

LESSON 17



Pakikinig: Liham mula sa dayuhang piitan

Letter from a Foreign Prison

Listen to this excerpt from a two minute and five second (2:05) video (file name inter tag lesson 17) entitled “Liham mula sa dayuhang piitan (Letter from a foreign prison)” made by the *Pinoy Weekly* Staff and posted on December 23, 2010. Alternatively, you can watch the full 4:38 minute video at <http://pinoyweekly.org/new/2010/12/video-liham-mula-sa-dayuhang-piitan/>.

In this video, Nerissa Neri, a Filipina overseas worker who served a prison sentence in the Middle East, tells her own story. Towards the end of the video, she also reads a letter from her former cellmate to Philippine President Benigno Aquino III.* Neri was repatriated from Saudi Arabia on December 9, 2010.

To provide a context for her story, here are some pertinent details in Neri’s case—these details are shown through texts that bridge the video, but could obviously not be heard in the audio clip: First, Neri was raped on August 25, 2009 by a fellow employee at a hospital where she worked as a “janitress” (word used in the video) or as a custodian. Nerissa became pregnant, was accused by her employer of having an illicit affair and then sent to Hafer Al Baten Central Jail. She was sentenced to 10 months in prison and 150 lashes. During the time she was incarcerated, she was only visited twice by an official from the Philippine embassy, and was not given any assistance. Neri had a miscarriage in prison. She completed her sentence on August 10, but instead of being sent home, she was transferred to Damman Central Jail because she apparently did not have a ticket to go back to the Philippines. It took four more months before she was released from prison. More than 300 overseas foreign workers are currently in prison in the Middle East. In 2011, the Aquino government cut more than 50% of funds allocated to overseas foreign workers.

Review/study the following vocabulary words: **nagpasya** (decided); **nangangalahati** (half); **bakanteng lote** (vacant lot); **alibabok** (dust); **humaharap** (facing); **umamin** (admitted); **pasigaw** (in a shouting manner); **padabog** (showing annoyance); **kulungan** (prison); **takas** (escapes [from employers]); **napagbintangan** (was falsely accused); **binubugbog** (beaten up); **nananawagan** (calling on); **pabalik-balik** (kept going back); **tauhan** (staff); **embahada** (embassy); **napabayaan** (uncared for)

Answer the following comprehension questions about the audio passage:

1. Why did Nerissa Neri go abroad to work?

* Aquino was elected President in 2010 with a term of six years. Under the Philippine constitution, Philippine presidents cannot run for a second term.

2. What happened to Neri just before she was raped?
3. Where was she and what was her state when she woke up, leading her to conclude (although not implicitly stated) that she was raped?
4. What were conditions like at the jail?
5. What was the problem she faced when she went to court?
6. How did the embassy official talk to Neri and what did he/she want Neri to do?
7. What were the experiences of the other Filipina women in prison?
8. In the female prisoners' opinion, how has the Philippine government helped them?