

DFA repatriates 7 Filipino trafficking victims from Syria

By Joyce Ann L. Rocamora September 19, 2021, 11:13 am

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REPATRIATES. The seven Filipino repatriates from Syria arrive safely at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport on Saturday (Sept. 18, 2021). The repatriates were victims of human trafficking who took shelter at the Philippine Embassy in Damascus prior to their repatriation. *(DFA photo by A. Duqueza)*

MANILA – Seven trafficking-in-persons survivors arrived safely from Syria on Saturday at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport, the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) reported.

The repatriates sought refuge at the Philippine Embassy in Damascus over poor working conditions and abuses at the hands of their employers.

The DFA immediately held talks with their employers and the recruitment agencies, as well as government officials of the Syrian Arab Republic, for the prompt and appropriate issuance of exit visas.

"The repatriation of these seven trafficking survivors from Syria reflects the DFA's continuing commitment towards protecting and assisting each and every one of our distressed Kababayans who are in need of help and assistance," Foreign Affairs Undersecretary Sarah Lou Y. Arriola said.

The DFA said the repatriates will receive government assistance in filing cases against their abusers.

Philippine government agencies led by the DFA's Office of the Undersecretary for Migrant Workers' Affairs, the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration, Department of Social Welfare and Development, Inter-Agency Council Against Trafficking, Bureau of Immigration as well as the Philippine Coast Guard were present to welcome the repatriates and conduct debriefing as well to orient them on Covid-19 arrival and health protocols. *(PNA)*