

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
DISTRICT OF PUERTO RICO**

IN RE:

CORONA VIRUS (COVID19) PUBLIC  
EMERGENCY

Misc. No. 20-0088 (GAG)

**FIFTH AMENDED ORDER CONTINUING CIVIL AND CRIMINAL PROCEEDINGS**

Given the continued risk of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, and, in the interest of protecting the health and well-being of court employees, members of the bar and the public, the Court hereby issues the following directives effective immediately:

1. The Court will continue to use its video teleconferencing (“VTC”) or teleconference systems to hold eligible civil and criminal proceedings until January 11, 2021.<sup>1</sup> Nonetheless, with the approval of the Chief Judge, certain critical in-person proceedings may be held by way of exception.

2. The Court finds that in all criminal cases the ends of justice served by the present continuance outweighs the interests of the parties and the public in a speedy trial, and, therefore shall be excluded under the Speedy Trial Act, 18 U.S.C. § 3161(h)(7)(A).

3. Jury Trials will resume in accordance with the District of Puerto Rico’s Jury Trial Plan.

4. Grand Jury proceedings will continue as scheduled.

5. Administration of Oath to Attorneys will resume on a limited basis.

6. Criminal matters before Magistrate Judges, such as initial appearances, arraignments, detention hearings, and the issuance of search warrants, shall continue to be conducted by VTC with the defendant’s consent.

7. All petty offense Central Violations Bureau hearings are continued until further notice.

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<sup>1</sup> For technical requirements and step-by-step instructions on how to participate in a VTC connection from outside the Court premises, the Court directs counsel to review the “*How to Setup a Video Tele-Conference (VTC) for Virtual Courtroom Proceedings*” instructions in the District Court’s Internet website by clicking [here](#).

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8. The Court extends the terms and conditions of its Visitor Entry Protocol until January 8, 2021.<sup>2</sup>

9. In accordance with the May 11, 2020 policy adopted by the Facilities Security Committee of the Federal Office Building in Hato Rey, all employees and visitors, including but not limited to members of the bar, press and public, are required to wear a face mask or face covering while in the premises of the Clemente Ruiz Nazario United States Courthouse and the Federico Degetau Federal Office Building in Hato Rey. This policy will continue until a further directive to the contrary is issued.

10. The Clerk's Office will continue to operate with only essential personnel until further notice. The Clerk's Office Intake Area at the Federico Degetau Federal Office Building will continue to operate on a limited schedule of Tuesdays and Fridays from 9:00AM to 4:00PM. During regular business hours, all court employees will telework, process court filings, issue orders and judgments, schedule hearings and conferences, and be available to answer telephone calls and emails from the public and bar.

11. Judge's participation in Naturalization Ceremonies held by the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service will be via a video conferencing system. On-site Naturalization Ceremonies are continued until further notice.

12. All non-case related events, including but not limited to public tours, and committee meetings are cancelled until further notice.

13. The Court may issue other orders concerning future continuances as necessary and appropriate.

IT IS SO ORDERED.

In San Juan, Puerto Rico, this 6 day of November 2020.



Gustavo A. Gelpí  
Chief, US District Judge

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<sup>2</sup> See [Standing Order, Visitor Entry Protocol Due to COVID-19](#), Misc. No. 20-088 (GAG) (Docket No. 1), March 11, 2020.