

Interpol arrests suspect in brutal slay of OFW

By HELEN FLORES

The principal suspect in the murder of overseas Filipino worker Joanna Demafelis in Kuwait has been arrested in Lebanon, the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) announced last night.

Foreign Affairs Secretary Alan Peter Cayetano has in-

formed President Duterte about the arrest of Lebanese Nader Essam Assaf who, together with his wife Mona, a Syrian national, are the principal suspects in the brutal murder of the 29-year-old domestic helper.

"The President welcomes the news that Nader Essam Assaf is now in the hands of authorities in Lebanon," Cayetano said in a statement.

"Assaf's arrest is a critical first step in our quest for justice for Joanna and we are thankful to our friends in Kuwait and Lebanon for their assistance," he said.

Assaf and his wife have been the subject of an Interpol manhunt after Kuwaiti

authorities discovered early this month the battered body of Demafelis inside a freezer in the couple's abandoned apartment.

Cayetano said Kuwaiti authorities conveyed the arrest of Assaf to Ambassador Renato Villa during a meeting at the Ministry of Interior on Thursday.

In that meeting, Maj. Gen. Ibrahim Al-Tarah, assistant undersecretary for general security affairs, disclosed to Villa that Interpol Lebanon had notified Interpol Kuwait that Assaf is now in custody but that his wife is still at large and is believed to be in Syria.

Kuwaiti authorities request-

ed the assistance of Interpol in locating and arresting the couple who they believe had fled to Lebanon or Syria shortly after the torture and murder of Demafelis.

Cayetano said he expects Kuwaiti authorities to request the extradition of Assaf so he could stand trial in Kuwait.

OVERSEAS FILIPINO
WORKERS (OFW)

* DEPT. OF
FOREIGN AFFAIRS (DFA)