

PRESS RELEASE

PHILIPPINE EMBASSIES IN DAMASCUS AND BEIRUT IN COOPERATION WITH IOM REPATRIATE 23 FILIPINOS



PHOTOS:

FIRST ROW LEFT – Vice Consul Rona Beth Goce and the IOM staff distribute food to the repatriates inside the bus; **FIRST ROW RIGHT** – Welfare Officer Imelda Gatinao hands out food to the repatriates inside the bus; **SECOND ROW LEFT** – Mr. Armand Dimaranan (fourth from right) turns over the passports and travel documents to the repatriates before they approach the Emirates Airlines check in counter at the Rafik Hariri International Airport; **SECOND ROW RIGHT** – Vice Consul Dennis John Briones pose with the repatriates at the boarding area at the Rafik Hariri International Airport before they boarded their flight out of Beirut.

01 November 2013 – The Philippine Embassies in Damascus, Syria and Beirut, Lebanon with the support of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) once again facilitated the successful repatriation to the Philippines of another batch of 23 Filipinos from Syria on Thursday, 31 October 2013. The IOM again provided the airfare, land transportation and meals of this batch of repatriates.

The same-day cross-border repatriation operation commenced in the morning of 31 October 2013, when Vice Consul Rona Beth Goce and Welfare Officer Imelda Gatinao of Beirut PE, proceeded to the General Security (Lebanese immigration) at Masna'a border, where they met the team from IOM. At the Masna'a, the Beirut PE and IOM teams received the 23 Filipinos from the officers of Damascus PE and then assisted the repatriates undergo immigration entry procedures.

From the Masna'a border, Vice Consul Goce and Welfare Officer Gatinao escorted the repatriates directly to the Embassy where the 23 OFWs were received and assisted by Ms. Chloe Silverio, the Embassy's Property Officer and Administrative Assistant, and Mr. Khalaf Hussein, Embassy GUM. While at the Embassy, the 23 Filipinos took time to rest while waiting to be brought to the airport.

Later in the afternoon, another team composed of Vice Consul Dennis John Briones and Mr. Armand Dimaranan, Consular Assistant, brought the repatriates to the Rafik Hariri International Airport, where the group underwent airline and immigration procedures. At the airport, a representative from IOM was also on hand to assist the repatriates.

At exactly 7:25 P.M., the repatriates left Beirut for Dubai where they would be taking their flight to Manila. The group is scheduled to arrive in Manila on 01 November 2013 at 4:00 P.M. via Emirates flight EK 332.

This is the **37th cross-border operation** undertaken by the two Embassies. The departure of this group of 23 Filipinos brings to **1,885** the total number of Filipinos repatriated from Syria via the Rafik Hariri International Airport in Beirut since the first cross-border operations on 12 December 2012. **END**