

Office of Sen. Manny Villar

Sagip-OFW Helpline

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Villar's OFW Helpline offers free overseas calls to families of OFWs caught in strife, tragedies abroad

Relatives who are worried about their loved ones abroad, particularly those in troubled areas around the world, can be reunited on air through the "Libreng Tawag" project of the OFW Helpline of Sen. Manny Villar.

The toll free overseas calls project will last for one month and would be coursed through the Bantay OFW radio program of Toots Ople aired live over DZXL-RMN Manila every Mondays to Fridays.

Villar, whose advocacies have centered on the welfare of OFWs all over the globe, said the free telephone calls would give families the chance to be briefly reunited with their loved ones who are working in different parts of the world, "much especially those who are in countries gripped by unrest like Middle East and North Africa and of natural tragedies like Japan and New Zealand."

"Ang libreng tawag na ito ay bahagi ng ating krusada na matulungan ang ating mga kababayan sa abroad na dumaranas ngayon ng krisis at trahedya na maiparating ang kanilang kalagayan sa kanilang mga mahal sa buhay na naiwan sa Pilipinas," Villar said.

The senator stressed that until now since pro-democracy movements erupted in the Arab world, some families of OFWs who are based in the Middle East and in North Africa's Libya have remained clueless on the true whereabouts of their loved ones.

Villar said there are still families who have not contacted their relatives in the aftermath of the killer quakes that rocked New Zealand and Japan, which is being compounded by threats of possible nuclear radiation for Japan-based Filipinos.

He said the pain of not personally hearing the assuring voice of a loved one in a strife-torn nation becomes increasingly unbearable with the absence of communication lines that could be used to reach out to their relatives and vice-versa.

"Even if there are available communication lines, access is still a problem since applicable rates charged by international and local service providers are relatively high," Villar pointed out.

"This is where our Libreng Tawag project with the help of the radio program of Toots will seek to connect the two parties and possibly reunite them even for a moment via the airwaves," he added.

According to Villar, the precious phone minutes that a worried-sick family member would spend soliciting words of assurance from his beloved OFW relative would be enough to lessen the entire family's anxiety.

"Yung malaman man lang ng mga kababayan nating nasa Pinas kung ano na ang sitwasyon ng kanilang mga kaanak sa ibang bansa ay isa nang malaking kabawasan sa kanilang matinding pangungulila at pangamba. Kahit paano, mapapanatag ang kanilang kalooban lalo pa kung maririnig nila ang boses ng kanilang mga mahal sa buhay at makakausap nila kahit sa telepono man lang," Villar maintained.

The senator likewise lauded RMN Manila and Ople, who also heads the Ople Policy Center, for co-spearheading the “Libreng Tawag” project.

Relatives or families wishing to contact by overseas telephone call their loved ones abroad will just have to visit the RMN-DZXL station at the fourth floor of Guadalupe Commercial Complex in Guadalupe, EDSA, Makati City from 9am to 12 noon.

The free long distance call project will run until April 23.

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