

### **Dissenting Opinion**

I find Labor Secretary Arturo Brion's message at the end of the (following) article quite harsh and insensitive to the foreign employers. Isn't it enough that the employer is giving a job to a Filipino who could hardly find one in his country? There's this contract between the employer and the Filipino employee which has to be processed at the POEA before an OFW leaves for work. In the contract it clearly states that the employer will be responsible for the employee, including repatriation of body in case of death. One more thing, a prospective OFW will also have to pay the OWWA, which includes, among others, insurance and repatriation privilege, as mandated by the Magna Carta for OFWs and other Migrant Workers.

So what is this bond all about? What is it for? Will it not be (like) a "double jeopardy" for the employing end? Surely imposition of which will discourage employers from hiring Filipinos. Then would the Philippine government be able to provide jobs?

Freda Contreras, a disgruntled ex-OFW in Kuwait

Editor's Notes: Ms. Freda had just persuaded her husband (non-Filipino) to sponsor a relative in the Philippines as family driver rather than an Indian or Bangladeshi one which her husband originally planned to.

Here is the news release sent by Asia Pacific Mission for Migrants (APMM), which formed the basis of Ms. Freda's commentary:

QUOTE.

OFWs in Milan walk out of meeting with RP execs

Migrant group leaders walked out of a consultation meeting with officials on the Philippine government's memorandum circular on direct-hiring policy in Milan, Italy.

ABS-CBN Europe News Bureau Chief Danny Buenafe said representatives of migrant group Lampada refused to hear out the clarification of Consul General George Chan regarding the posting of a \$5,000 repatriation bond by foreign employers.

Consul General Chan said employers who wish to hire Filipino workers in their respective countries would only pay \$50 as premium of the bond. He said he has been asking the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration to exempt Italy in the repatriation bond under

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Written by Freda Contreras

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POEA circular no. 4.

He added that there has been no problem in the repatriation of Filipino workers in Europe.

Right after walking out of the meeting inside the Carmeni Church in Cordusio, Milan, Mike Montemayor of Lampada said migrants would continue the signature campaign to pressure the Philippine government to scrap the controversial POEA circular.

Montemayor and other Filipino workers claimed that the Philippine Consulate in Italy has a different agenda.

They said the POEA circular failed to clarify the premium to be paid by the employers on the \$5,000 repatriation bond.

Consul General Chan said that they will not make money out of the posting of repatriation bonds but bonding companies.

Labor Secretary Arturo Brion said POEA's Governing Board will meet on Friday to discuss possible exemptions to the new rules on direct hiring.

Secretary Brion said labor attachés from the Philippine Overseas Labor Offices (POLO) will be sending in their recommendations for the implementation or exemption of directly hired Overseas Filipino workers in their respective areas of jurisdiction.

He said that if the attachés say there is sufficient protection for directly hired OFWs in their areas, the POEA Governing Board and Brion might consider making employers based in their places of jurisdiction an exception to the POEA rule.

He also said the supposed new rule was not really new but rather a stricter implementation of an existing rule.

"Di bagong policy, di lang naipapatupad ng tama...binabalik na lang ang tamang pagpapatupad...namihasa silangangkatangkat na walang binabayaran (It's not a new policy. The old one just wasn't implemented correctly. We are putting things right. Employers abroad were just recruiting OFWs without paying the corresponding fees). # # #

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UNQUOTE.

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