

PRESS RELEASE

PHILIPPINE EMBASSIES IN DAMASCUS AND BEIRUT IN COOPERATION WITH IOM REPATRIATE 31 FILIPINOS FROM SYRIA



PHOTOS:

FIRST ROW LEFT – Vice Consul Dennis John Briones (third from left), Damascus PE Vice Consul Meynard Maleon, ATN officer Marianne Vida Cara (in white jacket), Mr. Rex Malimban (second from right), member of the Rapid Response Team with IOM staff at Masna'a border while preparing the passports and travel documents of the 31 OFWs; **FIRST ROW RIGHT** – ATN/Legal Officer Junaid Ali distributes food to the repatriates inside the bus at the Masna'a border; **SECOND ROW LEFT** – Vice Consul Briones (center) pose with IOM staff and the repatriates inside the bus while at the Masna'a border; **SECOND ROW RIGHT** – an IOM staff assists in distributing the passport and travel documents of the repatriate; **THIRD ROW LEFT** – Vice Consul Briones checks the travel document of one of the repatriates before the check in counter at the Rafik Hariri International Airport in Beirut; **THIRD ROW RIGHT** – Cultural Officer Gladys Pery guides the repatriates as they board their Emirates flight to Manila via Dubai.

26 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 31 Filipinos from Syria on Monday, 25 November 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 25 November 2013, when Vice Consul Dennis John Briones and ATN/Legal Officer Junaid Ali, proceeded to the General Security (Lebanese immigration) at Masha'a border, where they met the team from IOM. At the Masha'a, the Beirut PE and IOM teams received the 31 Filipinos from the officers of Damascus PE and then assisted the repatriates undergo immigration entry procedures.

From the Masha'a border, Vice Consul Briones and ATN/Legal Officer Ali escorted the repatriates directly to the Embassy where the 31 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 31 Filipinos took time to rest while waiting to be brought to the airport.

Later in the afternoon, another team composed of Vice Consul Briones and Cultural Officer Gladys Perey 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 26 November 2013 at 4:00 P.M. via Emirates flight EK 332.

This is the **40th cross-border operation** undertaken by the two Embassies. The departure of this group of 31 Filipinos brings to **2,011** 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**