

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
DISTRICT OF PUERTO RICO

IN RE:

CORONA VIRUS (COVID19) PUBLIC
EMERGENCY

Misc. No. 20-0088 (GAG)

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

Given 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 District Court of Puerto Rico (“the Court”) hereby issues the following directives effective immediately:

1. The Court will continue to use its video (“VTC”) and/or teleconferencing (“TC”) systems to hold eligible civil and criminal proceedings until June 30, 2021.¹ Certain critical civil and criminal hearings, as well as any in which a criminal defendant is on bond, may be held in person by way of exception.
2. The Court finds that in all criminal cases, the ends of justice served by the present Order 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 may be held on a limited basis, in accordance with the District of Puerto Rico’s Jury Trial Plan.
4. Grand Jury proceedings will continue as scheduled.
5. Jury Qualification proceedings may be held, as needed.
6. Administration of Oath to Attorneys will continue to be held on a limited basis.
7. 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.
8. Beginning on June 1, 2021, petty offense Central Violations Bureau hearings shall be held combining the use of VTC systems with in-person appearances.
9. The Court extends the terms and conditions of its Visitor Entry Protocol until June 1st, 2021.²
10. In accordance with the policy adopted by the Facilities Security Committee of the

¹ 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](#).

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

Federal Office Building in Hato Rey, and the José A. Toledo United States Courthouse in Old San Juan, 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; and the José A. Toledo United States Courthouse in Old San Juan. This policy will continue until further directive to the contrary is issued.

11. The Clerk's Office will continue to operate with only essential personnel. The Clerk's Office Intake Area at the Federico Degetau Federal Office Building will continue to operate on a limited schedule, on Tuesdays and Fridays from 9:00a.m. to 4:00p.m.
12. Judge's participation in Naturalization Ceremonies held by the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service will be via video conferencing system. On-site Naturalization Ceremonies are continued until further notice.
13. All non-case related events, including but not limited to public tours, and committee meetings are cancelled until further notice.
14. The Court may issue other orders concerning future continuances as necessary and appropriate.

IT IS SO ORDERED.

In San Juan, Puerto Rico, this 27th day of April 2021.



Gustavo A. Gelpí
Chief, US District Judge