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دولة إرتريا
وزارة الشؤون الخارجية

The State of Eritrea
Ministry of Foreign Affairs


Dutch action is unwarranted and unacceptable

On Tuesday last week, the Netherland's Foreign Ministry expelled Eritrea's *Charge d'Affaires* to the country, Mr. Tekheste Ghebremedhin, invoking untenable explanations for its unacceptable act. .

The letter that the Minister of Foreign Affairs sent to the Netherland's Parliament on the case indeed illustrates the banality of the whole affair.

On the one hand, the Minister states: "the Cabinet recognizes that no judge has yet recorded proof of wrongful or punishable offenses by the Eritrean embassy office in The Hague". And yet, the Minister alludes to "the broadcast of Argo (Dutch radio station)" and to the "...Motion of two parliamentarians requesting the government to close the Eritrean embassy" to explain and justify this unwarranted and unfriendly act.

Eritrea's levying of 2% Rehabilitation and Recovery tax in the Diaspora, enacted in accordance with the laws of the country in 1994, is a legitimate and sovereign act that cannot be misconstrued, by any stretch of imagination, as a contravention of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations. (There are indeed some countries that levy full income tax from their citizens abroad). Tax collection is carried out through normative and appropriate transactional modalities. The Consulate naturally provides ordinary consular services, including the provision of relevant information to its citizens in the country.

Needless to emphasize, the Rehabilitation and Recovery Tax Law contains explicit clauses on the penalties that apply for tax evasion. These measures are not onerous by any standards. A citizen who fails or opts not to pay the 2% Rehabilitation Tax is entitled to all his/her rights and consular services. But he/she will forfeit business license and land entitlement rights in the home country. 

In the event, the designation of Eritrea's *Charge d'Affaires* as *persona non grata* constitutes an arbitrary and provocative act that has no consonance with the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations. We must also recall previous unfriendly incidents taken by the Netherland's authorities against Eritrea in the past few years.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the State of Eritrea rejects the hollow accusations leveled against its Consular Office in the Netherlands. The Netherland's non-resident Ambassador to Eritrea has been summoned to explain the unfriendly acts of her government. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is naturally considering appropriate reciprocal measures that it will have to take to partially redress the wrong.

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