



Salig Bangsamoro

(Trust Bangsamoro) is Rooted in Trust Philippines' biweekly rumor bulletin for humanitarians. Rooted in Trust is a global and local humanitarian response run by Internews to fight the spread of rumors on COVID-19. In the Philippines, the focus is on the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM).

This week's bulletin answers three concerns we have heard through our social media monitoring platforms.

People questioned the implementation of social distancing measures in public transportation in Marawi City. Residents in Cotabato City believe that they need bullet proof vests, not face shields, as more people are reported to be killed from senseless violence than from COVID-19. Lastly, an allegation on the process of hiring contact tracers was raised in Lanao del Sur. This 3rd issue of the Salig Bangsamoro bulletin provides suggestions to counter these rumors and to see what people can do next.

What are people saying

No social distancing in Government's "Libreng Sakay"



"How come two passengers are not allowed in pedicab/tricycle while in the Libreng Sakay e-trike provided by the government, passengers are jam-packed? Are e-trikes exempted from the virus?"
(Female, 26-35 years old)

Rumor Risk Level: Medium

Platform: Facebook

Comments: 221

Reactions: 495

Shares: 1.4K

This claim from the community expresses doubt on government's response to the pandemic. This is not the first. Since September, there have been related rumors concerning mistrust on gov't initiatives. Some of these were related to controversies like allegations of corruption, and whether testing on COVID-19 is real. Issues like this may make people doubt the credibility of government's program to combat COVID-19. There is some anxiety from people who feel the current rules are not fair.

Social distancing of at least 1 meter in any transport vehicle is important to control local transmission of virus. Under the relaxed quarantine measures, jeepneys, multi-cabs, tri-cabs and tricycles are only permitted to carry half of their authorized capacity.

For tricycles, only the driver and one passenger are allowed. The Libreng Sakay e-trike (tri-cab) is not exempted from this guideline. The bigger capacity, the more space to prevent physical contact. This rule is not to rob the drivers of their income but to protect them from catching the virus.

The Libreng Sakay, which started last October 5 in Lanao del Sur is not for anyone's profit or benefit but to assist the medical frontliners and those authorized persons outside their homes in their everyday work. In addition to the measures of social distancing in public vehicles, if you need to go out make sure to follow these **"Seven Commandments"** issued by the medical experts:

1. Wear proper face mask
2. Wear face shield
3. No talking, no eating
4. Adequate ventilation
5. Frequent and proper disinfection
6. No symptomatic passengers
7. Observe physical distancing



WHY DOES IT MATTER?

What are people saying

Hiring allegations on Contact Tracers

Only those who are connected to local officials are hired as contact tracers. It is so unfair. I was informed it was an order from the mayor. Why is it people who don't have any connections can be easily removed from the list of candidates, despite being eligible and going through the right process?

Rumor Risk Level: Medium

Platform: Facebook

Reactions: 655

Comments: 47

Shares: 1K



This concern is related to the growing fears of people about whether they can trust the government's actions against COVID-19. As different measures are in motion, more people may question the efficacy or fairness of these government responses.

Contact tracers play an important role in our efforts to monitor COVID-19. The World Health Organization recommends one contact tracer to 800 people in community. The job has become a popular opportunity in these difficult times. Since it is personal to them, this allegation of biased hiring can often stir anger and impact their assessment of the whole effort. This adds suspicions that the motivation for COVID-19 is not health but money as has been the trend of other rumors we've identified lately from previous bulletins.

The region allotted 1,480 slots for hiring of contact tracers as currently there is one contact tracer to 6,721 population according to the Ministry of Health. The hiring process and any other process must be approached with a good level of transparency. We suggest that departments that are involved in these efforts provide the public accessible contact details for any clarifications.

WHY DOES IT MATTER?

What are people saying

Bullet proof vests and not face shield

"More people are being killed not by COVID-19 in Cotabato. What people need is bullet proof than face shield to protect themselves."
(Male, 19-25 years old)

Rumor Risk Level: Medium

Platform: Facebook Reactions: 256

Comments: 42 Shares: 666

WHY DOES IT MATTER?

Mindanao is caught between conflict and the coronavirus. For decades, the communities have been facing threats from several armed groups that negatively impact the peace and order situation in the region. With the spread of COVID-19, the threats have not completely stopped. But crimes which include murder, homicide, physical injuries in the region have slightly declined in the last three quarters this year which may be a result of the implementation of stricter quarantine measures. From 738 total crime incidents in January to March, it went down to 624 in April to June and to 619 in July to September.

Although a decrease in crime incidents was observed, senseless violence continues to perpetuate in communities despite the presence of COVID-19. In August 2020, nine farmers were massacred in Barangay Aringay, Kabacan in North Cotabato by unidentified suspects using high-powered firearms. Recently, a store supervisor was shot dead in front of her workplace in Sinsuat Avenue in Cotabato City. In response, the Bangsamoro Regional Police has deployed 300 more personnel in Cotabato City to strengthen law enforcement operations.

But efforts against COVID-19 are not here to replace peace and order issues, authorities need to find a balance to address both. The pandemic may also give opportunities for armed groups to tighten their grip over influence and use the COVID-19 response.

Communities, just as they are the 1st line of defense for conflict-affected areas and peace-building, are also the first line of defense to stop the spread of COVID-19. By wearing your face shields and face masks, and maintaining a 1-meter distance from other people, you can effectively reduce the transmission of COVID-19 by at least 99%

Estimated Risk Reduction of Contracting COVID-19 per Intervention (Dans, Herrera, et al., 2020)



YOUR HEALTH AND SAFETY IS ALSO YOUR PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY, LET'S PROTECT OURSELVES FROM COVID-19.

For more information on COVID-19: Visit the official DOH website at <http://www.doh.gov.ph/2019-nCoV>

If you have any complaints on the contact tracing application, you may contact:



The Ministry of Interior and Local Government

(064) 552 8644
(064) 421 2178
mlg@bangsamoro.gov.ph

If you see suspicious activities, please report them to:



Philippine National Police Hotlines:

Regional Headquarters: 09053524920
Maguindanao: 09177034075
Lanao del Sur: 09177909115
Basilan: 09976643779
Sulu: 09457236318
Tawi Tawi: 09177048927

Or contact the following hotlines:

BANGSAMORO EMERGENCY HOTLINE NUMBERS

Globe: 09663018777
Smart: 09363395221



AMAI PAKPAK MEDICAL CENTER- COVID HOTLINES

Smart: 09991909488
Globe: 09955632722



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Please contact: Kia Obang, Data Analyst (kobang@internews.org) or Paola Mikaela Alpay, Information Manager (palpay@internews.org)