

PRESS RELEASE

No: MFA/PR/2022/22

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT OF NIGERIA'S EFFORTS TOWARDS REPATRIATION OF STRANDED NIGERIANS FROM THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES (UAE)

The attention of the Federal Government of Nigeria has been drawn to news making the rounds on social media that the Nigerian Mission in the UAE has abandoned some stranded Nigerians in that country and is making it difficult for them to return home.

The allegation is completely untrue and misleading as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Nigerian Mission have been working assiduously with the UAE authorities to assist over 300 Nigerians stranded in the country for various reasons, ranging from overstay, lost passports, lack of documentation especially in the case of infants, to pending cases with the Emirati Police.

The affected Nigerians are among nationals from other African countries in custody at the holding centre of Al Aweer Immigration Office, pending the consideration of their cases and conclusion of the legal processes by the relevant authorities before repatriation.

The Nigerian Mission has since the commencement of the saga on 15th August, 2022 been working hard to collate the details of the stranded Nigerians with a view to issuing Emergency Travel Certificates (ETC) to those of them with no means of identification.

The UAE authorities on the other hand, will process the immigration papers of those on overstay, who are the majority and are required by law to pay fines. Some of the affected Nigerians have fines of over \$10,000 per person. The UAE Government is willing to waive the fines for those who are unable to pay, however, not without the attendant penalty of 10 years ban from the UAE. Those in police custody for other alleged offenses must be cleared, while those without documentation or means of identification especially infants will go through legal procedures for rectification.

The various processes outlined above have to be finalized by the relevant Emirati authorities before repatriation of affected Nigerians by the Federal Government.

The Federal Government wishes to seize this opportunity to appeal to Nigerians in the UAE to remain law abiding and avoid actions that would inflict untold hardship on