

**Office of the Press Secretary
Presidential News Desk**

Media interview of President Ferdinand Romualdez Marcos Jr. during his visit to the Pasig City Sports Complex vaccination site for the PinasLakas Booster Vaccination Campaign

[Held at Pasig City Sports Complex in Pasig City, Manila | 01 August 2022]

MARIZ UMALI (GMA-7): Good afternoon, Mr. President. Mariz Umali po of GMA-7. Mr. President, una po sa lahat ano po ba ang mga instructions natin sa Department of Health ngayon pong number one, may increasing cases of COVID sa bansa, specifically mataas po 'yung positivity rate sa VisMin areas? And number two, now that there is already a confirmed case of monkeypox in the Philippines, is there a need to change the border protocols or screening given this situation, Mr. President?

PRESIDENT MARCOS: The first you asked was that — what was the instruction to the DOH?

MS. UMALI: Mr. President, the first question is what are your instructions to the Department of Health given that there is an increasing case of COVID in the country, specifically po mataas po 'yung positivity rate seen in the VisMin areas?

PRESIDENT MARCOS: Well that's exactly the — this what we have here now, this booster rollout is really because it came — was borne [out] of the discussions that I had with the Department of Health, with Usec. Vergeire and all of her staff to find out what really was the situation.

But we have to remember that the situation now in August 2022 is very, very different from it was maybe in July, June of last year.

We have now the vaccines and many, many people have been vaccinated already. Of course, we still have — the subject of the booster rollout actually came about because we were talking about the face-to-face classes this coming semester.

So sabi namin, eh paghandaan na natin lahat. And the DOH's — ang rekomendasyon ng DOH ay sabi nila huwag lang 'yung mga bata. Lahat na dapat mapa-booster na natin para talagang ligtas na sila doon sa ano — ligtas na sila diyan sa COVID or Omicron and its variants.

Yes, it's unfortunate that we have recorded our monkeypox case one, one monkeypox. Let me stress on that, it is one monkeypox case here in the Philippines. And as of now, the patient, 'yung pasyente nung monkeypox ay pagaling na at malapit — umuwi na yata? Yeah, nakauwi na.

So we don't have anymore cases of monkeypox. But even then, I want to be very clear to everyone, this is not COVID. Walang — hindi kagaya ng COVID ito. Hindi kasing — hindi nakakatakot kagaya ng COVID 'yung monkeypox. Parang smallpox, para kang may smallpox. Marami namang gamot. Kaya't puwede naman nating gamutin.

Pero again, ganoon din eh. Kagaya ng lahat ng sakit, kailangan malinis ang mga kamay natin. Medyo mag-ingat lang tayo sa sanitation, 'yung mga bagay-bagay na ganyan. Pero sa ngayon, 'yung monkeypox ay talagang nakabantay tayo dahil nasanay na tayo rito sa COVID. Nakabantay tayo nang husto. Pero siguro masasabi natin sa ngayon, madaling masabi na wala tayong kaso dito sa Pilipinas sa ngayon.

ALEXIS ROMERO (THE PHILIPPINE STAR): Mr. President, I'm Alexis Romero from the Philippine Star. Since you met recently with some officials regarding the ICC...

PRESIDENT MARCOS: Hirap na hirap. Ang hirap ano — kasi nag-e-echo.

MR. ROMERO: Sige po, sige po. Okay take two po. Since you met recently with some officials regarding the ICC probe, will the Philippines rejoin the ICC and will the Philippines meet the September 8 deadline set by the ICC to provide observations on the planned reopening of the probe on the drug war?

PRESIDENT MARCOS: No, the Philippines has no intention of rejoining the ICC. The meeting that we had with the SolGen, the Secretary of the Department of Justice, kasama na rin diyan si Senator Enrile who has become my legal adviser, amongst other, we — yes also si Atty. Harry Roque because he is involved and recognized by the ICC — ang mineeting (meeting) namin ay dahil sinasabi ngayon na itutuloy ang imbestigasyon.

Eh sinasabi naman namin may imbestigasyon naman dito at patuloy rin naman ang imbestigasyon, bakit magkakaroon ng ganoon?

So anyway, para alam natin ang gagawin natin, if we will respond, if we will not respond, kung ano — kung sakali man sasagot tayo, anong magiging sagot natin; or possible din, basta hindi natin papansinin dahil hindi naman tayo sumasailalim sa kanila.

Pero the ICC is a very different kind of a court kaya't pinag-aralan muna. Sinabi ko pag-aralin niyo munang mabuti 'yung procedure para tama 'yung gagawin natin. Kasi hindi natin siyempre kailangan — baka ma-misinterpret 'yung ating mga ginagawa. Kaya't liwanagin natin kung ano ba talaga ang dapat gawin, sinong susulat kanino, anong ilalagay sa sulat, et cetera, et cetera.

REX REMITIO (CNN PHILIPPINES): Mr. President, good afternoon.

PRESIDENT MARCOS: Good afternoon.

MR. REMITIO: Rex po from CNN Philippines. 'Di ba po 'yung House Bill 9652, 'yung doon sa honoraria and tax exemptions for poll workers. Can you tell us more about your — just for your veto?

PRESIDENT MARCOS: The bill that you're talking about was supposed to give tax breaks to election workers. Right? Vineto (veto) ko because as I have always said, hindi ko... Halimbawa nung doon sa VAT ng gasolina, sinabi ko kaagad hindi ko babawasan 'yung VAT ng gasolina pero 'yung mga tinamaan ng pagtaas ng gasolina, bibigyan natin kaagad ng ayuda.

So ganoon din ang iniisip namin kasi isipin ninyo we are trying to simplify 'yung payment ng BIR. Ngayon kung lalagyan natin ng bagong kategorya 'yan and there will be more chance of leakage, the confusion, mas mahirap gawin, eh mas magkakaproblema baka 'yung iba, the red tape, makakain lang ng red tape 'yan. So that's one reason why we did not do it.

But as a matter of principle, ang sinasabi ko hindi kasi pagka gumawa ka ng tax subsidy, hindi mo alam kung sino ang makakakuha dahil kahit 'yung hindi nangangailangan nakakakuha ng subsidy. Hindi naman dapat sila bigyan.

Ngayon, hindi ibig sabihin nito na kinalimutan natin 'yung ating mga election workers. Mayroon — babalikan natin sila pagka nagka-eleksyon, eh 'di titingnan natin sino ba talaga ang nagtrabaho? Ilang oras sila, ilang araw sila nagtrabaho dito? Ano 'yung kanilang position? Sila ba'y naging — sila 'yung nag-aano doon sa mga makina? Whatever it is.

And then, doon tayo magdadagdag ng ayuda and we do not have to put a new section, a new category sa pagbayad ng tax dahil ang sa pagbigay ng ayuda, 'yung buong makinarya na pagbigay ng ayuda ay nandiyan na. Sasabihin na lang natin okay isama natin doon sa mga magiging beneficiary ang mga election workers.

Iyon ang gagawin namin. Iyon ang — para maging mas maayos ang pagbigay pati ng ayuda. 'Yung national ID we are counting on the national ID to help with that. Kung sakali hawak na nila 'yung national ID, wala na. Hindi na sila mag-a-apply, hindi na sila kahit na anong gagawin. Basta't papadala na lang namin 'yung ayuda.

MODERATOR: Thank you very much, President Bongbong Marcos.

PRESIDENT MARCOS: Sige.

MODERATOR: Thank you, Malacañang Press Corps.

PRESIDENT MARCOS: Maraming salamat. Thank you very much. *[applause]*

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