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Press Release

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Villar wants a check on RP posts' assistance for OFWs

In light of the death of the overseas Filipino worker in Saudi due to acid burns, Sen. Manny Villar today pushed for a Senate inquiry on the procedures followed by the diplomatic posts and the Philippine Overseas Labor Offices (POLO) in providing assistance to OFWs in distress.

Villar filed Proposed Senate Resolution No. 190, which urges the Committees on Labor, Employment and Human Resources Development and Foreign Relations to look into the performance of POLO, as the satellite office of the Department of Labor and Employment, in attending to the problems of Filipino workers abroad.

"The fact that many kababayan of ours continue to suffer and die overseas tell us that there is a need to review the appropriation and programs for OFW assistance. This could mean the tightening of existing laws with regard to overseas recruitment and the establishment of OFW-centered diplomatic posts and POLO offices," Villar said.

On September 8, Romilyn Eroy-Ibanez, 22, a household service worker in Al-Khobar, Saudi Arabia, was found in her employer's kitchen with stab wounds in her neck, abdomen and wrist, as well as acid burns in her mouth, arms and legs.

Ibanez came from North Cotabato. She arrived in Saudi on May 31 supposedly as a nursing aide. The attending physician said that it is impossible for Ibanez to have committed suicide by stabbing herself and ingesting the acid at the same time.

Villar also cited the case of a number of stranded migrant Filipinos in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia who are in need of repatriation and assistance.

"Our government should be aggressive in pushing for protection mechanisms of our OFW workers. A people-oriented foreign relations policy should be put in place where the safety and welfare of our workers is guaranteed. There must be a system to address their needs when they encounter trouble overseas and to bring them back if need be," he said.

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