
Manila suspends deployment of workers to Nigeria

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By Lira Dalangin-Fernandez
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Philippine President Gloria Arroyo has ordered a temporary suspension of deployment of workers to Nigeria following the kidnapping of six Filipinos by a rebel group Saturday (Jan 20), her spokesman Ignacio Bunye announced.

At the same time, Bunye said on Monday (Jan 22) that the President was monitoring the situation as the Department of Foreign Affairs coordinated with the Nigerian government to ensure the safety and secure the release of the Filipinos.

"The President has ordered a temporary halt to deployments to Nigeria until the security of our nationals is guaranteed," Bunye said in a statement.

"The President is monitoring the situation and the Department of Foreign Affairs is coordinating with the Nigerian authorities to ensure the safety and secure the release of the kidnapped victims," the statement said.

Unknown assailants took six Filipino oil workers and one Nigerian hostage on a cargo ship on Saturday in the Niger Delta, the latest in a string of kidnappings in the epicentre of Nigeria's multi-billion-dollar oil industry.

They are demanding the release of a prisoner being held by the Niger federal government.

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