

PRESS RELEASE

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Alien spouses of Pinoys with existing visas can enter PH, BI clarifies

MANILA, Philippines - The Bureau of Immigration (BI) said foreign spouses of Filipinos can enter the country if they already have existing visas previously issued to them by the Bureau.

Immigration Commissioner Jaime Morente clarified that the said aliens can enter the Philippines as long as the visas that were issued to them by the Bureau are still valid.

"If you are married to a Philippine citizen and a holder of a valid visa that you obtained from the Bureau, you may enter the country without the need to secure an entry visa from your port of origin," Morente explained. "The visa that you hold will suffice as basis for our immigration officers to admit you upon your arrival in our ports of entry."

Morente said he issued the clarification to address reports of alleged confusion over the BI's earlier pronouncement that all foreign spouses, dependents and parents of Filipinos must have the appropriate visas to enter the country.

The BI Chief stressed that it would be impractical to require these alien spouses, dependents and parents of Filipinos to secure new visas if they already have visas that are still valid in their possession. "Only foreigners married to Filipinos who do not possess any visa at all are required to secure entry visas to be able to enter our country," he said.

Morente, however, warned that aliens with existing visa but possess expired Alien Certificate of Registration Identity Cards (ACR I-Cards) will be denied entry, thus they have to renew the same before traveling to the Philippines.

A memorandum issued last Wednesday, 12 August 2020, by BI Port Operations Division Acting Chief Grifton Medina further clarified that alien spouses, minor dependents and parents of Filipino minors are no longer required to secure visas if they already possessed valid visas issued by the BI.

Medina said these visas need not only be those that were issued to aliens by reason of their marriage to Filipinos.

"For example, a holder of a valid 9(g) working visa or a Special Retiree's Resident Visa (SRRV) can enter the country if he or she is married to a Filipino. They need not apply for a new entry visa from our Philippine Consulates abroad," Medina said.

Medina also said that foreign spouses of Filipinos exempted from the travel ban also cover former Filipinos who have been naturalized as citizens of other countries. "They may join their spouses or children so long as they secure or possess the appropriate visas," he said.

The BI official explained that "the bottomline is that no foreigner can enter the country without a visa even if he is married to a Filipino. All of them must have a valid visa or they will be turned back upon arriving in our ports of entry."