

GUIDELINES ON THE REPATRIATION OF FILIPINO CONTRACT WORKERS IN KUWAIT

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Quoted hereunder is the information from the Philippine Embassy in Kuwait which was relayed through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the guidelines in repatriating contract workers particularly domestic helpers who are victims of maltreatment and abuses by their employers. To wit:

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1. All CWs in Kuwait and in Middle East countries come under sponsorship visa of employers and only sponsors may give sponsorship release. Embassy and employment agencies, not being sponsored have no authority to effect release. They can only make representation, persuade and make appeals for release.
2. All CWs are contracted for a period of time and expected to have work contract specifying period of employment. Asking release before contract expires for various reasons not specified in contract such as inability to perform work, illness or death in the family, etc. . . . are not acceptable reasons for release purposes.
3. If employer agrees to release before period of contract expires, employer demand among others refund of expenses incurred - one way ticket Manila-Kuwait about 500 US Dollars. Agents do not pay these expenses three months after worker's deployment. Passports are released to CWs on latter's payment of employers' expenses.
4. After securing release, CW must present release papers to Kuwait Ministry of Interior, Passport and Nationality Office for exit permit without which he/she cannot leave the country. Exit permits are not issued immediately. If CW is a runaway, investigation on the case is conducted.
5. Airline tickets (either purchased by CW agent or sent by relatives) with definite booking are to be presented to Ministry of Interior when applying for exit permit. Consequently, the mere holding of airline ticket does not by itself permit CW to leave Kuwait. He/she must, to repeat, in addition, possess release permit from employer and exit permit from the Ministry of Interior.
6. While above formalities are personal, embassy invariably assists but procedure takes time.
7. Employers generally resent being invited to the embassy or contacts being made with their employees.
8. Assistance to run-away maids is subject to their whereabouts being known to post. Some housemaids deliberately conceal their whereabouts or use assumed names.
9. Some CWs secure release from original employer to work for others or wish to remain in Kuwait for various personal reasons in which case embassy requires them to submit sworn statement of their intention for the record.

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The above is for dissemination thru PDOS particularly for departing domestic helpers.

Adopted: 5 Aug. 1986

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