

Dialing (202) 364-1200 (Ethiopian Embassy) ---Pick up the phone for heaven's sake!!!

It was good news when I heard about officials from the Inland Revenue Service coming to the USA to collect biometric information (Finger prints) to assign Tax Identification Numbers (TIN) to Diaspora tax payers. It's a good decision to send the officials here as it would definitely save a lot of people from making unplanned trips to Ethiopia and incur huge costs.

With this in mind, I called the Ethiopian embassy in DC during working hours to find out if the officials are touring the major metropolitan areas where most Ethiopians reside or if it requires us to travel to DC or LA. I called intermittently for more than one hour.

Dialing 202-364-1200 !! No answer ! No voicemail! I kept dialing and every time I got directed to the operator that never picks up. It would have been nicer if there was at least a nice classical music to listen to and get directed to a voicemail without warning. At least that was what I got when I tried to the embassy in LA instead....same issue there too, but not as bad from my past experience.

It has been a known issue for years that it's very hard to get hold of the embassy staff on the phone. Anybody that tried to call would tell you that they just don't pick up. But, honestly speaking, I expected them to be different this time. But, I was wrong !...nothing has changed.

Every time I called the embassy before, the trick I used to get somebody to pick up the phone was to choose the "English option", posing as a foreigner and "investment" as a reason for the call. Then when somebody picks up the phone, I change my story and get channeled to the appropriate personnel. Not always, but the trick worked for the most part. This time there's no such option. Either way, English or Amharic, the phone rings endlessly.

Even though I am entitled to, I am not a person who complains because of a one-time incident. This has been a chronic problem for years and it needs to change for good. They need to be reminded that they live in a country where good customer service is taken for granted and valued greatly as an input towards success of a business or otherwise. With such a lousy service, if it was a business, it would have been bankrupt long time ago. But this is more than a privately owned business...it's the people's business. So before we talk about anything important, pick up the phone for heaven's sake !!

I checked the embassy's website and all they have is a Taxpayer Registration Form. So, the main reason for my call still remains unanswered and there are many that don't even know that the officials are here in the US, and I hope they post the general information, requirements and the schedule on the popular Ethiopian web sites like www.Aigaforum.com, www.hebrezema.com and www.awefeki.com etc.

Transformation starts right here....be transformed ! Next time, if they don't change, I will try to get their cell phones.

For now, I have to hang up. Buae!...hwket !

*Success to the **GTP** and the **Millenium Project** !!!*

By: Suhul