

**PRESIDENTIAL COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE**  
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Ref: PCO Dir. Robertzon F. Ramirez

**DEPARTURE STATEMENT BY PRESIDENT FERDINAND R. MARCOS JR. FOR HIS PARTICIPATION IN THE 44<sup>TH</sup> and 45<sup>TH</sup> ASEAN SUMMITS AND RELATED SUMMITS**

[Delivered at the Villamor Air Base in Pasay City | 08 October 2024]

Thank you very much. *[Please take your seats.]*

House Speaker Martin Romualdez; members of the Cabinet, and those who are accompanying us and those who will be holding the fort back home; First Lady Louise Araneta-Marcos; Pasay District Representative Antonino Calixto; Pasay City Mayor Imelda Calixto-Rubiano; AFP Chief of Staff General Romeo Brawner and the Major Service Commanders; and Philippine National Police Chief General Rommel Marbil; Philippine Coast Guard Commandant Admiral Ronnie Gil Gavan; my fellow workers in government; ladies and gentlemen, good afternoon.

I depart today for Vientiane, Lao People's Democratic Republic (PDR) to attend the 44th and 45th ASEAN Summits and Related Summits at the invitation of the Prime Minister of Lao PDR Sonexay Siphandone.

The annual ASEAN Summits are essential for the Philippines to discuss the issues confronting ASEAN countries on geopolitical matters and also on functional cooperation.

In line with the theme of the ASEAN Chair this year on Enhancing Connectivity and Resilience, the ASEAN Leaders will explore how we can promote regional connectivity amongst ASEAN Member States, as well as to strengthen our resilience to promote sustainable development and inclusive growth.

I will also be participating in meetings with ASEAN's external partners. These engagements pave the way to advance cooperation in areas such as food and energy security, trade and investment, supply chain resilience, MSMEs, and addressing the impacts of climate change, and more.

We will also be discussing international issues that impact beyond the region, including the West Philippine Sea, the situation in Myanmar, conflict in Ukraine, in the Middle East as well, among other important regional and international issues.

As we continue to grapple with sharpening regional tensions, including the recent dangerous incidents in the West Philippine Sea, I intend to champion our advocacies in promoting an open, inclusive, and rules-based international order, and for the peaceful resolution of any disputes in accordance with international law.

This administration will continue to ensure that our constructive and deepening engagements with ASEAN, our Dialogue Partners, and stakeholders serve our national interest and the well-being of the Filipino people.

And as we speak, I think of our Filipino *kababayan* who are affected by the increasing tensions in the Middle East.

I wish to reassure the public that the Philippine government is doing everything it can to ensure the safety of over 40,000 Filipino nationals in Lebanon and in Israel and to bring them home so that they have a place that they can feel safe in, so long as they ask to come home.

I am glad to report that no Filipino has been reported injured in the crisis that we hear about in the news and --- to the wave of attacks against Hezbollah targets in the past few days, and the consequent Iranian reprisal against Israel.

Our Embassies have been coordinating with the Filipino community on this matter and working on securing exit papers and transportation for those returning.

Of the 1,500 initial applicants for repatriation from Lebanon, a third have already gone home, while another third, around 500, are still having their papers processed. The DFA will expedite this and OWWA will be chartering the flights to bring them home.

For the month of October, the DMW and OWWA will be bringing home at least 162 distressed OFWs from Israel. Once they return to the Philippines, the DMW and OWWA are ready to provide assistance to them.

Sa ating mga kababayan sa Lebanon at Israel, ang ating pamahalaan ay nakahanda sa pagtugon ng inyong pangangailangan. We hope that you will avail yourselves of our repatriation program while flights are available. In the meantime, heed the Advisories of the Philippine Embassy and the Lebanese and Israeli governments.

I expect the Secretaries of the DFA and the DMW and the Administrator of OWWA to report to me with updates daily.

The Philippines urges all parties to refrain from escalating the violence and to work towards a peaceful resolution of the conflict.

We emphasize the need to adhere to international humanitarian law, especially the principles of proportionality and distinction in response to security threats, and to ensure the protection of civilians at all times.

The Philippines will always stand for the principles of international law and the safety of Filipinos in the Philippines and overseas.

Maraming salamat at magandang hapon sa inyong lahat. *[applause]*

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