

PRESS RELEASE

PHILIPPINE EMBASSIES IN DAMASCUS AND BEIRUT REPATRIATE 31 OFWs FROM SYRIA



FIRST ROW LEFT – Vice Consul Rona Beth Goce briefs the repatriates before the final immigration check at the Masha'a border; **FIRST ROW RIGHT** – Property Officer/Administrative Assistant Ma. Chloe Silverio briefs the repatriates upon arrival at the Embassy from the Masha'a border; **SECOND ROW LEFT** – Finance Officer Dorotea Apostol, Ms. Silverio and Consular Staff Melissa Mancenido attend to the repatriates after serving dinner at the Embassy; **SECOND ROW, RIGHT** – Ambassador Leah M. Basinang-Ruiz briefly chats with the repatriates and bids them a safe journey home to their families; **MIDDLE PICTURE** – Ambassador Ruiz (standing, center), Cultural Officer Gladys Perey (standing, extreme right), MWOFRFC Houseparent Gina Murillo (standing, left most) and Collecting Officer Lilia Pangilinan (standing, second from left) pose with the repatriates before they board the bus and leave for the airport; **FOURTH ROW LEFT** – Cultural Officer Perey assists the repatriates inside the bus on the way to the airport; **FOURTH ROW RIGHT** – Vice Consul Goce briefs the 31 OFWs at the Rafik Hariri International Airport boarding gate before taking their flight to the Philippines.

12 September 2013 – Thirty-one (31) OFWs who crossed the Syrian border to Lebanon on 11 September 2013, were repatriated to the Philippines via the Rafik Hariri International Airport in Beirut. The group left at 1340H today via Gulf Air flight GF 910.

With the assistance of the Philippine Embassy in Damascus and the Rapid Response Team (RRT), this particular batch of OFWs crossed the Syrian immigration at lunch time on 11 September 2013 and was turned over to the team from the Philippine Embassy in Beirut and personnel from the Caritas Lebanon Migrant Center (CLMC), which assisted the group to clear entry procedures at Lebanese immigration at the Masha'a border.

Escorted by the border team from the Masha'a border, the 31 OFWs were brought directly to the Embassy in Beirut where they stayed overnight. Several Embassy personnel, including Property Officer/Administrative Assistant Ma. Chloe Silverio, ATN officer Dexter Macaraeg, Collecting Officer Lilia Pangilinan and Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipinos Resource Center (MWOFR) Houseparent Gina Murillo, took their respective shifts to look after them until they left for the airport in the morning of 12 September 2013. At the Embassy, the repatriates were served dinner and breakfast, prepared by the food committee composed of Finance Officer Dorotea Apostol and Consular Staff Melissa Mancenido. Around 9:00 AM of 12 September 2013, another team composed of Vice Consul Rona Beth Goce and Cultural Officer Gladys Perey brought the 31 OFWs to the airport and assisted the group in undergoing the airline, immigration and boarding procedures.

The repatriates are scheduled to arrive in Manila on Friday, 13 September 2013, at 1055H via Gulf Air flight GF 154.

With the departure of the 31 OFWs today, the Embassy has repatriated a total of **1,750** Filipinos from Syria via the Rafik Hariri International Airport in Beirut since the first cross-border operations jointly undertaken by the Philippine Embassies in Syria and Lebanon began in December 2012. **END**