BI to Filipino travellers: strict compliance on travel requirements

MANILA, Philippines - The Bureau of Immigration (BI) advised Filipinos intending to go abroad to fully comply with the requirements that the government has prescribed for them to be able to leave the country.

“We will be very strict in seeing to it that these requirements are fully complied with, otherwise we will not allow them to leave,” BI Commissioner Jaime Morente said.

Morente stressed that the lifting of restrictions on non-essential travel of outbound Filipinos does not mean that anyone can now leave the country anytime as he or she pleases.

He said no one is exempted from complying with the conditions imposed on all outbound Filipinos, unless they are permanent resident, overseas Filipino workers (OFWs), and holders of study visa in their country of destination.

The BI Chief also cautioned Filipino would be travelers that "unless your purpose in going abroad is really very important that you cannot forego, we advise you to stay until this pandemic is over as the risk of you getting infected by the virus is still very serious."

According to BI Port Operations Acting Chief Grifton Medina, BI personnel in different international ports were already instructed to strictly implement the resolution of the Inter-Agency Task Force on Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF-EID) on the requirements for outbound Filipino travelers.

These requirements include the presentation of a confirmed return ticket for those traveling on tourist visas; adequate travel and health insurance to cover rebooking; and accommodation expenses if stranded and hospitalization, if infected.

Medina said it is also important for the traveler to first ascertain if the country of his destination has not imposed restrictions on the entry of Filipinos in order to avoid the inconvenience of being turned away and sent back to Manila.

“They are also required to sign, by their airlines, a declaration acknowledging the risks involved in their travel. They will be informed that upon their return, they will be swab tested for COVID-19 and undergo hotel quarantine,” Medina added.

He further stressed that even passengers who comply with the requirements will still be subjected to
rigid inspection to make sure that these travelers are not victims of human trafficking and illegal recruitment