

Nigeria Foreign Policy on her Citizens: The Nigeria Embassy's Role in Germany

Written by The Concerned Nigerians Germany (CNG)

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Overview

This report is written to inform all Nigerians and the supporters of Concerned Nigerians Germany (CNG) of the effects of Nigeria foreign policy in the lives of Nigerians residing in Germany. It summarizes the information gathered during CNG investigation and explains the conclusions reached.

It has been observed over the years by the African Community Leaders that Nigeria Embassy in Berlin has been issuing ETC for the deportation of Nigerians and other African citizens to Nigeria. The rationale behind this practice is to make money for the Ambassadors and Ministers to enable them live a luxury life upon return to Nigeria. This act is wrong as all Nigerian diplomats are given estacode by the Nigeria government and not to get extra from the German government in a corrupt manner.

With this background, this report is organized into five sections to provide (1) an overview of the role of Nigeria Diplomats, (2) a summary of the evidence reviewed and findings of CNG visit to Karlsruhe to observe Mobile Consular Hearing, (3) the disclaimed of the Nigerian Community Leaders (NCL) by the Minister of Economics and Commerce (Mr. John C. Eziaghighala), (4) Nigeria and the Diaspora Communication and (5) the negative role of the embassy in the renunciation of citizenship.

Introduction

Nigeria embassy was established in Germany to protect the interest of its citizens. The building is supposed to be a house in a permanent structure, which includes staff housing, offices, and spaces for public functions. But today, the embassy staff have re-defined it as the movement of Embassy Ministers from city to city in the name of identifying Nigerians to manufacture money for the enrichment of the Ambassadors and its Ministers through aiding of deportation. This movement of the embassy for the issuance of Emergency Travelling Certificate (ETC) is what the Concerned Nigerians Germany (CNG) referred to as Mobile Consular Hearing (MCH).

It is disturbing to the Concerned Nigerians that the German government takes responsibility of the complete financial commitment (ranging from Estacode and hotel accommodation for the officials and family members). Considering this commitment, the CNG and other activists felt the consular hearing decision will never be fair to the asylum seekers.

From the investigation conducted on Nigeria Diplomats over the years, the Diplomats in Berlin are considered to be silent killers. Their idea of a diplomat is hatred, anger and low self-esteem in others. The Diplomats are aware that their ideas are destructive.

A narrative essay on the issue

The essence of this report was to register the recent experience on the Mobile Consular Hearing that took place from the 15th to the 18th of August 2011 in Karlsruhe. The Mobile Consular Hearing (MCH) was piloted by Minister John Eziaghighala in the Federal Ministry of Immigration and Refugees (Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge), Baden Württemberg branch in Karlsruhe, Germany.



The Concerned Nigerians have been asking the rationale behind Mobile Consular Hearing, not until recently discovered that the essence of the exercise is to generate money for the embassy staff for a luxury life at the end of their posting period in Germany.

In attempt to find answers to this question, the

resolution of the meeting held with two Nigerian Ambassadors to Germany from 2005 to 2011 on the Mobile Consular Hearing issue was put to Test on the 18th of August 2011, and was very disappointing to the CNG delegates. In 2008, a verbal invitation was given to the Concerned Nigerians by the former Ambassador, Abdul Bin Rimdap, the Minister for Information and Politics – Mr. Patrick Okoye, Minister Roddy I. Nwokebia (Former Head of Chancery) and Mr. Sidi – Minister in charge of Consular and Immigration Affairs then, to observe the Mobile Consular Hearing whenever it is deem necessary. The Concerned Nigerians visited Karlsruhe on the 18th of August to act as requested. Before departure, the CNG was informed that Mr. John Eziaghighala (Minister, Economics and Commerce) was the person conducting the interview.



Mr. J. Eziaghighala

Upon arrival in Karlsruhe, the CNG contacted the head of German Police Delegation at the Hearing Centre for a permission to speak with the Nigeria Embassy representative (Mr. John C. Eziaghighala), the Police Officer informed the delegates that he would like to request a permission from the embassy representative before granting the group access to speak with him. The Police Officer did as said, in return, message brought was that Mr. Eziaghighala disclaimed the group by name or organisation. The Police officer was then given two complimentary cards from two of the delegates to Mr. Eziaghighala which he also disclaimed. This said Minister has held a meeting with this persons and has been communicated with in writing to recommend meaningful issue for the progress of Nigerians in Germany. To substantiate the police officer's claim, several calls were made to Mr. Eziaghighala's cell phone, which he left



Mr. Femi Rotimi

unanswered. Additional effort was made to contact Charge D' Affairs - Mr. Femi A. Rotimi of the Nigeria embassy by phone, the CNG delegates were also very dissappointed to have spoken with Mr. Rotimi who denied being Charge D' Affairs. However, as conversation continues, he accepted to be Charge D' Affairs, but claimed to be attending a meeting, the conversation ended. Further effort made was to contact other Ministers.

Firstly, a call was made to Mr. Ahmed (Minister of Consular and Immigration) who denied knowing the person in the interview centre. Secondly, Mr. Rabi Shehu (Minister and Head of Chancery) contacted, confirmed that Mr. Eziaghighala could not grant permission to the group as Nigeria issue cannot be discussed outside the embassy's premises. His defense was found very irritating by the CNG, as the embassy could discuss Mobile Consular Hearing outside the embassy premises. From the statement made by Mr. Shehu, this has been the advocacy of the Concerned Nigerians Germany, that Nigerians' issue should only be discussed inside the embassy premises.



Mr. Amadu A. Ahmed

The Concerned Nigerians were not only perplexed with the manner at which the officers handle the affairs of Nigerians, but also the ways in which they respond to Nigerians' need in every aspect relating to consular matters.

Another issue that puzzled the Concerned Nigerians was a case of a guy from Burundi, to whom Mr. Eziaghighala requested to accept being a Nigeria to end the issue of further invitation for Consular Hearing. This evidence is in-line with what happened in 2008, when a guy from Cameroon was identified to be a Nigerian that was supposed to be issued ETC. The termination of the deportation of the Cameroonian was stopped as a result of the intervention of activists in Germany calling the embassy to inform them that the guy to be issued ETC was not a Nigerian. These are just two examples among many.

The Concerned Nigerians Germany are aware that Mr. President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan once called on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to reform the country's foreign policy in order to articulate and market the country to meet global challenges. However, the question of CNG is, does this policy geared towards the faciliation of Nigerians deportation from Europe or to define the innovative ways of developing the financing instruments that would harness Diaspora resources?



Mr. R. Shehu

There are certain types of people that indulge in negative states of mind. They are all different in some ways of thinking and acting, but the unifying feature of all of them is their constant negativity. This philosophy defined the diplomats in Nigeria embassy in Berlin.

What is the rationale behind the Mobile Consular Hearing?



In our last report, we revealed the number of refugee migrants to Germany from January to March 2011. It was reported that Afghanistan top the list, followed by Irak and the third was Serbian. The report indicate that African countries were not found in the first 10.

Evidence of our report on Refugees' Migrant to Germany could be seen from this photo (taken in Karlsruhe on the 18th of August 2011). Looking at the Queue, one could conclude that black Africans are the minority of refugee migrants in Germany. The question here is, why does Nigeria embassy carryout Mobile Consular Hearing? Why are the countries having the largest number of migrants not involve in such activities? Beside, there is no refugee crises in Germany.

Nigeria Embassy in Question

There has been vociferous complaints by the Concerned Nigerians over the years regarding the collaboration of the embassy in Berlin to deport Nigerians in a conspiracy or collusion with German government, thereby undermining the willingness of Nigerians. The Concerned Nigerians Germany are aware that no one can stop deportation, but the manner at which it is practised by the Nigeria embassy is totally dis-respectful to the black people. We are also aware that Nigeria as a country does deport illegal immigrants, but what CNG is against is the movement of the embassy from city to city. As the definition of embassy implies, all issues relating to embassies duties should be conducted at the embassy premises, except on issues very pressing like visiting citizens in prison and attending diplomatic meetings relating to bilateral agreement or trade between the two countries.

Outside these activities, is the movement of the embassy part of the treaty signed between Nigeria and the German Government? This question needs an answer. We are aware that Nigeria has almost a 50 room office (including accommodation for staff members) in Bonn, if the claim of Ambassador Patrick Okoye regarding the size of the embassy in Berlin being tool small is the problem, then what is the use of the Nigeria house in Bonn?



Amb. Patrick Okoye

Another question that need answer here is, what does the embassy stand to gain by moving from city to city to conduct consular hearing for the deportation of Nigerians? Can the €500.00 collected for each ETC progress Nigeria or decrease the rate of unemployment in Nigeria or breed more criminals as a result of fraustration? Does the person forcefully deported from Europe after ten years of stay improve the economic status of Nigeria? We expect the embassy to move from place to place for the benefit of Nigerians (passport processing and visit to prisons from time to time, not only for deportation). When Mr. Shehu and Mr. Eziaghighala visited Kassel on the 2nd of April 2011, the contact information of the Nigeria Community Leaders were collected, the essence of the collection is still questionable as no information or single contact has been established

between the parties.

Nigeria and the Diaspora Communication

Several reports have been published over the years on how the embassy staff treat Nigerians in Berlin. When German government request an information in the form of letter from Nigerians residing in Germany – both those residing legally and asylum seekers, documents are never given by the embassy. Some of the Ministers do say, the embassy is not in a position to issue letters to Nigerians. Why issue ETC to the German government for the deportation of Nigerians?

This matter has been bordering a lot of Nigerian Community Leaders and has been discussed several times with the Ambassadors and Ministers. Many a time, the Ambassadors claimed not to have received any complaint from Nigerians. They mentioned that there is a complaint box where Nigerians are requested to place in their complaints.

To the Ambassadors, we the Concerned Nigerians found this statement also very irritating, as several letters and recommendations on the progress of the embassy and Nigerians in particular have been mailed directly to the Ambassadors through traditional mail delivery, yet, no response has been received so far. The Ministers often apportion blames to the auxiliary staff knowing fully well that they cannot defend themselves as they were never present in our meetings. The auxiliary staff also have their blames, this is the result of how they perceive the diplomat on Nigerians' affairs. Nigeria Diplomat have never been fair to their citizens. Problem of Nigeria's is perceived not to be part of the embassy's responsibility despite their mission here in Germany to act as messengers between Nigerians and their government. Most request made by Nigerians in the Nigeria embassy in Berlin are often turned down and are usually referred to contact Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Nigeria knowing fully well that it is not possible for the individual persons to reach the Ministry. Some of the Ministers claim having difficulties reaching the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Abuja. Our question is, is the embassy not the communication link between Nigerians and their leaders back home?

Nigerians and Citizenship Renunciation

The recent finding of the Concerned Nigerians and Elders was a total disappointment and frustration for many Nigerians as the embassy has over the years been selling her citizens for €500.00. The Concerned Nigerians sometimes wonders whether the right calibre of diplomats were selected to serve at the embassy in Germany. The Nigerians in Germany are suffering because the embassy has not been able to carryout its functions effectively. The embassy supposed to be the information centre for Nigerians, in the aspect of money generation, the embassy always claim ignorance, therefore forcing the citizens to denounced their citizenship before accepting German Citizenship. The Nigeria constitution accept dual citizenship as stated in Chapter 3, Article 29, which states that the citizen of Nigeria may not be renounced except by the approval of the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. The relevant of the German Aliens and Citizens Acts - StAG § 12.1.2.1+ 2 ; AuslG § 87 Abs. 1 Satz 1 – 6 and StAG § 8.1.2.6.3 also support Dual citizen of which Nigeria is amongst the countries listed. These rules were neglected by the embassy due to what they stand to gain. There were several cases where passport given up to the embassy were found in the hands of others at the airport on their journey to Europe. How do we assess this act?

Looking at the role of Nigeria embassy in Germany on the affairs of Nigerians, the CNG cannot sit back to allow a contemptuous Nigeria people or self centered embassy staff to stand in favour of German Government to trample on the rights of Nigerians. In several of our reports, Nigeria embassy has been advised to stop Mobile Consular Hearing, to this end, to no avail.

The Concerned Nigerians Germany calls on well meaning Nigerians and other Africans to join in the mobilisation of Nigerians to help show solidarity through a protest against Nigeria embassy that has been the front player of the Mobile Consular Hearing (MHC) which has diminished black people's reputation in Germany.