

PRESS RELEASE

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Slow deployment of OFWs blamed on lack of international flights

Some groups of placement agencies in the Philippines claimed that lack of outbound international flights is slowing down the deployment of overseas Filipino workers even as the number of contracts processed by the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration reached the one million mark..

POEA Administrator Rosalinda Dimapilis-Baldoz said the president of the Overseas Placement Association of the Philippines, Eduardo T. Mahiya reported the visible lack of international flights of the various airlines, notably those servicing the Middle East out of Manila, which has caused caused the slow pace of deployment of OFWs. Mr. Mahiya said the extreme difficulty and undue delay in booking for OFWs often lead to cancellation of the visa of the workers.

Jackson Gan, the president of the Philippine Manpower Agencies Accredited to Taiwan, Inc. (PHILMAT) echoed the same sentiment. Gan said bookings for flights to Taiwan have become a problem for their member-agencies.

Baldoz did not categorically say that the problem on booking outbound flights may have caused a significant effect on the government's target of one million deployed OFWs for 2005 but she noted that the preliminary figure for 2005 on contracts processed by the POEA was 1.01 M OFWs against only 963,115 deployed workers or a big difference of 37,085 OFWs who failed to leave the country even with complete employment and travel documents.

"We do not have the exact figure on how many visas were actually cancelled last year due to lack of booking so we cannot measure its effect on the number of OFWs deployed, but if the problem persists, it may interfere with the government's overseas employment agenda", Baldoz said.

Baldoz said a meeting will be arranged between the leaders of the recruitment industry and the Civil Aeronautics Board to discuss the problem and look for solution.

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