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SENATE  
P. S. RES. 189

RECEIVED BY: 

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Introduced by Senator Villar

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**RESOLUTION**

**URGING THE SENATE COMMITTEES ON LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT AND FOREIGN RELATIONS TO CONDUCT AN URGENT OMNIBUS INQUIRY ON THE PLIGHT AND PRESENT CONDITIONS OF DETAINED FILIPINO OVERSEAS CONTRACT WORKERS AND OFWs WITH CASES FILED AGAINST THEM IN VARIOUS COUNTRIES, INCLUDING AN ASSESSMENT OF LEGAL AND SOCIAL REMEDIES BEING AFFORDED BY OUR EMBASSIES AND CONSULAR OFFICES WITH THE END-IN-VIEW OF FORMULATING REMEDIAL MEASURES AND DEVISING PACKAGE OF ASSISTANCE TO PROTECT OFWs, THE PHILIPPINES' 'BAGONG BAYANI'**

Whereas, the 1987 Philippine Constitution's full commitment to honour social justice is reflected in our fundamental guarantees on protecting labor, viz:

- "The State affirms labor as a primary social economic force. It shall protect the rights of workers and promote their welfare." (Article II, Section 18)
- "The State shall afford full protection to labor, local and overseas, organized and unorganized, and promote full employment and equality of employment opportunities for all." (Article XIII, Section 3)

Whereas, the overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) because of their enormous contribution to the country's economy and upliftment of lives of the citizens are hailed as the new "*bagong bayani*";

Whereas, during the first half of the year 2007, the remittances of OFWs coursed through banking institutions alone collectively totaled \$ 7 billion, 18.1. % higher than the level recorded in the same period in 2006;

Whereas, it has been reported that a large chunk of OFWs are incarcerated, imprisoned and detained in various prison houses and there are many OFWs with cases filed against them with some of them substantially living as "TNTs" and "*bilogs*", as can be gleaned in the following data:

1. More than 5,000 Filipino OFWs are in prison for various cases of alleged small thefts, violations of illegal entry and similar immigration laws and some criminal cases which are all basically an "act of self-defense" in such countries as Jordan, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Syria, and United Arab Emirates, among others;

2. OFW Smuggling and Illegal Trafficking Cases. OFW smuggling/illegal trafficking has been rampant in Iraq despite the presence of a standing deployment ban to said country; the practise of "*sawary*" in which OFWs are lured to work in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia through the use of exit visa which is illegal; in Hongkong, Japan, Macau and the City of Dubai, there are a number of illegally recruited women and men which

ended up working in red light zones and prostitution and even in the United States of America, where school teachers from the country are allegedly illegally being “imported”;

3. A number of Filipinos are victims of internal rebellion and civil strifes as documented in such countries as Nigeria and Iraq, among others;

Whereas, the government must exert effort to assist our OFWs from being subjected to painful ignominy, harsh condemn and deplorable abuse and treatments,

Whereas, a comprehensive strategy that will strengthen legal assistance being provided by our attaches and other legal and social remedies provided by embassies and consular offices must be made including coordination efforts with various governments of other countries: Now therefore be it

Resolved, by the Senate of the Philippines, to Urge the Senate Committees on Labor and Employment and Human Resources to conduct an urgent omnibus inquiry on the plight and present conditions of detained Filipino Overseas Contract Workers and OFWs with cases filed against them in various countries, including an assessment of legal and social remedies being afforded our embassies and consular offices with the end-on-view of formulating remedial measure and devising package of assistance to protect the OFWs, the Philippines’ “*Bagong Bayani*”.

Adopted,



MANNY VILLAR