



## Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Abuja

### PRESS RELEASE

No: MFA/PR/2023/24

**THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS REFUTES ALLEGATIONS MADE BY ONE DR. PAUL EZIKE IN A VIRAL VIDEO ON THE PLIGHT OF NIGERIAN INMATES IN KALITI PRISON, ETHIOPIA**

The attention of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has been drawn to a video by one Dr. Paul Ezike making the rounds on social media on the alleged plight of Nigerian inmates in the Kaliti Prison in Ethiopia.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs considers Dr. Ezike's narration as exaggerated and blown out of proportion, while his assertion of inaction by the Nigerian Mission in Addis Ababa to the alleged plight of Nigerian inmates, is unfair and misleading.

There are over 270 Nigerian nationals serving various prison terms in Ethiopia. Most of them are incarcerated for drug related offences. The Nigerian Mission in Addis Ababa, as with other Nigerian Missions world over, embarks on regular consular visits to these prisons to ascertain and attend to the wellbeing of Nigerian inmates, and in the same vein engage with host authorities on their behalf.

The Ethiopian authorities on the other hand, have always maintained that Nigerian inmates are not treated differently from other inmates, Ethiopian inmates inclusive. Scarce resources and budgetary constraints, amidst the growing number of inmates, often feature as the main challenge for the prison authorities.

It is in this regard, that the the Federal Government of Nigeria, in response to the demands of Nigerian inmates, is in the process of concluding a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on the Transfer/Exchange of Prisoners with the Ethiopian Government. When finalized, this will enable Nigerian Inmates complete their jail terms in Nigeria, where their family members could complement government's efforts towards their maintenance in prison.

This will be particularly beneficial to inmates with underlying illnesses. For instance, information obtained by the Nigerian Mission in Addis Ababa from the Federal Prison Hospital, Kaliti regarding the death of Ms. Favour Chizoba on 12th March, 2023,



revealed that she died of cardiac arrest, having had a history of hypertension and cardiac disease.

Similarly, on the death of Mr. Joachim Uchenna Nwanneneme, a Nigerian inmate in the same Kaliti Prison on 22nd September, 2023, the official report indicated he died of kidney failure. He was previously diagnosed with tuberculosis, which according to the hospital officials, prompted his isolation.

There is no gain saying the fact that prison conditions are not the best of conditions. That explains why, the Federal Government keeps reiterating the call for the few unpatriotic Nigerians involved in transnational organized crimes, including drug and human trafficking, to desist from such acts that lead to imprisonment and tarnish the image of the country, thereby subjecting innocent citizens to undue profiling across international borders.

Being a transit hub, Ethiopia's Bole International Airport receives massive movement of passengers and cargos to over 127 international destinations daily. There are, therefore, reported cases of daily interceptions of drug traffickers. Sadly, Nigerians have been identified as major culprits. This has contributed to the undue profiling and ill-treatment of a few innocent Nigerians transiting the Airport. It is however, an exaggeration for Dr. Ejike to claim that all holders of the Nigerian green passport are subjected to profiling at the Bole International Airport, which receives four commercial flights from Nigeria daily with over 2 thousand passengers.

The Federal Government of Nigeria, through its Mission in Addis Ababa, will continue to engage with the Ethiopian authorities to address irritants in the bilateral relations of the two friendly countries, caused by a few individuals.

*Signed*

**Francisca K. Omayuli (Mrs)**

**Spokesperson  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs**

**Tuesday, 3<sup>rd</sup> October, 2023**