

PRESS RELEASE

2020 May 04

Less arrivals and departures expected as airport closes

PASAY, Philippines—the Bureau of Immigration (BI) said that it expects further decrease in arrivals and departures following the announcement of the Manila International Airport Authority (MIAA) that all commercial flights to and from the Philippines will be suspended starting May 3.

According to reports, said action follows the decision of National Task Force Against COVID-19 Chief Implementer Secretary Carlito Galvez, Jr., to help slow down the further spread of the virus.

The MIAA likewise reported that cargo flights, as well as medical supplies, utility and maintenance flights will continue operation, subject to protocols set by the Inter-Agency Task Force in the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF-EID).

BI Commissioner Jaime Morente welcomed this development stating that “the move is essential in further slowing down the spread of the virus, as well as giving the country more time to increase our capacities in managing this disease.”

Morente said that he is hopeful that the travel industry will bounce back once the crisis is over, but believes that the temporary travel restriction set by the government is “a necessary sacrifice” and adds that the BI is ready to implement any restriction in the international movement of people, following the direction of the IATF.

In April, the BI recorded 41,249 arrivals and 23,187 departures at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport. “Most of those who arrived are Filipinos including overseas workers, and their families, while majority of those who left the country are foreign nationals who wished to go back to their home countries,” he shared. “This number is a far cry from the usual more than half a million arrivals and departures that we used to see monthly,” he added.

He clarified that travel restrictions remain in place, and only Filipinos, their spouse and children, as well as diplomats are allowed to enter the country, while foreign nationals, OFWs, permanent resident and student visa holders abroad are allowed to depart.

Currently, Immigration Officers deployed at the airports are on reduced operations following the suspension of operations of all international airports nationwide.