

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session
House Bill No. **3065**



Introduced by: Congressman **BIENVENIDO M. ABANTE, JR.**

AN ACT
AMENDING SECTIONS 3(A) AND 14 OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 11641
OTHERWISE KNOWN AS AN ACT CREATING THE DEPARTMENT OF
MIGRANT WORKERS, DEFINING ITS POWERS AND FUNCTIONS,
RATIONALIZING THE ORGANIZATION AND FUNCTIONS OF
GOVERNMENT AGENCIES RELATED TO OVERSEAS EMPLOYMENT AND
LABOR MIGRATION, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR
OTHER PURPOSES

EXPLANATORY NOTE

While the State is faithful to its duty to protect the rights and promote the welfare of Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) and their families by obtaining the best possible conditions of work that uphold the dignity of Overseas Filipino Workers¹, some inevitable and unprecedented events will likely put the lives of our OFWs and their families in danger.

Last February 24, 2022, Russian President Putin authorized special military operations in Ukraine. Russian forces began missile and artillery attacks, striking major Ukrainian cities including Kiev, and as the tension between Russia and Ukraine escalated, there were 300 Filipinos living in Ukraine², while more than 10,000 OFWs in Russia³ were affected amid the invasion of Ukraine.

Recently, the armed conflict between Israel and Palestinian militant groups led by Hamas began on 7 October 2023, with a coordinated surprise offensive on Israel. The attack began with a barrage of at least 3,000 rockets launched from the Hamas-controlled Gaza Strip against Israel. In parallel, some 2,500 Palestinian militants breached the Gaza-Israel barrier, attacking military bases and massacring civilians in neighboring Israeli communities.⁴ Israel houses around 30,000 Filipinos who are mostly working as caregivers, the government said earlier. Unfortunately, it has been

¹ RA 11641 Sec. 2.

² <https://www.rappler.com/nation/philippines-main-concern-safety-workers-russia-ukraine-crisis/>

³ <https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/pinoyabroad/dispatch/825421/over-10-000-ofws-in-russia-amid-invasion-of-ukraine-poea/story/>

⁴ Hamas Leaves Trail of Terror in Israel. The New York Times. 10 October 2023. ISSN 0362-4331. Retrieved 14 October 2023.

reported on the news that there were already three (3) OFWs who died amid the conflict. The first two Filipino fatalities were identified as a 33-year-old female from Pangasinan who was working in Israel for six years, and a 42-year-old male from Pampanga. As of October 13, 2023, the number of our kababayan killed due to the ongoing conflict in Israel has increased to three.⁵

While the State does not promote overseas employment as a means to economic growth and national development and shall continuously aim to make it a choice and not a necessity⁶ let us not neglect our duty to help our fellow kababayan by all means necessary who were affected by actual or potential war and violence abroad as it was mandated not only by our laws but more so the Holy Writ –the Bible in 1 John 3:17 (KJV)

But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?

For the foregoing reasons, the passage of the instant bill is earnestly sought.



BIENVENIDO M. ABANTE, JR.

⁵ <https://www.sunstar.com.ph/manila/another-filipino-dead-in-israel-hamas-war>

⁶ RA 11641 Sec. 2

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

SECTION 1. Sec 3. Definitions of Terms - As used in this Act, the following terms and phrases are defined as follows:

- (a) Agarang Kalinga at Saklolo para sa mga OFWs na nangangailangan (AKSYON) Fund – the fund created under Section 14 of this Act to provide legal, medical, financial, and other forms of assistance to overseas Filipino Workers, including repatriation, shipment of remains, evacuations, rescue, and any other analogous help, **TO INCLUDE, AMONG OTHERS, OFWs AFFECTED BY AND/OR VICTIMS OF ACTUAL OR POTENTIAL WARS AND VIOLENCE IN THE COUNTRIES THEY ARE WORKING** or intervention to protect the rights of Filipino nationals;

SEC. 2 Sec. 14 Agarang kalinga at Saklolo para sa mga OFW na Nangangailangan (AKSYON) Fund – The Agarang kalinga at Saklolo para sa mga OFW na Nangangailangan (AKSYON) Fund is hereby established to provide legal and other forms of assistance to OFWs, **TO INCLUDE, AMONG OTHERS, OFWs AFFECTED BY AND/OR VICTIMS OF ACTUAL OR POTENTIAL WARS AND VIOLENCE IN THE COUNTRIES THEY ARE WORKING**, separate from the funds managed by the DFA. The DFA shall retain ATN and Legal Assistance Funds for the benefit of other Filipinos overseas and for consular assistance services. An appropriate shall initially be provided for the AKSYON fund in the General Appropriation Act of the year

following its enactment into law, and an appropriate amount for every year thereafter to provide assistance to OFWs at Foreign Service Posts where MWOs have been established and staffed.

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SEC. 3. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* - The Transition Committee shall promulgate the implementing rules and regulations within seventy-five (75) days after the effectivity of this Act.

SEC. 4. *Separability Clause.* - If any provision of this Act shall be held unconstitutional or invalid, the remaining provisions which are not affected thereby shall continue to be in full force and effect.

SEC. 5. *Repealing Clause.* - All laws, decrees, executive orders, rules and regulations, and other issuances, or parts thereof, contrary to or inconsistent with this Act are hereby modified, amended, or repealed accordingly.

SEC. 6. *Effectivity.* - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,