



NEWS RELEASE

June 2, 2006

Recruitment agencies probed for Illegal use of Saudi visa

The Philippine Overseas Employment Administration is pointing its guns at some recruitment agencies based in the Philippines and Saudi Arabia for misuse of visas as it warns jobseekers not to accept visas issued by employers which are not their legal sponsors.

Administrator Rosalinda Dimapilis-Baldoz said some 55 Filipino workers, mostly construction engineers and workers, are now stranded in Jeddah after they entered the Kingdom using another company's visas.

The Philippine Overseas Labor Office (POLO) in Jeddah reported that 14 of the 55 Filipinos requested their assistance to make representation with their legal sponsor for the issuance of their work and residence permit. The 55 workers were deployed using visas issued to Al-Seder General Services in Jeddah, KSA but actually went to Saudi Arabia to work in another company.

The report identified the Philippine recruitment agencies involved in this scheme, which are now under investigation by the POEA for recruitment violations.

The Jeddah POLO said most of the workers arrived as "freelancers" or those workers who paid and processed their legal document with the intention of working with a different employer.

Under Saudi Law, a worker should only work for their assigned company. Freelancers risk detention and deportation if apprehended by the Saudi police because they do not have proper work and residence permits.

###