

# Office of Sen. Manny Villar

## Sagip-OFW Helpline

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### **Villar seeks DFA explanation on OFW's missing body parts**

Senator Manny Villar called on the Department of Foreign Affairs to explain why the repatriated remains of OFW murder victim Romilyn Ibanez with missing body parts.

Villar noted that Ibanez's repatriated body was missing a tongue and an eye, a fact that brought even more pain and sadness to her family. He also pointed out that it took a year for the Philippine Embassy in Saudi Arabia to work for the repatriation of Romilyn's remains, and the DFA has not been forthcoming with any explanation as to the said delay.

"For the family's peace of mind and in the name of justice, I join the different non-government groups in calling on the Department of Foreign Affairs to reveal the forensic and police reports surrounding Romilyn's gruesome death," the president of the Nacionalista Party added.

The slain OFW was found dead in September 2010 on the kitchen floor of her employer's house in Al Khobar, Saudi Arabia. Based on medical records, she died due to acid ingestion and multiple stab wounds. A bottle of sulfuric acid was found near her body.

Last year, Ambassador Antonio Villamor discussed Ibanez's case with Prince Mohammad bin Fahad bin Abdulaziz al Saud, emir of the Eastern province who assured him that the case would be resolved. Last February, the Philippine Embassy allegedly received copies of the police and forensic reports from the Saudi Ministry of Foreign Affairs but no further details have been disclosed since then.

Villar questioned the use of the DFA's legal assistance fund and would like DFA Undersecretary Esteban Conejos to explain before the Senate how much of it was spent to ensure that justice was served in the Romilyn Ibanez's case.

The staunch OFW advocate in the Senate also stressed the need for the DFA and POEA to explain whether charges were filed against the recruitment agencies in the Philippines and Saudi Arabia that conspired to bring Ibanez to Saudi Arabia.

"Romilyn's contract did not specify her work as a domestic helper. She thought she was going to work in the private sector and not in a household. We owe it to her and to her grieving family for the truth to come out and proper charges to be filed against those who contributed to her demise," Villar said.

On Monday, Senator Villar will file a Resolution on the procedure of repatriation and the system of giving assistance to OFWs who were murdered or put to death with ignominy. The Solon said that this recent situation is not a first time occurrence and that an inquiry must be pursued for the government to formulate a relevant policy keeping in mind the welfare of OFWs.

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