



NEWS ADVISORY

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Saudi to punish illegal foreign workers and their employers - POEA warns

The Shoura Council, the parliament of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, recently approved a law to name violators of the Kingdom's residency law as well as citizens who hire overstaying foreigners for work.

The legislation was prodded by a report of the Security Committee urging council members to take action on the increasing number of illegal foreign workers in the Kingdom.

With this development, POEA Administrator Rosalinda Dimapilis-Baldoz warned job applicants anew against accepting work visas issued by employers which are not their legal sponsors or accepting tourist visas for work in the Middle East or any other country.

Baldoz also noted that some illegal recruiters, using fake documents, send Filipino workers to Saudi Arabia as pilgrims to Mecca.

The report said that in the past three years 213,000 or nine percent of all Umrah pilgrims failed to return to their home countries and were staying in Saudi Arabia illegally. Other experts estimated the number of overstaying foreigners in KSA to reach as high as 400,000.

The new legislation allows the Saudi government to publish the names of the offenders in a newspaper where they reside.

The current law on residency which was set by a Royal Decree punishes the employer with SR100,000 fine and two years imprisonment, and SR50,000 fine and a jail term of one year for the illegal worker.

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