

Written by Bobby Reyes (As Updated on Jan. 27, 2008)

Wednesday, 16 January 2008 19:13 - Last Updated Sunday, 27 January 2008 09:46

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Why Filipinos Must Learn Middle-Eastern Logic and How Filipino Woman Leaders Fail to Protect their Fellow Women. Filipino Rape Victim in Kuwait Accepts Settlement and Returns to Manila

Canada-based Ms. Winda Lagumbay-Petilla reported about a Filipino maid who claimed that she was raped in Kuwait. Perhaps the defense of the Kuwaiti policeman is that it is the fault of the Filipino maid because if she did not go to work there as a domestic servant, then the rape would not have happened. This is not the first time that the argument has been used.

I know of a Sorsoganon truck driver who was involved in a nasty accident in the Middle East. The Bicol-Filipino driver was driving on the main road when an Arab driver failed even to slow down, much more come to a complete halt, at a Stop sign as he was driving on the side street. The Arab just merged into the highway without looking at the on-coming traffic. Later the Filipino driver was arrested and eventually his Arab employer was able to settle for a fine, which was of course deducted from the Filipino driver's salary. You know what the traffic policeman said when he told the Filipino driver that he was at fault? "If you did not come to this country, then there would have been no accident." Case closed.

The national leaders of the Philippines must and should realize that even Arab women are treated as second-class citizens in many countries in the Middle East. So, one can just imagine how Filipino women are looked down, abused emotionally, physically and sexually.

The Arroyo Dispensation boasted that it took a presidential visit to the Middle East to raise the salary of a Filipino maid to \$400 per month. But considering that Filipino workers, maids

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included, pay something like \$4,000 to their placement agency, travel agent and other expenses, legal or otherwise – from the immigration to the customs people plus the cost of the passport -- essentially the first year's wages are lost.

Think of the emotional trauma and the social costs of mothers leaving elementary-school-age children for years while they work their butts out as servants in a foreign land. Think of the thousands of Filipino maids who are sexually harassed and abused and who just keep silent because of the stigma of being a rape victim and even being blamed for the crime being committed? Is it worth the national pride? Is it worth the emotional trauma suffered by the maids' children and other dependents that are left in the Philippines?

The Philippine President is a woman and so are several Filipino senators and representatives, judges and justices and cabinet secretaries, diplomats and what not. And they all turn a blind eye on the tragedies that happened and are happening to many woman OFWs. These officials ought to think that the taxes, including the VAT, and fees being paid by these OFWs of any gender are like blood money that comes out from not only from their veins but also from their sweat glands and tearful eyes. How can these officials sleep soundly at night, knowing that they are not protecting at all their fellow Filipino women? These Filipino woman officials are just as guilty as the Middle-Eastern bosses who exploit the Filipino woman workers.

Need this column say anything more?

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Here is the report of Ms. Winda: QUOTE.

KUWAIT CITY: A Kuwaiti policeman allegedly raped a 29-year-old Filipina domestic helper on Jan 8 in the backseat of his SUV. The victim managed to get the plate number of the suspect's car leading to his arrest. The suspect is now detained at the Salwa Police Station and a case was filed at the Hawally Prosecutor's Office.

Carmen (not her real name) is married with three kids, in Kuwait since October 2007 working as a housemaid in Salwa taking care of two kids, aged four and seven months respectively.

She reported the incident to the Head of the Assistance to Nationals Unit, Mustapha Bayanan, which subsequently led to the arrest of the suspect.

A lawyer has been assigned to handle Carmen's case, Atty. Khalil Al-Qattan, who is closely monitoring the case now. Philippine Ambassador Ricardo Endaya stated that all needed legal assistance will be available for Carmen.

Excerpts from a news report by Michelle Fe Santiago, a Special to the *Arab Times*. UNQUOTE.  
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