



PRESS RELEASE
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DOJ ISSUES ADVISORY ON ILLEGAL DRUG COURIERS

Los Angeles, 16 May 2011 – The Philippine Department of Justice (“DOJ”) issued an Advisory Opinion explaining to the public the issues surrounding the recruitment, arrest, detention and conviction of Filipinos caught transporting illegal drugs abroad.

As with its previous Advisory Opinion regarding the basic rights of citizens in military/police checkpoints, Advisory Opinion No. 2 is in line with the thrust of the DOJ to take a pro-active stance in criminal justice concerns, including the issue on Filipino illegal drug couriers or “drug mules”.

The DOJ’s Advisory is addressed both to Filipinos who willingly accept offers to become illegal drug couriers and to those who were involuntarily caught in the criminal activities of syndicates through various *modus operandi*. In either case, the Advisory lays down basic rules that all Filipinos should bear in mind once they are apprehended abroad on suspicion of transporting illegal drugs.

Below are the ten (10) advisory points issued by the DOJ, couched in simple and straightforward language for easy comprehension by the general public:

1. “Carry at your own risk”
2. Knowledge is immaterial and intent is not a requirement in drug trafficking.
3. Be vigilant of the *modus operandi* of drug courier syndicates.
4. In the unfortunate event of arrest or detention for drug trafficking, have presence of mind and do not resist arrest.
5. Assert your legal rights, inquire on the legal remedies and request for consular assistance.
6. Presumption of innocence will always apply.
7. The laws of the country of arrest apply.
8. If sentenced, the government can only be of limited assistance.
9. “Blood money” cannot be paid to erase the liability of a person convicted of a crime involving illegal drugs.
10. Take full responsibility of your actions.

The DOJ’s Advisory Opinion No. 2 was issued at a time when more and more Filipinos are being arrested and convicted in various countries allegedly for being drug couriers. It seeks to warn Filipinos of the legal consequences of being involved, voluntarily or involuntarily, in the criminal activities of illegal drug syndicates.

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