

# EMBASSY TOLD FILIPINOS: DON'T WAIT FOR AMNESTY, TAKE ADVANTAGE OF AVRPP

## PROGRAM 'ACT OF KINDNESS' ON KUWAITI GOVERNMENT'S PART

By Ben Garcia

**KUWAIT:** The Philippines Embassy in Kuwait advised its nationals here to take advantage of the 'Assisted Voluntary Repatriation Program' (AVRP) which is being offered by the Kuwaiti government. The program is not exclusive for runaway housemaids but it also accepts Article 18 visa holders whose residency visa has expired or those with absconding issues. The embassy warned overstayers or absconders not to wait for an amnesty as the government has shown no indication that it is planning an amnesty any time soon.

### Uncertain

Vice Consul Sheina Tesorero, speaking with the Kuwait Times yesterday, advised all illegal Filipino expatriates in Kuwait to take advantage of this program instead of waiting for the uncertain amnesty period.

"Of course we do not know when the amnesty period will be announced in Kuwait. But while we are waiting for the real amnesty announcement, the AVRPP is already here and very clear to us all. We can help you, and now is the time because you will not be detained

anymore (at the immigration detention center). So please take advantage of this program, apply now if you are illegal and want to go back home," she said.

Last week over 108 undocumented Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs), mostly runaway housemaids, were repatriated (without detention) through AVRPP in a chartered flight via Gulf Air. The program is not considered an amnesty but an act of kindness on the part of Kuwaiti government for those illegal Filipinos in the country. The program was also made possible in cooperation with the Philippine Embassy led by Ambassador Renato Pedro Villa, Consul General Raul Dado and Labor Attaché Cesar Chavez.

### 4-6 months

Tesorero said assisted voluntary repatriation program could take 4-6 months from application, although the embassy prioritizes and expedites the application of the sick and pregnant. "The program will rely on the compliance of the applicants. I remembered last time the same program was stopped in 2014 because some applicants who were already in the list of people to be repatriated did not

show up in the airport on the day of their flights. So this time embassy personnel will be there to assist everyone and make sure that everyone in the list will be included or everyone will show up in the airport. We were told that one more no show case will jeopardize the program and it will be stopped again," she warned.

### Process

For the Filipinos who want to take advantage of the program, here is the step by step process:

- 1) Apply for repatriation at the ATNU. Embassy staff in charge will process the application and undertake initial assessment (probable case, current status, available documents, etc.). If the applicant has no passport, he/she must apply for travel documents. The TD application is free of charge and requires the submission of three photos (2x2 or 2x2-3/4).
- 2) Embassy will undertake initial verification (system check with MOI, MOJ, Municipality, travel ban check). The Embassy will submit a request for group fingerprinting schedule for travel document holders with the Immigration-CID.

3) Fingerprinting of TD holders. Applicants will be asked to report to the embassy at the appointed schedule. The embassy will transport the group to the Immigration Office in Shuwaikh.

4) Release of fingerprinting result. The result will indicate the status of the applicant's record in the Kuwait Government system.

5) Verification by Immigration (i.e. elimination of those with criminal cases, police absconding cases, travel bans). The list of qualified candidates will be released. Applicants will start booking open air tickets and will be on standby for final call.

6) The flight will be scheduled by Immigration. Ticket will be re-booked. Repatriation candidates will be called to report to the ATN Shelter at least 1 week prior to flight.

Not all candidates will be accepted as those with criminal cases may face other legal issues. Also anyone applying for the program and leaving Kuwait in this way will be blacklisted and unable to return as compared in the case of amnesty program. The embassy accepts applicants without fees and travel documents will be issued for those without valid passports.



**KUWAIT:** Atty Sheina Tesorero attentively listening to questions from listeners yesterday. —Photo by Ben Garcia

### INFORMATION MINISTER CONGRATULATES LEADERSHIP ON ADVENT OF EID AL-ADHA

**KUWAIT:** Minister of Information and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Sheikh Salman Sabah Salem Al-Humoud Al-

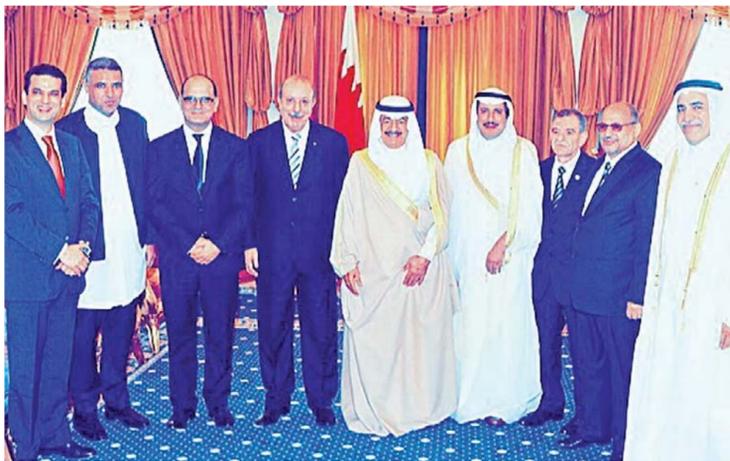


**Sheikh Salman Al-Humoud Al-Sabah**

Sabah congratulated yesterday the Kuwaiti leadership on the advent of the Eid Al-Adha. In a statement to KUNA, Sheikh Salman invoked the lessons and values imbedded in the meaning of the occasion of the Eid Al-Adha as an apt reminder to the people of Kuwait to uphold the merits of national unity

behind His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.

Sheikh Salman conveyed his congratulations to the nation's leadership, not only on his own behalf, but on the behalf of the intellectual, media, and artistic communities as he is also Chairman of the National Council for Arts and Letters. He expressed pride in these communities for having championed national unity and loyalty to the nation's leadership while rejecting religious intolerance, extremism in thought and conduct, and terrorism. Furthermore, he recalled in his statement the sacrifices given by Kuwaitis who lost their lives defending the nation and its lofty values. —KUNA



**MANAMA:** Bahrain's Prime Minister Prince Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa meets the dean of the diplomatic corps, Kuwaiti Ambassador to Bahrain Sheikh Azzam Al-Sabah and a number of Arab ambassadors. —KUNA

### BAHRAIN PM SAYS ARAB NATION CAN SAFEGUARD ITS RIGHTS

**MANAMA:** Bahrain's Prime Minister Prince Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa said the Arab nation has the capacity to stand with its rights and protect its interests once it leaves aside its differences and directs its efforts towards the helm of the joint Arab action that protects Arab interests and region from external interference. He said during his meeting with the dean of the diplomatic corps, Kuwaiti Ambassador to Bahrain Sheikh Azzam Al-Sabah and a number of Arab ambassadors yesterday that some policies have tried to distract Arab countries with their internal strife to distract attention from the first issue of the Arabs which is the Palestinian issue, stressing that the Arab support for the state of Palestine will not stop.

He added that what is happening today in Yemen "does not concern it alone, but it is a plot against the stability of the Arab nation in general and to undermine the security of the GCC countries in particular." Meanwhile, Sheikh Azzam expressed his thanks and appreciation to the Prime Minister on behalf of the Arab ambassadors, praising the support extended to them by the Kingdom aimed at strengthening relations between their countries with the Kingdom of Bahrain. —KUNA



# The Taste of Kuwait Since 1988

