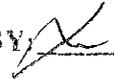


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SENATE

P.S. Res. No. 331

RECEIVED BY: 

INTRODUCED BY SENATOR MANNY VILLAR

RESOLUTION

URGING THE SENATE COMMITTEES ON LABOR, EMPLOYMENT AND HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT AND FOREIGN RELATIONS, TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, INTO THE REPORTED UNSOLVED CRIMES INVOLVING OVERSEAS FILIPINO WORKERS AND THE ALLEGED ABSENCE OF ASSISTANCE FROM CONCERNED GOVERNMENT AGENCIES IN MIDDLE EAST COUNTRIES WITH THE END IN VIEW OF STRENGTHENING MEASURES FOR THE PROTECTION OF OVERSEAS FILIPINO WORKERS

WHEREAS, Section 3 of Article XIII of the 1987 Constitution provides that "The State shall afford full protection to labor, local and overseas, organized and unorganized, and promote full employment and equality of employment opportunities for all";

WHEREAS, Overseas Filipino Workers (OFW) are considered as unsung heroes as their remittances contribute greatly to the Philippine economy;

WHEREAS, the volume of OFW remittance is equivalent to approximately 10% of the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP);

WHEREAS, based on the data from Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, the remittances brought by OFWs in the first 10 months of year 2010 amounted to \$15.456 billion, up 7.9 percent from \$14.231 billion in the same period last year;

WHEREAS, according to Philippine Overseas Employment Administration, Saudi Arabia remains the top destination for OFWs for the past seven years, with some 5.7 million Filipinos deployed in the oil-rich country from 2003 to 2009;

WHEREAS, Majority of these workers are nurses, domestic helpers, caregivers and information technology workers;

WHEREAS, in 2009, Filipinos from Saudi Arabia sent home some US\$1.4 billion, registering the third highest OFW remittances next only to those from the US and Canada. The UAE has been the second most preferred destination of OFWs for the past four years, with some 196,000 workers deployed there in 2009;

WHEREAS, in recent years, reports of crimes committed against Overseas Filipino Workers abroad increased in alarming rate;

WHEREAS, a number of OFWs also died of mysterious deaths;

WHEREAS, there are significant number of unsolved crimes involving OFW victims in Saudi Arabia;

WHEREAS, an OFW, Romelyn Eroy-Ybanez, 22 years old, died on September 8, 2010 in Saudi Arabia. Citing an embassy report, the victim had knife wounds in the neck, abdomen and wrist, as well as acid burns in the mouth area, on the arms and legs;

WHEREAS, the culprit has neither been identified nor arrested. The Philippine Embassy has yet to receive the police report which the local authorities have promised to provide as soon as the investigation has been completed;

WHEREAS, from February to August 2009, the Migrante Chapter in Dubai in the United Arab Emirates also recorded seven cases of mysterious deaths, to wit: (1) Roderick Miranda who reportedly hanged himself on February 4; (2) Norayda Ayuman, who allegedly jumped from the 7th floor of a building on February 6; (3) Jeffrey Alberto So, who reportedly jumped from the 3rd floor of a building on June 13; and (4) Evelyn Lilo, who allegedly jumped from a building on August 10;

WHEREAS, there are other cases of death, rape and sexual abuses in the Middle East which remain unsolved, to wit: (1) Rowena Peremne Arceo, 33, from Cordillera province, who died on October 22, 2008 in Al Khobar; (2) Joy Cabansi Sarto, 28, from Echague, Isabela province, allegedly murdered by her Arab employer on September 22, 2009; (3) Lorena (not her real name), 33, from Ilagan, Isabela, allegedly raped in Dammam, Saudi Arabia on October 1, 2009; (4) Eugenia Baja, 24, who reportedly committed suicide even though subsequent autopsy showed that she suffered stab wounds and bruises; (5) Clara (not her real name), from Lagawe, Ifugao, reportedly gang-raped at her employer's house in February 2007; (6) Analyn De Peña, 33, from Old Sta. Mesa, Manila, who allegedly committed suicide in November 2009, although the family suspects foul play; and (7) Marilou Macam Ating, 37, from Lingayen, Pangasinan, who reportedly died on November 24, 2008 after she fell from the fourth floor of her employer's residence but her family also suspects foul play;

WHEREAS, there is a need to intensify OFW protection, on-site services to distressed, abused and maltreated workers, and to bring to the bar of justice the perpetrators of these gruesome crimes against our OFWs;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Senate of the Philippines to urge the Senate Committees on Labor, Employment and Foreign Relations, to conduct an inquiry, in aid of legislation, into the reported unsolved crimes involving Overseas Filipino Workers in Middle East Countries with the end in view of strengthening measures for the protection of overseas Filipino workers.

Adopted,


MANNY VILLAR