

PRESS RELEASE

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BI to implement DFA circular on suspension of arrivals

MANILA, Philippines—Bureau of Immigration (BI) Commissioner Jaime Morente announced that they will be implementing the restricted entry of foreign nationals in the country starting March 22.

Said move follows the issuance of a Foreign Service Circular by the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) suspending visa issuance and visa-free privileges for foreign nationals arriving in the Philippines due to the declaration of a State of Calamity throughout the Philippines because of the Covid-2019, and the declaration of a public health emergency throughout the Philippines.

According to Morente, all issuance for entry visas for visa-required foreign nationals were suspended by the DFA, while all previously-issued visas are deemed cancelled.

The DFA circular adds that visa-free privileges of foreign nationals are likewise temporarily suspended.

Currently, nationals of 157 countries enjoy visa free privileges. These countries include the South Korea, United States of America, Canada, Japan, and Singapore.

South Korea remains the top arrival in the country with more than 2.1M arrivals in 2019.

Exempted from this suspension are foreign spouses and children who are traveling with the Filipino national, foreign crew members, as well as foreign government and International Organization officials accredited to the Philippines.

“We will be implementing it in 48 hours, or 12mn of March 22, 2020 to give ample time to the DFA to inform foreign posts and embassies,” said Morente.

The suspension of visa issuance and visa-free privileges is tantamount to a total suspension of the entry of foreign nationals.

“Following the direction of the DFA who decides on our foreign policy, we will likewise be temporarily restricting the entry of foreign nationals who have converted to both immigrant and non-immigrant visas, those under visa waiver agreements, as well as special visa holders,” said Morente. “Only Filipinos, their spouse and children, foreign diplomats, and foreign crew members will be allowed entry,” he clarified. #