

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
QUEZON CITY



SIXTEENTH CONGRESS
FIRST REGULAR SESSION

H.B. NO. 2354

Introduced by **HON. AL FRANCIS C. BICHARA**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

By application of the pertinent provision of Article IV, Section 1 of the 1987 Philippine Constitution that "Congress, by special act of legislature, can confer Philippine citizenship to distinguished foreigners who rendered notable service to the country and to the Filipino people," I respectfully submit for consideration and approval of this body the bill to grant Philippine citizenship to Mr. MOHAMAD WASSIM NANAA, a Syrian national, and currently the Honorary Philippine Consul General in Aleppo.

Mr. NANAA was first appointed Philippine Honorary Consul (PHC) in Aleppo, Syria with jurisdiction on Idlib, Hama, Latakia, Ar-Raqqah and Tartus on 24 April 2008. He showed exceptional service in promoting Philippines-Syrian bilateral economic and cultural relations, tourism and in protecting the rights and interests of OFWs in his jurisdiction, thus he was promoted to Philippine Honorary Consul General (PHCG) on 24 April 2011. This appointive honorary position is without financial compensation.

Mr. NANAA as PHCG in Aleppo performs the following functions: 1) promotion of Philippine trade, tourism, art and culture; 2) protection of the rights of OFWs and; 3) represents the Philippines to the government of Syria on matters of interest affecting our country upon instruction from the Department of Foreign Affairs/ Philippine Embassy.

To promote Philippine trade and tourism, PHCG NANAA hosted forums and receptions to highlight the Philippines as an investment and tourist destination area, notably the widely attended 1st Philippine Investment Forum in Aleppo in 2009. He led the 1st Syrian Tourism Group to the Philippines on 13-21 November 2010, widely published in Syrian newspapers, magazines and websites. He also hosted receptions to celebrate Independence Days attended by Syrian government officials, Consular Corps and Filipinos.

PHCG NANAA remarkably showed his respect, loyalty and love of the Philippines and commitment to serve the Filipinos. He ably represented the Philippines in Syria and promoted the welfare and protected the rights of OFWs within his

jurisdiction. With his extensive contacts with the Syrian government officials like the Grand Mufti, mayors, chief of police and immigration authorities, PHCG NANAA successfully resolved assistance to Filipino nationals cases such as: a) collected unpaid salaries and/or enforcement of employment contract; b) In coordination with Aleppo Immigration authorities, compelled agency/employer to shoulder all or part of the expenses in the repatriation of OFWs; and c) amicably settled conflict between OFW and employer.

In January 2012, at the onset of the political unrest and instability in Syria, PHCG NANAA was immediately enlisted as member of the Rapid Response Team to assist in the search, rescue and repatriation of OFWs. He even made available his private residence as a sanctuary to hundreds of distressed Filipinos at no cost to the Philippine government. To date, with "civil war" in Syria, he actively works with the Philippine Embassy in assisting OFWs and is a member of the Philippine Government's Mandatory Repatriation Program in Aleppo. The Philippine Embassy in Damascus and the DFA vouched for the commitment and excellent performance of PHCG NANAA, in assisting our OFWs in Syria.

GMA News reported on 23 December 2012 that DFA Secretary Albert F. Del Rosario, while in Syria during the crisis to look into the plight of the OFWs being repatriated, spoke to PHCG NANAA and thanked him for his "selfless efforts in keeping all OFWs in Aleppo and Idlib safe". In addition, DFA Undersecretary for Administration Rafael Seguis, Former Undersecretary for Migrant Workers' Affairs Esteban Conejos, Philippine Ambassador to Damascus Wilfredo R. Cuyugan and Charge d' Affaires, a.i. Ricardo M. Endaya, all commended Mr. NANAA for his outstanding performance as PHCG.

Mr. NANAA is well educated and financially independent. He graduated with a Bachelors degree of Law from Beirut Arab University in Lebanon in 2005. He is a successful businessman in Syria doing import-export family-owned business, which he can duplicate in the Philippines.

In view of the abovementioned outstanding and meritorious services of PHCG NANAA to the Philippine government and OFWs, I submit for your support and approval this bill to confer Philippine citizenship to Honorary Consul General MOHAMAD WASSIM NANAA.#



AL FRANCIS C. BICHARA
2nd District, Albay

CONGRESS OF THE PHILIPPINES)
SIXTEENTH CONGRESS)
First Regular Session)

H.B. No. **2354**

Introduced by **HON. AL FRANCIS C. BICHARA**

“AN ACT GRANTING PHILIPPINE CITIZENSHIP TO MOHAMAD WASSIM NANAA”

Be it enacted by the Senate and the House of Representatives of the Philippines in Congress assembled:

SECTION 1. Mohamad Wassim Nanaa is hereby granted Philippine citizenship with all the rights, privileges, and duties appurtenant thereto and with the same affects and subject to the same conditions as provided under the Constitution.

SECTION 2. Upon the taking of the oath of allegiance to the Republic of the Philippines before the Bureau of Immigration and the issuance to him of the Certificate of Naturalization, Mohamad Wassim Nanaa shall enter upon the full enjoyment of Philippine citizenship.

SECTION 3. This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in at least two (2) national newspaper of general circulation.