

Unfortunate incident: The senator was forced out of the plane after failing to produce his ID

'Get out', KQ staff orders Wetangula

By ROSELYNE OBALA

Drama unfolded at Jomo Kenyatta International Airport on Thursday night, when the national carrier, Kenya Airways ordered all passengers aboard KQ 622 to disembark after efforts to block a top politician from travelling failed. A KQ official had ordered Coalition for Reforms and Democracy (CORD) co-principal and Senate Minority leader Moses Wetang'ula (Bungoma) out of the plane for failing to present his national identification for clearance to travel to Mombasa. Trouble started while passengers were heading to board, Senator Wetangula had his boarding pass and the staff at clearing desk demanded to see his identification.

Senator Wetangula provided other identification documents, since he had forgotten his National Identification Card in his briefcase, which was with his bodyguard and driver who were travelling to the same venue by road.

Pilot directive

Instead of his ID, he produced his Platinum flying Blue card, Air Emirates cards and other identifications, which were rejected. His colleagues Speaker Ekwee Ethuro, senators Mutahi Kagwe (Nyeri) and Wilfred Machage (Migori) intervened in vain.

It was then that the politician proceeded to board the plane making his way to his seat. The airline employee tried to eject him, but when her attempts failed, the pilot announced that all passengers should disembark for further security checks.

It is alleged that the KQ official shouted at



Wetangula, "You get out". The legislators who were accompanied by Speaker Justin Muturi (National Assembly) were heading to Mombasa for a consultative meeting. Ethuro and senators Kagwe, Peter Mositet (Kajiado) and Machage (Migori) urged the passengers to stay put, but others chose to obey the pilot's directive. This unfortunate event resulted in more than two hours flight delay, as the plane was scheduled to take off at 8.40pm but finally left with the senator on board, at midnight, after interven-

tion from KQ senior management.

"After a three hour stand-off, we were all asked to board the plane again and departed for Mombasa at 23:50 hours, a flight, which had been scheduled to take off at 20:50 hours," said an angry Wetangula at a press conference. Ethuro regretted that passengers had been caught in the drama, which cost them their time.

"KQ did not even bother to apologise for the delay. The airline should train their staff on how to treat their clients with dignity," Ethuro said.

Contacted, Speaker Muturi termed what happened an unfortunate incident, and that KQ should set clear guidelines on requirements for a local flight to avoid such misunderstandings in future.

Following the unfortunate incident, members of the National Assembly said they would, on Tuesday, discuss the conduct of Kenya Airways staff and future engagement with the airline.

"My colleagues have vowed to move a motion of adjournment next Tuesday to discuss the conduct of the KQ staff and decide on any future engagement with the national carrier," said Wetangula.

But a Kenya Airways official who spoke to us but did not want to be quoted because he is not allowed to speak to the media, said the airline had express instructions from Kenya Airports Authority to check identifications of everybody except the President.

The source said the steps had been taken to boost security and ensure that only legitimate passengers board the aircraft.

Ongeri demands apology from Ombudsman

By ERICK ABUGA

Newly appointed Kenyan ambassador to the UN Habitat, Prof Sam Ongeri, has given the Otiende Amollo-led commission five days to apologise over a report that implicated him in land grabbing in Kisii or else he will move to court.

The Ombudsman report released last Wednesday indicated that Ongeri used his position as a Government officer to hive off a plot from Kisii Municipal Market.

Through his lawyers Nyaberi and Co advocates, Ongeri says the report was prepared without according him the right to be heard, adding that the report misrepresented facts. "Prof Ongeri was not a minister at the time, but a lecturer at the University of Nairobi's School of Medicine," read part of the letter to the commission.

Speaking in Kisii yesterday, former area civic leaders led by Daniel Anyona and John Maroko, said there was political mischief by the commission only targeting two political families for investigation.

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