

amid Syria strikes

Ian Nicolas Cigaral (philstar.com) - April 14, 2018 - 10:39am

MANILA, Philippines **(Updated 1:35 p.m.)** – The Philippine government on Saturday said it is now monitoring the situation in Syria after the US and its allies launched military strikes in the Syrian capital to stop suspected use of chemical weapons.

In a statement, the Department of Foreign Affairs said the Philippine Embassy had issued advisories to Filipino expats as early as April 8 in anticipation of possible military action against Syria.

“We are in touch with the Philippine Embassy which is now checking on the condition of more than 1,000 of our kababayans in Damascus,” the DFA.

“So far, the Embassy has not received any reports of Filipino casualties in the attacks that appear to have targeted military installations in and around Damascus,” it added.

“The Embassy also has not received any requests for assistance from any” Filipinos in Syria.

President Donald Trump announced Friday (Washington time) that the U.S., France and Britain together launched military strikes in Syria to punish President Bashar Assad for his alleged use of chemical weapons against civilians and to deter him from doing it again.

Loud explosions lit up the skies over the Syrian capital, as Trump announced the airstrikes.

In an announcement from the White House, Trump said the U.S. is prepared to “sustain” pressure on Assad until he ends what the president called a criminal pattern of killing his own people with international banned chemical weapons.

The decision to strike, after days of deliberations, marked Trump's second order to attack Syria; he authorized a barrage of Tomahawk cruise missiles to hit a single Syrian airfield in April 2017 in retaliation for Assad's use of sarin gas against civilians. — **with a report from the Associated Press**