

# Philippines apologizes to Kuwait

## Kuwait protests over sovereignty violation



● The two countries are working on a pact to protect overseas workers

● Philippines in January banned the dispatch of contract labor to Kuwait

### Manila

The Philippines yesterday formally apologized to Kuwait for actions the latter viewed as violation of its sovereignty after the southeast Asian nation's embassy "rescued" several overseas workers from employers' homes, the foreign secretary said.

Kuwait had protested over the "rescue" of Philippine citizens working as domestic help, summoned the Philippine ambassador to demand an explanation and arrested two embassy staff who were involved in Saturday's incidents.

Foreign Affairs Secretary Alan Peter Cayetano said Kuwait has accepted the Philippines' explanation after the Kuwaiti ambassador met President Rodrigo Duterte on Monday in southern Davao city

and held talks with Cayetano on Tuesday in Manila.

"We're sending a note now to my counterpart, and we are apologising for certain incidents that Kuwait view as violation of their sovereignty," Cayetano told an impromptu news conference.

He said measures had been agreed with Kuwaiti authorities to avoid a repeat of such incidents, footage of which was posted on social media.

The two countries are working on a pact to protect overseas workers after the Philippines in January banned the dispatch of contract labor to Kuwait over reports of abuse by employers that had driven many to suicide.

The ban was ordered after a Filipino migrant worker was found dead in a freezer, the latest incident in what Manila

called a pattern of abuse in the Gulf state.

Cayetano said the embassy was forced to "assist" Filipino workers who sought help to leave employers because some situations were a matter of life and death that precluded waiting for local authorities to act.

"We respect Kuwaiti sovereignty and laws, but the welfare of Filipino workers is also very important," he said, adding that domestic helpers account for more than 65 percent of the more than 260,000 Filipinos in Kuwait.

There are 600 workers in embassy-run halfway houses in Kuwait, Cayetano added, with about 120 more who have sought to be "rescued" from employers due to worries over tough working conditions, pay and abuse.



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### DR. SAMY GOUDA

MD, MS, PHD

Consultant of Neurosurgery & Spine Surgery

## Dutch Lawyer seeks Qatari compensation

A prominent human rights lawyer demanded Monday that Qatar compensate Dutch-based victims of an al-Qaida-linked Syrian extremist group, saying the Al Nusra group was financed by Qatar-based funding networks.

In a letter sent to Qatar's ruling emir that was seen by The Associated Press, lawyer Liesbeth Zegveld accused the Gulf state of failing to take action against the al-Nusra Front and said: "Qatar is therefore liable for the damages suffered by the victims."

In her letter to Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, Zegveld alleged that one of the victims was taken hostage by members of al-Nusra near Damascus in December 2012.

The man, whose identity was not released out of safety concerns, was repeatedly tortured, forced to watch the executions of two other hostages and subjected to a mock execution. The militants demanded nearly \$2 million for his release.

He eventually escaped and fled Syria, and has since been granted asylum in the Netherlands, Zegveld said.

While the country denies funding extremist groups, it remains a key patron of the Islamic Hamas movement, which rules the Gaza Strip. Western officials also have accused Qatar of allowing



or encouraging funding of extremists like the Nusra Front. It also has hosted members of the Afghan Taliban.

Qatar also has backed members of the Muslim Brotherhood, a pan-Arab Islamist organization.

The Nusra Front "was only able to arise and maintain its terrorist activities due to the financing provided by Qatar," Zegveld said in her letter. "Qatar supports and facilitates the terrorist organization in various ways."

Zegveld said that if Qatar fails to establish a compensation fund, she will launch legal proceedings against the country, state

officials and "other individuals and organizations residing in Qatar that are involved in the financing of terrorism."

She gave Qatar six weeks to respond. (AP)

**Prominent lawyer Liesbeth Zegveld accused the Gulf state of failing to take action against the al-Nusra Front**



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- ◆ Facial pain & Trigeminal Neuralgia
- ◆ Dizziness & Vertigo
- ◆ Weakness & difficulty in walking
- ◆ Bleeding in the brain (stroke)



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