



Republic of the Philippines
Supreme Court
Manila

FROM THE CHAMBERS OF:

Estela M. Perlas-Bernabe

ACTING CHIEF JUSTICE

Re: Physical closure of courts in the National Capital Judicial Region and nearby provinces from March 29 to 31, 2021 and throughout the Holy Week.

In view of the alarming surge of COVID-19 cases and upon consultation with the members of the Court *En Banc*, as well as the heads of the concerned offices, the **physical closure** of all courts and court offices (Supreme Court, Court of Appeals, Court of Tax Appeals, *Sandiganbayan*, and trial courts) in the National Capital Judicial Region, and nearby provinces of Bulacan, Cavite, Laguna, and Rizal is hereby **EXTENDED** effective **March 29 (Monday) to March 31 (Wednesday), 2021 and throughout the Holy Week**.


In the foregoing regard, all hearings in the abovementioned courts are **temporarily suspended** during this period, **except on urgent matters**, such as but not limited to petitions, motions and pleadings in relation to bail and *habeas corpus*, promulgation of judgments of acquittal, reliefs for those who may be arrested and detained during this period, and other related actions that may be filed in relation to measures imposed at the local or national levels to address the declared health emergency.

However, all courts and court offices must continue to remain accessible to the public through their respective hotlines and email addresses, as published in the Supreme Court website, *i.e.*, <https://sc.judiciary.gov.ph/hotlines>, to act on urgent matters and to address pertinent queries.

Relative to the public health situation, further notices/guidelines will be subsequently issued in order to better address the health and safety concerns of court personnel and litigants, which must, at the same time, be delicately balanced with the Judiciary's unwavering mandate to dispense justice to our people.

Indeed, the Supreme Court, as well as the entire Judiciary, empathizes with the plight of the general public in the midst of these trying times. Although the pandemic has posed dire challenges to the courts' ranks, the judicial institution remains unified, steadfast, and hopeful to rise to the occasion, as we all overcome this health crisis together with a renewed sense of optimism and courage, and an unyielding regard for justice and the rule of law.

March 27, 2021


ESTELA M. PERLAS-BERNABE
Acting Chief Justice