

PRESS RELEASE

Department of Foreign Affairs

2330 Roxas Blvd., Pasay City, Philippines

Tel. No. 834-4000

www.dfa.gov.ph



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PHILIPPINE EMBASSY, AMMAN ISSUES WARNING ON DEPLOYMENT OF UNDOCUMENTED OFWs TO JORDAN

21 November 2006 — Philippine Ambassador to the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan Jose P. del Rosario, Jr. issued a warning to OFWs, especially those seeking employment as domestic workers in Jordan, to ensure that Philippine recruitment agencies deploying them have complied with government regulations and procedures.

“It appears that several unscrupulous agencies are determined to circumvent Philippine Overseas Employment Administration’s (POEA) procedures and requirements in their rush to deploy OFWs to Jordan,” Ambassador del Rosario noted. “Statements made by their hapless victims to Embassy officials indicate that these unscrupulous agencies have contacts at the NAIA who facilitate the exit of undocumented OFWs for a fee,” the Ambassador added.

The Philippine Embassy in Amman urged OFWs bound for Jordan to make sure that they possess a valid employment contract that has been verified by the Philippine Embassy and POLO in Amman, and by the POEA. They should also have participated in a Pre-Departure Orientation Seminar (PDOS) and their Philippine recruitment agency must also have obtained an Overseas Employment Certificate for them from the POEA.

“Those who seek work in Jordan, or any other country abroad, should not allow themselves to be duped by agencies who use scare tactics, such as telling the OFW that she has to pay tens of thousands of pesos if she does not take the flight booked for them right away,” Ambassador del Rosario reiterated, adding that “OFWs should refuse deployment if they find the circumstances suspect.”

OFWs in Jordan, who have incomplete documentation, have reported that their agencies coerced or otherwise duped them in this manner when they asked why they do not have a proper employment contract or not attended the pre-departure seminar. These OFWs were given false assurances that their contracts will be finalized upon arrival in Jordan.

The Philippine Embassy in Amman also reported that a major reason for the OFW’s misunderstanding with and departure from employers is the underpayment of salaries.

“Recruitment agencies in Jordan and in the Philippines replace the valid employment contract with ‘side contracts’ that reflect a much lower salary. The Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) has set a minimum monthly salary of US\$200.00 for Filipino domestic workers regardless of country of deployment. However, prevailing

salaries for foreign domestic workers in Jordan are much lower than this, and many OFWs find themselves receiving a salary much lower than what they earn in the Philippines. In several cases, factory workers, government employees and even teachers were induced to become domestic workers in Jordan through false promises of salaries higher than what they receive in the Philippines. The sad reality is that once they end up in Jordan, they realize that they have been shortchanged or, in worse cases, end up with several months of unpaid salaries,” Ambassador del Rosario reported.

Ambassador del Rosario warned Filipinos seeking employment in Jordan that the Jordanian government only allows foreign domestic workers for entry into its labor market and maintains tight restrictions for other jobs and occupations. “OFWs who are being enticed to come to Jordan purportedly for work as salesladies, hotel staff, or nurses are urged to be extra cautious and double-check such offers with the POEA or the Philippine Embassy in Amman,” the Ambassador urged.

OFWs should immediately report these dubious practices to DOLE and POEA so that administrative and criminal charges could be filed against agencies not following relevant rules and regulations.

Even as the Philippine Embassy in Amman calls for tougher enforcement at home of regulations, it continues its close cooperation with Jordanian authorities, notably the Ministry of Labor, Ministry of Interior, and Border Security and Residency Department (Immigration), to enact measures that would help curb the deployment of undocumented OFWs to Jordan.

Representations made by Embassy officials have convinced the Ministry of Labor to allow the Philippine Embassy in Amman to clear all applications for work and residency permits filed by Jordanian recruitment agencies for arriving Filipino domestic workers.

Applications for work and residency permits, which are required by Jordanian authorities before any OFW could be deployed to Jordan, shall no longer be processed by the Ministry of Labor and Ministry of Interior unless the application form bears the stamp of the Philippine Embassy in Amman, thus enabling a thorough verification by Embassy officials that the OFWs being deployed to Jordan are properly documented. END

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