

QDJWQH. 13stij

13/7/92

Oriole Travel,
P.O. box 1804,
Joubert Park, 2044.

Dear Francinette,

RE: CHARTER FLIGHT TO DAR ES SALAAH RETURN 8th - 10th JULY.

Thank you for organising above and we are glad that the flight made it safely for both legs.

Being aware that it was a long flight we were concerned that people should be as comfortable as possible, especially the senior members of the delegation. Accordingly we strongly urged that no cost be spared regarding food and refreshments. With the inclusion of travel time to and from the airport it is quite . obvious that all passengers would be travelling for well over 12 hours. Therefore it is blatantly obvious that 3 full meals would have to be served. In addition we expected plenty of refreshments, such as fruit, snacks and drinks, given our request. However we were shocked to hear that only 1 meal had been catered for - and it was frozen to boot! Besides this almost inedible meal there was only 1 apple and a couple of soft drinks provided. No one can argue that this paltry amount of food is sufficient. Our delegation began their journey from 6. 00 - 7.00 am only to arrive at their final destination after 10.00 in the evening. We understand the catering bill is R1, 800 and we totally fail to understand on what the money was spent.

Surely the Charter company is responsible for ensuring that appropriate food is served, especially when expressly requested. How can food that needs heating be ordered when there are no heating/cooking facilities on the plane? It appeared the stewardess was not apprised of the situation. We find that . strange as surely someone must take responsibility for ensuring proper food and refreshment arrangements are made? On arrival in Dar es Salaam we were then told it is our responsibility to cater for the homeward journey.

Our complaint is that we were never advised of any problems nor informed in time so that we could have done something about the matter. We were not even told to expect to buy lunch in Lilongwe. It was purely fortuitous that we had funds to cover the only adequate meal for the day. We strongly suggest that in future the Charter Company state in advance what they will be serving and discuss the matter with the hirers so that arrangements are made to the satisfaction of all. Food may seem a small matter but on such a long journey it makes all the difference.

Secondly it is absurd that we are expected to pay R1, 800. For that amount of money we could have done much better and provided plenty of wholesome food. We expect you to take up this matter with the Charter Company.

Our second concern is the miscommunication in terms of the time of travel. You have subsequently informed me that you were only referring to the actual flying time, but this was never made clear to us until I was querying the arrival time in South Africa on the Friday evening. Whilst on the phone to you, you got the Charter Company on the line to explain how the flight was arriving 2 hours later than our calculation. It was only then that we realised that the total flight time was due to take around 11 hours.

In such a tight programme as ours this information is vital, not only for preparing the passengers but for arranging our programme. Both Marge and I were repeatedly told to calculate 9 hours on to the departure time for time of arrival at point of destination. Accordingly we had estimated arrival at around 5.00pm and had informed Tanzania. It had also been explained to me that the 9 hours included the stop over.

Not only is it a matter of our programme but arrangements made by others. Such an important occasion includes all sorts of dignitaries and formal events. The Tanzanians had arranged for a welcoming function for that evening, not to mention that someone of the stature of O.R. Tambo, our National Chairman, is always met at the airport by important persons. All these arrangements were seriously jeopardised and put us in an embarrassing position.

Whilst on the point of time we should mention the fact that on the return leg, everyone was at the airport for departure between 7.00 and 8.00 am only to discover that the crew were still at the hotel. We then had to wait for their arrival and for refuelling. No doubt, we can take the blame for inadequate communication with the crew. However, we find it very strange that a crew, who is responsible for getting us home and knowing that it takes a full day, were not, themselves, more proactive in ensuring time of departure. Moreover surely they could have refuelled the day before. The delayed departure meant keeping O.R. Tambo, the Treasurer-General and important dignitaries waiting at the airport for well over 2 hours. Yet again this caused us acute embarrassment.

We are formally notifying you of these complaints so that they can be taken up and most importantly so that we avoid repetition. Otherwise we would certainly like to thank the crew. It was a long but safe journey and the flying comfortable.

Our thanks to you too for making the arrangements, especially with all our changes. The delegation would not have got there at all had we relied on scheduled flights! The delegation was very thankful for getting there and back, in spite of the problems mentioned.

Yours sincerely,