

Undocumented Pinoys can avail of Bahrain's Flexi-Visa program —DFA

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Some 3,000 undocumented Filipinos in Bahrain can avail of the new Flexi-Visa program, which will allow them to correct their status in the Gulf state, the Department of Foreign Affairs said Thursday.

Bahrain's Labor Marketing Regulatory Authority announced that domestic workers with unfinished contracts before Nov. 1 are also covered by the visa program, Foreign Undersecretary for Migrant Workers Affairs Sarah Arriola said.

Renewable every two years, the Flexi Visa is essentially a residence and work permit made available for the those who have no legal immigration status in Bahrain.

It covers health insurance and return ticket once the contract period has ended, or when the migrant worker wants to return to his or her country.

There are now 267 previously undocumented Filipinos in Bahrain who have received their "blue cards" with another 42 expected to get it next week.

The Philippine Embassy in Manama covered the cost of the payment of the visa fee and the first two monthly administrative fee for the Filipinos who initially availed of the program.

Arriola expressed her appreciation the Bahraini Government for the initiative, as it provides an avenue for Filipino workers to regularize their status.

“These reforms are to our mind one of the most progressive among the Gulf Cooperation Countries and demonstrates to the world that a receiving country and a sending country can cooperate to protect migrant rights to their mutual benefit,” Arriola said. —**LBG, GMA News**