department of Health  
**OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY**  
*Communications Management Unit*

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## DOH justifies abolition of 10-nation travel ban, sets controls

THE Department of Health (DOH) on Monday defended the decision to lift the restrictions on people traveling from 10 countries, saying border control measures

remain in place.

The travel restrictions on India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, the United Arab Emirates, Oman, Thailand, Malaysia,

and Indonesia were lifted on Monday after President Rodrigo Duterte approved the recommendation of the COVID-19 task force over the weekend.

In an online briefing, Health Undersecretary Maria Rosario Vergeire said the COVID-19 situation has improved in

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countries previously covered by the travel ban such as India, Indonesia, and Malaysia.

Vergeire said these countries have been placed on the "yellow list" for having moderate risk for COVID-19.

"We don't have to worry because we have safeguards in place. Even if we don't impose a travel restriction on a particular country, our strict border control requires travelers to undergo quarantine. There is no exemption," Vergeire said.

Inbound travelers from areas on the "Yellow list," regardless of their vaccination status, will undergo a 14-day quarantine upon arrival, with the first 10 days at a quarantine facility and the remaining four days under home quarantine.

They will also have RT-PCR testing on the seventh day, counting the day of their arrival as Day 1.

Vice President Leni Robredo, however, questioned the lifting of travel curbs while infections in the country continue to spike.

"I hope all of our policies are data-driven. I don't know why we removed this restriction when our cases are increasing. Other countries are very strict," Robredo said in Filipino during her weekly radio program over the weekend.

Senator Imee Marcos labeled as "reckless if not premature" the recommendation by the Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF) to lift the travel ban.

The action, she said, would only add anxiety to people who are already seeing cases spike on a daily basis.

Senator Risa Hontiveros also questioned the move as hospitals are still close to full capacity.

"Are they playing with this?" she said.

The labor group Anakpawis asked why the government would impose granular lockdowns when it simultaneously allows international travelers to come into the country?

"We don't know what to make of the Malacanang and IATF's decision," said Anakpawis national president Ariel Casilao. "It's senseless and unproductive."

**Willie Casas and  
Macon Ramos-Araneta**

