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Complaint regarding misconduct of Sulayman Ceesay / Comfort Quality Service

In March 2018, Mr. Sulayman Ceesay from Comfort Quality Service visited our company headquarter in Germany together with 4 officials from The Gambia Police Force to inform themselves about TÖNNJES products and solutions for security license plates, holographic stickers and manufacturing equipment.

Subsequently, Mr. Ceesay requested to be appointed as our exclusive authorized representative for The Gambia, terminating our previous relationship with Mr. Senghore / Tedungal Multimedia. He argued that the contract for supply and distribution of new security license plate would be a direct negotiation between his company and the Ministry of Interior and he must be the distributor of our products for this contract.

After this visit, several proposals, commercial offers and samples have been made and prepared for Mr. Sulayman Ceesay for submission and presentation to the relevant authorities. In early January 2019, Mr. Ceesay requested the urgent preparation of samples for use in a presentation of our proposal. Only a few days later we were informed that the presentation was in fact a bidding process for the contract of supply of number plates. When confronting Mr. Ceesay with the information, he claimed that only local companies could bid and no foreign companies were allowed, but he would still work with our company exclusively.

We insisted that our Branch Manager from our subsidiary AFRIPLAQUE in Dakar, Mme Gomis, attended the bid submission to understand the exact scope of the bid and also who participated in the bid. We were shocked to hear the price levels at which Comfort Quality submitted its bid but Mr. Ceesay was not willing to explain or discuss his strategy with us, claiming that he had "everything under control".

Late in January 2019, he requested us to issue fake reference letters, which should prove that Comfort Quality had experience in manufacturing and supply of vehicle license plates. We denied his request and only offered to issue support letters in case of award of the project to Comfort Quality Services.

In February 2019 Mr. Ceessay requested a meeting at Afriplaque headquarter in Dakar, discussed technical details for the plate design and manufacturing aspects, and requested various revised samples. It was clear that he had no knowledge or understanding of license plates and was only looking to reduce the cost as much as possible.

This was even more evident when he subsequently confirmed that he was awarded with the contract and that he now requested us a price reduction of further 50% (!). We eventually had to decline his request as we believe this was completely unethical and we had concerns that the huge profit margin between the actual cost of our products and the bid price submitted by Mr. Ceessay (65,7 million Dalasi for 65.000 plates) was created for activities which are not in compliance with our strict compliance rules when dealing on government contracts. We therefore decided to terminate his appointment and to refuse dealing with Mr. Ceessay and his company any longer.

It is only upon contact by Mr. Senghore / Tedungal Multimedia when we learned about the failure of compliance of Mr. Ceessay and it is due to the kindness and forgiveness of Mr. Senghore that we were able to renew our previous arrangements and are now working with Tedungal Multimedia as our authorised representative for the Gambia.

As such, we have been made aware by recent news and PR activities by Comfort Quality and their Operations Manager Ousman Njie. We noticed some blatant lies and feel obliged to raise these to your institution as the company is clearly misleading the public.

To our knowledge, the bid at the time was never about a BOT contract or a direct supply to public, leaving alone about setting up an electronic vehicle management system.

Comfort Quality was by far the most expensive bidder at 65,7 million Dalasi for a total of 65.000 plates. So the unit price bid by Comfort Quality was over 1.000 Dalasi / plate. In the recent TV interview they claim that the unit price bid is only 315 Dalasi. In this case, one would need to ask the question where the difference of almost 700 Dalasi per plate is going to?

The plates issued by Comfort Quality in the market are imported from China, not from Germany. This is clearly evidenced by the Chinese manufacturer mark on the back of the plates, which is from a company called "Daoming / DM". The claimed DIN certification is a hoax and must be challenged. We offer to take sample plates from Comfort Quality and submit them to an independent test house in Germany for an independent test.

But most concerning is the fact that Comfort Quality claims to have a secure system using a QRcode with personal and vehicle data residing in their database. The Qrcodes issues by Comfort Quality are standard, open source QRcodes, which can be printed and reproduced by any 3rd party. Any smartphone can capture and read the data contained which raises huge concerns regarding data privacy. There is no protection of the data against unauthorised reading nor is there any protection against counterfeiting or manipulation of the data.

Are Gambians aware, that all the personal and vehicle data is now residing with a private entity that is most likely not even qualified to handle and protect private data? Again, this is far beyond the scope of the original bid issued by the Gambian Police Force, which was for the supply of 65.000 plates.

Our company operates manufacturing facilities in over 40 countries world-wide and also one facility in Senegal, where we indeed manufacture blank plates for Senegal. Contrary to claims made by Mr. Nije in the TV interview, Senegal no longer imports blank plates but has a local manufacturer who knows what quality and security really mean.

Best regards

Jochen Betz
Managing Director

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