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Sen. Villar urges the DFA to issue travel advisories to Libya and Bahrain

Senator Manny Villar urged the Department of Foreign Affairs to issue travel advisories to caution Filipinos against travelling to Bahrain and Libya at this time given rising political tensions in the two countries.

Villar, chairman of the Senate trade committee, also called on the trade, energy and labor departments to come up with a comprehensive study and concrete proposals on how an escalation of hostilities between protesters and government forces could impact on the national economy and the welfare of overseas Filipino workers.

“Compared to an estimated 6,000 Filipinos in Egypt, we have around 40,000 workers in Bahrain and more than 10,000 workers in Libya. Let us make sure that our embassies in these two countries are fully-supported with contingency funds and manpower to assist our workers to safety when the situation calls for it,” Villar stressed.

The OFW advocate in the Senate said that the DFA should lose no time in coming up with the appropriate travel advisories to warn Filipinos against traveling to Bahrain and Libya while outbreaks of violence continue.

“There may be workers leaving the country who are unaware about what’s going on in Bahrain and Libya. It may be wiser and safer for them to wait until the situation normalizes,” Villar added. He said that at the very least, these workers should be instructed to immediately get in touch with the Philippine Embassy upon arrival for better coordination.

The leader of the Nacionalista Party also underscored the need for a thorough study on the implications of the spread of hostilities across more Middle East countries on world oil prices and the national economy. He pointed out that around 3,000,000 Filipinos are situated in the Middle East and North Africa.

“As tensions continue to engulf the Middle East, we must be vigilant and prepared to deal with its impact on tens of thousands of Filipino workers in the region as well as on the incomes of their families here at home,” Villar said.

He also noted that world oil prices continue to be affected by outbreaks of violence in Egypt, Libya, Yemen, Tunisia and Bahrain. “Soaring oil prices could lead to further erosion of incomes and savings here at home. This is why government needs to be completely thorough in studying the effects of a prolonged crisis in the Middle East on world oil prices and overseas remittances.”