



NEWS RELEASE

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POEA intensifies online legal assistance

Amid the threat of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA) intensifies its anti-illegal recruitment campaign through the online legal assistance program.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, clients personally go to the POEA office in Ortigas to personally seek legal advice and counselling on a range of overseas employment issues. With the imposition of the quarantine, POEA continued to offer its legal assistance service with the re-launch of the POEA Legal Assistance Online platform and via e-mail.

More than 620 clients have been served by POEA lawyers since the start of the community quarantine in mid-March. Queries relate to contract violations, non-payment of wages and benefits, various forms of abuse, among others. Aside from legal advice, POEA lawyers also provided welfare assistance related to repatriation and the DOLE-AKAP (DOLE's cash assistance program for OFWs). Reports on illegal recruitment and recruitment violations were also handled and endorsed for proper investigation.

With the current state of public health emergency brought by the COVID-19 and various levels of community quarantine still observed in the country, POEA Administrator Bernard P. Olalia issued Memorandum Circular No. 12 (series of 2020), outlining the guidelines for an intensified offering of legal assistance during this challenging time. The said Memorandum Circular was issued to ensure the timely and effective delivery of legal services in order to safeguard the rights and welfare of OFWs. The provision of legal assistance online is an avenue for those seeking legal assistance without the need to travel all the way to the POEA main office. With limited transportation and mobility options, not only is the service convenient, it is also aligned with stay at home and community quarantine requirements.

POEA advises overseas jobseekers, OFWs and their immediate families who would want to avail of free legal assistance to log-on to the POEA Legal Assistance online platform at legalassistance.poea.gov.ph or e-mail the Legal Assistance Division at legalassistance.poea@gmail.com. For more information please visit the POEA website or the POEA Anti-Illegal Recruitment Branch Facebook page at www.facebook.com/airbranch . ###