

## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **PHILIPPINE EMBASSIES IN DAMASCUS AND BEIRUT, IOM, REPATRIATE 11 FILIPINOS**



#### **PHOTOS:**

**FIRST ROW LEFT** – Vice Consul Dennis John Briones (rightmost) with IOM-Beirut personnel at the Masna'a border while processing the passport and travel documents of the repatriates with Lebanese immigration authorities; **FIRST ROW RIGHT** – Vice Consul Briones pose with the repatriates at the Embassy ground floor after the turn-over with Collecting Officer Lilia Pangilinan (third from right) and MWOFRFC Houseparent Gina Murillo (extreme left); **SECOND ROW LEFT**– ATN officer Dexter Macaraeg (in yellow shirt) endorses to Collecting Officer Pangilinan the passports and travel documents of the repatriates upon arrival at the Embassy; **SECOND ROW RIGHT** – Ambassador Leah M. Basinang-Ruiz (extreme right) addresses the repatriates before they left for the airport; **THIRD ROW** – Ambassador Ruiz (center) with Vice Consul Rona Beth Goce (seventh from left), Protocol officer Antonio Cruz (extreme right) and ATN officer Junaid Ali (extreme left) pose with the repatriates at the Embassy ground floor.

**30 September 2013** – Another group of 11 Filipinos from Syria were repatriated today to the Philippines via the Rafik Hariri International Airport in Lebanon. The Philippine Embassies in Lebanon and Syria once again joined hands to ensure this successful repatriation in collaboration with the International Organization for Migration (IOM), which provided the airline tickets, meals and transportation of the repatriates from Damascus to Beirut.

The 35<sup>th</sup> cross-border operation commenced in the afternoon of Sunday, 29 September 2013, when Vice Consul Dennis John Briones and ATN Officer Dexter Macaraig with Embassy driver Mr. Mar Mancenido received the 11 Filipinos from the Philippine Embassy in Damascus and IOM-Damascus. The 11 Filipinos were assisted at the Lebanese immigration in Masna'a by the Embassy team as well as IOM-Beirut personnel. After clearing immigration formalities, Vice Consul Briones and ATN officer Macaraeg escorted the 11 Filipinos to the Philippine Embassy in Beirut, where the repatriates were received by the Embassy shelter team composed of Cultural Officer Gladys Perey, Collecting Officer Lilia Pangilinan, ATN Officer Junaid Ali and Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipinos Resource Center (MWOFR) Houseparent Gina Murillo. The team took turns in taking care of the 11 OFWs during their overnight stay at the Embassy.

Before proceeding to the airport in the morning of Monday, 30 September 2013, Ambassador Leah M. Basinang-Ruiz met the repatriates at the Embassy showroom to convey to them her wishes for their safe journey and return home to their families in the Philippines. Vice Consul Rona Beth Goce, Protocol Officer Antonio Cruz and POLO/OWWA staff/driver Joselito Sunga escorted the repatriates to the airport, where they were also assisted in undergoing airport formalities. At 11:50 A.M., all the 11 Filipinos left via Emirates flight EK 958. They are scheduled to arrive in Manila on 01 October 2013, at 4:35 P.M. on board Emirates flight EK 332.

With the departure of this group of 11 Filipinos, a total of **1,846 Filipinos** has been repatriated 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 on 12 December 2012. **END**