

21 February 2011 - The Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) advises Filipinos who have plans to proceed to Libya, Bahrain or Yemen to defer non-essential and non-urgent travels, until the security situation in those countries have stabilized.

This is in light of protest actions taking place in those countries.

The Philippine Embassies in Tripoli, Manama and Riyadh reported earlier that they are in heightened alert and said Filipinos in those countries are safe. They are also in constant contact with them. The Embassies have also established 24-hour crisis monitoring teams. The Embassy in Riyadh covers Yemen.

As of June 2010, there are around 31,000 Filipinos in Bahrain, while 1,400 are in Yemen and around 26,000 are in Libya.

The Embassies have also advised Filipinos to be alert when in public places or on major roads and to stay well away from large crowds and demonstrations.

The Embassy in Tripoli communicated with the human resources manager of SNC Lavelin Company on the situation of some 1,800 Filipino construction workers at an airport construction site in Benghazi city, and was informed that the Filipinos there are safe within the work site which has its own security complement. The worksite is some 19 kilometers from central Benghazi, where the protests are taking place.

According to SNC Lavelin, the Filipinos have accommodations and ample food and water.

The Embassy added that the Thai, Indonesian, Pakistani, Indian and Bangladeshi embassies-which also have sizable populations in Libya-have not announced any evacuation at this time. It is also on heightened alert.

In Libya, clashes between protesters and security forces snowballed on Sunday in the northeastern cities. News reports confirmed 173 deaths.

The Embassy in Riyadh said that it communicated with members of the Filipino community in Yemen, who informed them that the Filipinos in the country are relatively safe, and that malls and all transportation facilities are working normally.

In Yemen, President Ali Abdullah Saleh offered to oversee a dialogue between the ruling party and the opposition to defuse the stand-off with protesters.

Meanwhile, the Embassy in Manama has issued an advisory to Filipinos in Bahrain to remain calm and avoid joining or going in places of protest actions. It has also provided a telephone hotline.

Protest actions continued to cool down in Bahrain Sunday as opposition groups working to present protesters' demands met to coordinate a response to the government's call for dialogue.
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