

SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE)
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
Second Regular Session)

*17 JUN 15 P2:00

SENATE

RECEIVED BY: X. Abun

P. S. RES. NO. 406

Introduced by **SENATOR LEILA M. DE LIMA**

RESOLUTION
DIRECTING THE SENATE COMMITTEES ON LABOR, EMPLOYMENT
AND HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT, AND ON FOREIGN
RELATIONS TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, TO
ASSESS THE IMPACT TO THE COUNTRY'S BILATERAL RELATIONS
AND TO THE OVERSEAS FILIPINO WORKERS (OFWs) OF THE
DIPLOMATIC ROW BETWEEN QATAR AND ITS NEIGHBORING
COUNTRIES

WHEREAS, it is the policy of the State under Article XIII, Section 3 of the 1987 Constitution that “the State shall afford full protection to labor, local and overseas, organized and unorganized, and promote full employment and equality of employment for all. Toward this end, the State shall provide adequate and timely social, economic and legal services to Filipino migrant workers”;

WHEREAS, under Republic Act No. 8042, also known as the Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipinos Act of 1995, as amended by Republic Act No. 9422 and Republic Act No. 10022, the government is mandated “to ensure that the rights and interests of distressed overseas Filipinos, in general, and Filipino migrant workers, in particular, documented or undocumented, are adequately protected and safeguarded”;

WHEREAS, on June 5, 2017, seven Arab nations, notably, Bahrain, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Yemen, Libya, and the Maldives, have cut diplomatic ties with Qatar which they accused of destabilizing the region for allegedly supporting Islamic militants;

WHEREAS, as a consequence of their diplomatic row, these Arab states closed down their land, air and sea traffic with Qatar, recalled their diplomats, and ordered Qatari citizens to leave their respective countries within 14 days;

WHEREAS, the diplomatic tension also triggered panic-buying of food from local Qatari supermarkets, fearing that Qatar which relies heavily on imports from its neighbouring countries would soon face food shortages;

WHEREAS, many economists predict that a protracted diplomatic row could further result to serious economic and political implications in the region, causing

potential dire repercussions to an estimated 250,000 Filipinos living and working in Qatar;

WHEREAS, according to the Philippine Overseas Employment Agency (POEA), Qatar has consistently been one of the top destinations for land-based OFWs in 2014 and 2015, which can be attributed to the rising demand for Filipino workers in the field of construction as Qatar builds infrastructure in preparation for its hosting of the FIFA World Cup in 2022;

WHEREAS, during his state visit in Qatar on April 17, 2017, President Duterte assured the Filipino community there that he loves the Filipino people so much that he is willing to pick a fight with any foreign nations which will take advantage of them;

WHEREAS, on June 6, 2017, the Philippine Government, through its Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), decided to unilaterally suspend the deployment of OFWs in Qatar until it can assess the situation and, if warranted, order their immediate repatriation;

WHEREAS, while DOLE has no plan yet to order the immediate repatriation of OFWs in Qatar, it has however asked them to stock up on food, water and medicine in case of a possible shortage;


WHEREAS, Presidential spokesperson Ernesto Abella also expressed belief that this diplomatic tension among Arab nations may have some “ripple effects” over the OFWs, with the fourth biggest and fastest growing group of foreign workers being based in Qatar;

WHEREAS, in view of the diplomatic tension, there is a need to look into the preparedness of the DOLE and the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), including its embassies and consulates abroad, to provide assistance to OFWs in the event that the diplomatic crisis worsens and compromises the safety of OFWs and their families;

WHEREAS, the DOLE and DFA must also provide constant assessments of the existing situations through the country’s embassies and consulates with a great sense of urgency and be ready to implement contingency measures, including possible repatriation and reintegration;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED AS IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED, to direct the Senate Committees on Labor, Employment and Human Resources Development, and on Foreign Relations to conduct an inquiry in aid of legislation to assess the impact to the country’s bilateral relations and to the Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) of the diplomatic row between Qatar and its neighbouring countries.

Adopted,


LBILA M. DE LIMA