



Philippines Emergency Hotline for Filipino OFWs

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Overseas Filipino Around the World



There is an estimated number of 8 Million Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) working all over the world, mostly to provide and improve the quality of life of the family left in the Philippines. Based on the statistics the estimated remittance as of April 2010, is about USD 5M or Php 275M. The continuous increase of OFW has positive impact on the Philippine economy.

	Jan	2010 P ¹ Feb	Mar	Apr	January-April 2010 P ¹	2009 P ¹	Growth Rates (%)
52	1,372,788	1,413,127	1,553,492	1,520,200	5,859,607	5,498,770	6.56
40	1,100,495	1,128,461	1,221,502	1,217,334	4,667,792	4,414,670	5.73
12	272,293	284,666	331,990	302,866	1,191,815	1,084,100	9.94

OFW population is increasing from time to time. The Philippine government has made several programs to protect OFW from any form of abuses while earning a living in the foreign land.

Sarah Balabagan, like many Filipinas, she left to become a domestic worker, lying about her age, and obtained a post in the town of Al Ain in the UAE. On July 19, 1994, she killed her employer, Almas Mohammed al-Baloushi who was 85 years old at the time, stabbing him 34 times. She alleged that he tried to rape her, and that she was acting in self-defense.

On June 26, 1995, a court ruled that she was guilty of manslaughter as well a victim of rape. She was sentenced to seven years imprisonment and ordered to pay 150,000 dirhams (\$40,000) blood money to relatives of the deceased, while at the same time she was awarded 100,000 dirhams (\$27,000) as compensation for the rape. However, the prosecution appealed the verdict, calling for the death penalty. On September 6, 1995, a second Islamic court found no evidence of rape and convicted her of premeditated murder, sentencing her to death by firing squad. There was an international outcry and a defense campaign in several countries, as her case was seen as symbolising the ill-treatment of domestic servants in the Persian Gulf countries, and just a few months earlier there had been the rather similar case of Flor Contemplación, a Filipina domestic servant who was hanged in Singapore.



Reportedly, it was only after a personal appeal for mercy by the President of the UAE Sheikh Zayed that the victim's family agreed to drop their execution demand in exchange for blood money. On October 30, at her third trial, her sentence was reduced to a year's imprisonment and 100 strokes of the cane, along with payment of blood money, which was donated by a Filipino businessman. She was caned in 20 strokes at a time, over five days during January 30 - February 5 in 1996. Philippine Ambassador Roy Seneres said "Balabagan said it was bearable. Embassy officials visited her twice afterward, and there were no marks or bruises or reddening." She returned to the Philippines on August 1, 1996 to a heroine's welcome.

Human Trafficking Of Domestic Workers Up by 20% in 2009

The Visayan Forum Foundation Inc. (VFFI), a non-government organization that promotes the welfare of Overseas Filipino Workers (OFW's) reports a 20% increase in the incidence of persons trafficked for domestic work. VFFI's records show that from 539 persons trafficked for domestic work in 2008, the number jumped to 697 from January to August of 2009.

Senior State Prosecutor Deana Perez said there have been 16 convictions since 2005. From 577 anti-trafficking cases that were filed in court since the law was created in 2003, only 242 cases are now pending trial while the rest are dismissed, archived or acquitted.



OFW Abuse Cases

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OFW wins abuse case vs Lebanese employer

12/19/2009 | 12:11 AM

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A Lebanese national was convicted for beating up a Filipino domestic worker in 2006, the first conviction ever for maltreating a migrant worker in the history of Lebanon.

In a report to the Department of Foreign Affairs, the Philippine Embassy in Beirut said Fayrous Farez was sentenced on December 9 by a Lebanese court to 15 days in prison, US\$34 (P1,586) in court fines, and US\$7,200 (P336,137) in compensation to victim Jonalyn Malibago, a native of Quirino province.

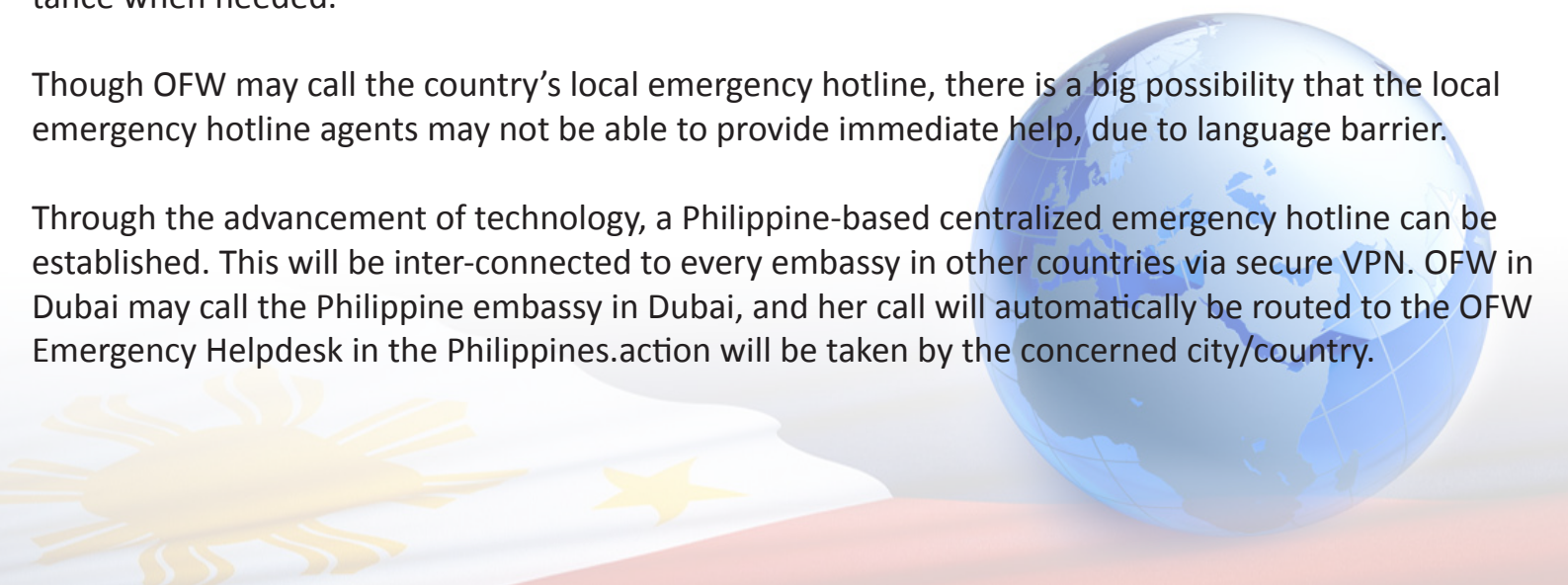
"The Embassy views this case as an important legal precedent in Lebanon, being the first conviction of a Lebanese employer for the abusive treatment of a migrant worker, who significantly happened to be a Filipino," Chargé d'Affaires, a.i. Mohd. Noordin Pendosina N. Lomondot said in his report.

Welfare Officer Mario Antonio rescued Malibago three years ago from her Lebanese employer who was beating her up as she tried to escape from Farez's car around 200 meters away from the Sassine Evacuation Center in Beirut.

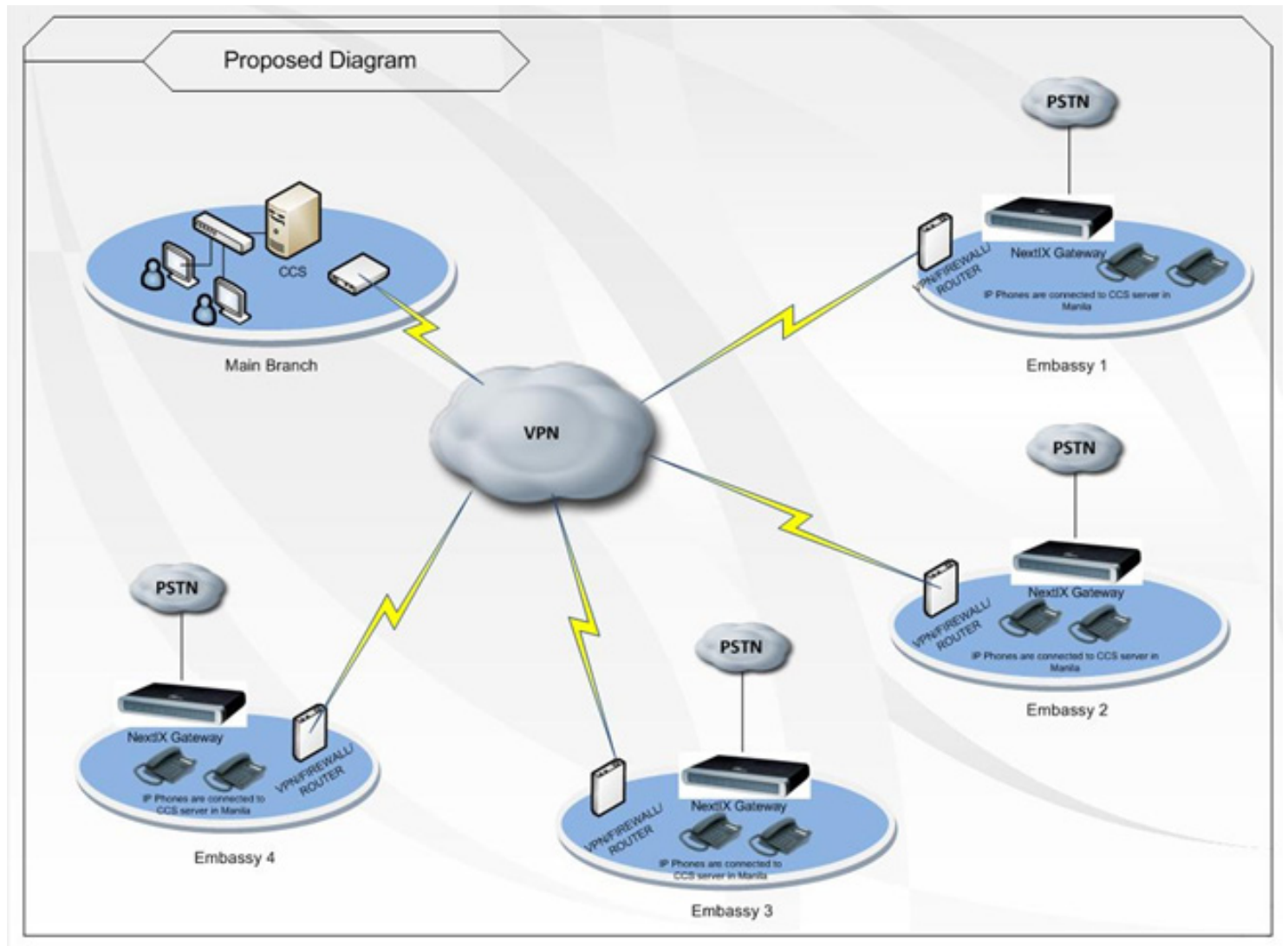
There is a significant growth of OFW population, there are possibilities that OFW abuse cases will increase as well. In order to prevent this from happening, Filipinos abroad must be given a special emergency hotline, a 911-like telephone service, which will enable them to seek immediate assistance when needed.

Though OFW may call the country's local emergency hotline, there is a big possibility that the local emergency hotline agents may not be able to provide immediate help, due to language barrier.

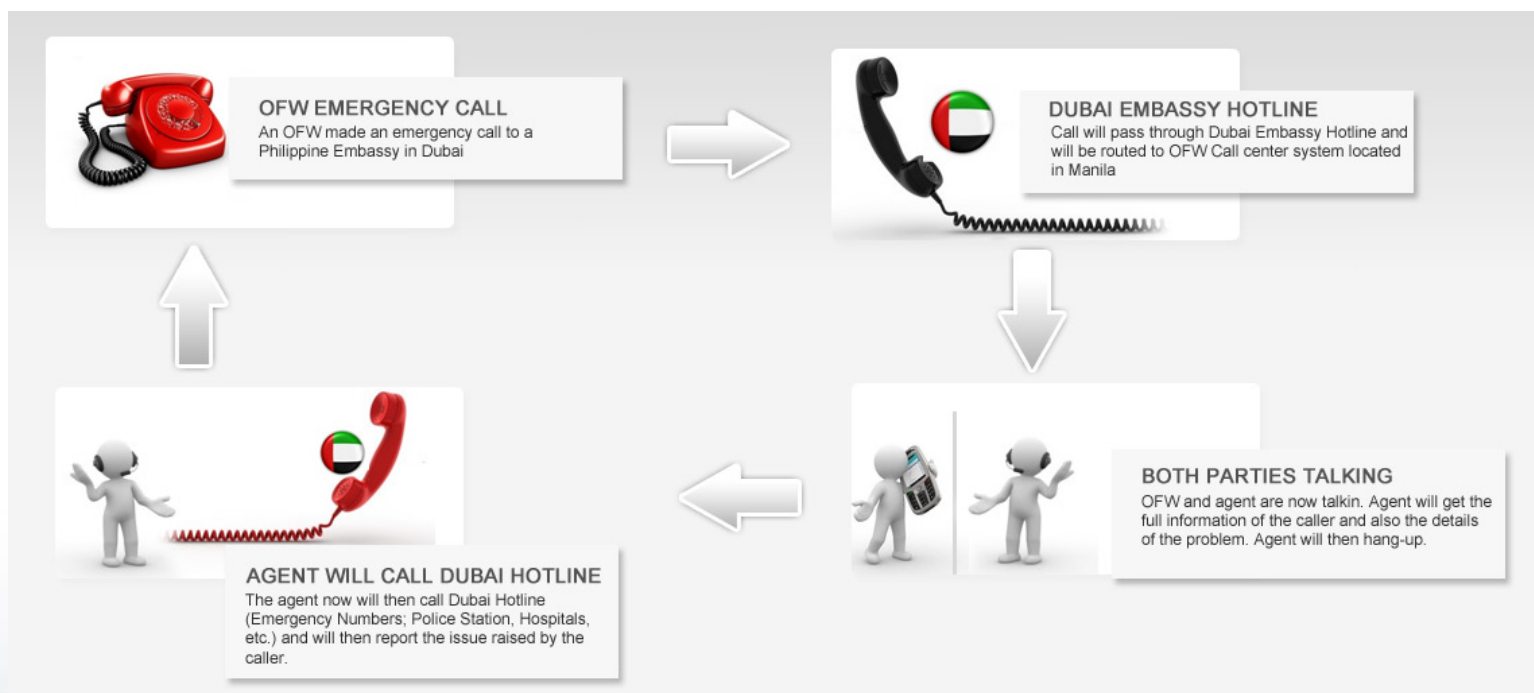
Through the advancement of technology, a Philippine-based centralized emergency hotline can be established. This will be inter-connected to every embassy in other countries via secure VPN. OFW in Dubai may call the Philippine embassy in Dubai, and her call will automatically be routed to the OFW Emergency Helpdesk in the Philippines. action will be taken by the concerned city/country.



Proposed System Diagram



Emergency Call and Flow



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