

**PR-MPGC-049-2021**

## **PRESS RELEASE**

### *Embassy of the Republic of the Philippines, Manama*

Villa No. 939, Road No. 3220, Block 332, Mahooz, Manama, Kingdom of Bahrain

Tel. No. +97317721234 (4 lines) +97317720857 (fax)

Website: <http://manamape.dfa.gov.ph/>



### **VISITING DFA DELEGATION MEETS WITH BAHRAIN OFFICIALS AND FILIPINO COMMUNITY LEADERS**



*DFA Undersecretary for Migrant Workers Affairs Sarah Lou Y. Arriola and Assistant Secretary Alfonso A. Ver meets with H.E. Dr. Abdullatif bin Rashid Al Zayani, Minister of Foreign Affairs (left) and H.E. Jameel bin Mohammed Ali Humaidan, Minister of Labor of the Kingdom of Bahrain (right).*

29 December 2021, Manama, Bahrain – Philippine Department of Foreign Affairs officials, H.E. Sarah Lou Y. Arriola, Undersecretary for Migrant Workers Affairs, and H.E. Alfonso A. Ver, Assistant Secretary for Middle East and African Affairs, arrived in Manama, Bahrain on 27 December 2021 for an official visit to meet with counterparts and the Filipino Community.

Undersecretary Arriola and Assistant Secretary Ver paid courtesy calls on H.E. Dr. Abdullatif bin Rashid Al Zayani, Minister of Foreign Affairs and H.E. Jameel bin Mohammed Ali Humaidan, Minister of Labor; and held separate meetings with H.E. H.E. Khalil Yaqoob Al-Khayat, Assistant Undersecretary for Consular Affairs, Resources and Informatics, MOFA; Mr. Duaj Khalifa Albinali, Advisor for Planning & Development Accounting and Deputy CEO for Operations & IT of the Labor Market Regulatory Authority (LMRA); and Engr. Ali Ahmed Alderazi, Chairperson of the National Institution for Human Rights.



*Undersecretary Arriola and the Philippine delegation during the meeting with LMRA officials (left) and Engr. Ali Ahmed Alderazi, Chairperson of the National Institution for Human Rights (right).*

Undersecretary Arriola applauded Bahrain's efforts and commitment to further improve its labor reform initiatives in the Kingdom, citing that Bahrain's model of labor reform program are now being followed by other countries in the GCC such as Qatar, UAE and Saudi Arabia. She highlighted that Bahrain has been the cradle of labour reform initiatives in the GCC and cited that the cooperation between the Philippines and Bahrain to advance these reforms is a model partnership that is now being replicated in other GCC countries.

Foreign Minister Al Zayani affirmed that this visit signifies the strong friendship and cooperation in various fields between the Philippines and Bahrain. He praised the Filipino community's role and contribution in advancing the development process in Bahrain.

Labour Minister Humaidan and LMRA officials stressed their commitment to continue promoting the labor reforms not just in Bahrain but also in the entire GCC. They also showed their commitment to help and support overseas Filipino workers in Bahrain, with LMRA also expressing interest to partner with the Philippine Embassy towards increasing the community's awareness about its programs and the mechanisms available to support expatriates in the Kingdom.



*Undersecretary Arriola delivering her message to the Filipino Community leaders.*

The Philippine delegation also took this opportunity to meet the Filipino Community in the Kingdom of Bahrain. The Philippine Embassy organized a FilCom event entitled, *“Kalingang Handog sa Kapaskuhan”* which aims to bring the Philippine Christmas spirit to Filipinos in Bahrain through building camaraderie with Filipino community leaders. The Department and the Philippine Embassy also provided cash assistance to distressed Filipinos.

Undersecretary Arriola and Assistant Secretary Ver during their welcome remarks to the members of the Filipino communities encouraged the FilCom to be more optimistic regardless of the challenges brought by the pandemic. They also assured the community that the overseas Filipinos still remain one of the top priorities of Duterte administration and brought to them the good news about the passage of the bill creating the Department of Migrant Workers, which was warmly received by the community leaders. END