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Villar holds dialogue with OFW groups in Dubai

As the government turns its focus on repatriating beleaguered OFWs in troubled spots in the Middle East and North Africa, Sen. Manny Villar will personally look into the plight of OFWs in Dubai, United Arab Emirates (UAE), especially those who have experienced abuse from their employers.

Villar, who travelled to UAE early this week, will be holding dialogues with OFW groups in Dubai and will visit the Filipino Workers Resource Center (FWRC) in Dubai where distressed and run-away migrant workers are given shelter and assistance.

The dialogues and consultations were part of Villar's continuing program to look after the welfare of OFWs around the world and craft programs that would improve their conditions while working in a foreign country.

"Mahalaga para sa akin na makausap ng personal ang mga kababayan natin sa abroad at makita ko mismo kung ano ang kanilang kalagayan doon. Daan-daang libong mga OFW ang nangangailangan ng tulong sa ibang bansa lalo na ang mga hindi dokumentado na naghihintay ng awa at aksyon mula sa gobyerno," Villar said.

Villar is nevertheless thankful that OFWs in Dubai are spared from the unrest currently engulfing other parts of the Middle East and North Africa.

"Pero hindi lamang gyera ang kalaban ng ating OFWs. Ibang klaseng laban nga lang, tulad ng narito sa Dubai, eto yung pakikibaka para sa maayos na working conditions, makatwiran na sweldo at makataong pagtrato," he said.

"Saklot ngayon ng pangamba ang marami sa arting mga kababayan sa ibang bansa kaya't marapat lamang na kalamayin ang kanilang mga loob sa pamamagitan ng pangungumusta sa kanilang sitwasyon at pag-alam sa kanilang mga problema at pangangailangan," he added.

Villar said the Dubai consultation is just one of the many dialogues that he plans to undertake in many parts of the Middle East as he monitors the situation in Libya, Yemen, Bahrain and even the simmering unrest in Syria.

"Even if we want to go to these places and help our countrymen, it's really hard. We don't want to get in the way of our government's efforts to extricate our OFWs there," the senator said, referring to OFWs in Libya, Yemen and Bahrain.

"Para ano pa at tinuturing nating mga bagong bayani ng ating mga bansa ang mga OFW kung hindi natin sila matutulungan sa oras ng pangangailangan," the senator stressed.

Villar will be joined in the Dubai dialogues by Filipino leaders in Dubai and consulate officials led by Consul General Benito Valeriano, Vice Consul Edwin Mendoza and Labor Attache Amilbahar Amilasan.

UAE, where Dubai is located, remains as the top destination for OFWs dreaming of a better future for families. It is home to more than 450,000 Filipino migrant workers where the biggest number is in Dubai followed by Abu Dhabi and Al Ain. ###