IMPLEMENTING THE STATE OF KUWAIT LAW NO. 121/1959 WHICH GOVERNS THE ISSUANCE AND RENEWAL OF RESIDENCY VISAS OF EXPATRIATES IN KUWAIT

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Adopted: 25 February 2015
Date Filed: 05 March 2015
The Ministry of Interior (MOl) of the State of Kuwait is now implementing Law No 121/1959 which governs the issuance and renewal of residency visas of expatriates, which includes Filipinos, in Kuwait.

The said law stipulates that the validity of the residence visa (Iqama) of foreign workers/residents in Kuwait will be limited to the validity of their passports such as:

- Holders of passports valid for two (2) years or more will get residence visa valid for two (2) years;

- Holders of passports valid for one (1) year but less than two (2) years will get a residence visa valid for one (1) year;

- Holders of passports valid for less than a year shall not be issued a residence visa or cannot renew their residence visa; and

- Valid residence visa stamped on expired passport shall be automatically expired causing the visa holders to overstay.

The same law also stipulates that the following penalties will be imposed on those who will violate the law:

- A fine of KD2 per day per person;

- A maximum of three (3) months jail term with a minimum fine of KD300 and maximum fine of KD600; and

- Travel ban - an overstaying worker shall not be allowed to renew his/her residence visa or travel out of the country without paying the fine.

Filipino expatriates in Kuwait are hereby advised to check and monitor the validity of their passports for their continued legal residence and employment in Kuwait and to avoid the above-cited penalties. If the validity of their passport is less than a year, they are advised to file their application for the renewal of their passport at the Philippine Embassy immediately. Simultaneously, they may also file applications for the extension of the validity of their passports to ensure that they are in possession of valid passport while waiting for the release of their new passports which takes about sixty (60) days from the date the passport application was filed.

Further, the Embassy may extend the validity of the passports only until 25 November 2015, the deadline set by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) for all countries to phase out all non-machine readable passports from circulation and discontinue the extension of the validity of passports in compliance with global standards, which require all countries to fully implement their respective e-Passport system and renew expired or expiring passports.

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Application for passport validity extension filed in the morning will be released in the afternoon. In this regard, the MOl's Residency Affairs Department should be informed on the extension of the validity of their passports so that their passport information in the MOl's system will be properly amended.

Filipino expatriates should also advise their employers to transfer their residence visa from the old passport to the new passport and update their personal data or information in the system of the MOl's Residency Affairs Department. These procedures should also be followed by those who renewed their passports in the Philippines or any other places outside Kuwait.

For information and guidance.

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