

10 January 2012 - The Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) announced today that it raises the crisis alert level in South Sudan to alert level 3 (voluntary repatriation) in light of the deteriorating security situation caused by inter-ethnic violence in the country, as well as for the protection of Filipinos in the area.

"For prudence's sake, we have raised crisis alert level 3 in South Sudan in light of escalating violence in the capital where most of our nationals are located. We are ready to move our people out, should they wish to leave," Foreign Affairs Secretary Albert F. del Rosario said.

Under crisis alert level 3, voluntary repatriation at government's expense will be offered to Filipinos who wish to leave South Sudan in light of the escalating tensions. In coordination with Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), a deployment ban is put in place effective immediately. Likewise, all Filipinos are advised not to travel to South Sudan at this time.

The DFA has instructed the Philippine Embassy in Cairo, which has jurisdiction over South Sudan, to implement the voluntary repatriation program.

There are 150 Filipinos in South Sudan, mostly in construction companies, with the United Nations and in non-governmental organizations.

The Embassy is also dispatching a consular/assistance to nationals (ATN) mission to South Sudan to further validate its contingency plan and to provide assistance to Filipinos who wish to leave.

According to the Embassy, the area of violence is confined to villages in the border area between Sudan and South Sudan. The latter recently won its independence from the former in July 2011. END