



NEWS RELEASE

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DOLE seeks clarification on new Saudi policies

Labor Secretary Arturo D. Brion is seeking clarification from the Saudi Arabia embassy in Manila on the recent implementation of new policies on the recruitment of foreign workers by the Saudi government.

Brion said he appreciate KSA's concern over the pre-termination of contract by foreign workers but expressed equal apprehension over the delayed re-entry of OFWs who have been selected and ready for deployment to Saudi Arabia even before to the announcement of the new policies.

The Saudi Embassy now requires Filipino workers to present no objection certificates (NOC) and old passports prior to issuance of a new visa to return to Saudi Arabia. For new passport holders, the embassy requires a certification from the Department of Foreign Affairs that the worker has been issued his first passport.

Brion is conveying to the Saudi government the concern of Philippine recruitment agencies about the need to establish a compulsory system of issuance of NOCs by the employers because some government and private companies in Saudi do not issue NOCs to their workers as a standard procedure.

Brion said some Filipino recruiters were also alarmed by the required mandatory participation of a private recruitment agency in Saudi Arabia in the recruitment and deployment of Filipino workers. The new requirement has spawned fears among the Philippine recruitment agencies that the new layer will add to the cost and period of deploying Filipino workers to Saudi Arabia and the possible

cartelization of the deployment of workers through Saudi recruitment agencies and their favored agencies in the Philippines.

Brion dismissed the idea that the new set of policies by the Saudi government was issued in retaliation over our own policies on the deployment of Filipino household service workers.

“The new policies covered all foreign workers in Saudi Arabia and were not directed to Filipino workers alone”, Brion said.

According to Brion, the new visa requirement may have been triggered to address the problem of non-Saudi visa peddlers or traders who have been reportedly submitting fraudulent documents for visa application. Under the new system, only Saudi nationals who are employees of government and private companies may be authorized to work for the visa applications of foreign workers on behalf of the hiring companies.

Brion said the status quo may be maintained and Philippine recruitment agencies should be very discriminating in dealing with Saudi recruitment agencies to ensure that no additional cost will be imposed on them but to the employer in the jobsite.

On the other hand, the POEA rules on recruitment and deployment of Filipino workers will be applied to allow the registration of foreign placement agencies as principals and direct employers, with the latter having the option to either use their Saudi employees to handle their visa requirements or employ a Saudi recruitment agency for the purpose, Brion said.

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