



Embassy humanitarian/consular team leader Renato P.O. Villa (2nd from right, in blue shirt) shaking hands with Embara Budi community leader Alia Asfa (2nd from left). Also in photo are Embassy member Bonina and humanitarian/consular team member Fatima Guzman (right).

21 March 2013 – The Philippine Embassy in Kuala Lumpur's humanitarian/consular teams went on high gear when the team based in Lahad Datu, led by Team Leader Renato P.O. Villa, turned over on March 20 food packs and relief goods for Filipinos at the four evacuation centers located at the Federal Land Development Authority (FELDA) Salahat area.

The relief goods were received to Alia Asfa, a community leader at the Embara Budi evacuation center whose mother is Filipina-born, and evacuation center officials. There are around 1500 evacuees in four FELDA evacuation centers.

The packages contain rice, canned sardines, noodles and sugar and hygiene kits.

The humanitarian/consular team also processed and issued travel documents (TDs) and passport extensions to Filipinos there.

Full access to the Filipinos in the evacuation centers has yet to be given by Malaysian authorities to the humanitarian/consular team.

In Tawau, the humanitarian/consular team assigned there processed 348 TDs for Filipinos who expressed their desire to be repatriated, and are making arrangements for their repatriation to the Philippines.

The Embassy has ramped up consular services and assistance to Filipino nationals in Sabah.

Two officials from the Embassy, including Vice Consul Francis Herrera, left Kuala Lumpur on March 18, and joined the Embassy's humanitarian/consular team in Lahad Datu, specifically to provide passports and TD to Filipinos who have expressed their wish to return to the Philippines.

“Despite the challenges, our humanitarian/consular teams are deeply committed to providing assistance to our nationals in Sabah. One of the most important pillars of Philippine foreign policy is assistance to nationals, and we are working double time in providing it to them,” Philippine Ambassador to Malaysia J. Eduardo Malaya said. END