

THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT RESPECTS THE DALAI LAMA'S PERSONAL DECISION TO CANCEL THE TRIP.

The South African government respects the Dalai Lama's personal decision to cancel the trip.

We have also noted the reports and enquiries with regards to the Visa application process itself. A Visa application in any country is subjected to the normal due process and the outcome is communicated to the applicant. The same principle applies in this case.

We however believe it is necessary to highlight a number of facts. The South African High Commission in New Delhi, India reports, amongst other things that: On August 29, The office of the Dalai Lama informed the High Commission that His Holiness is traveling abroad but they wanted to submit his application for a visa without the original passport. For a visa application to be considered it must be accompanied by the original passport of the applicant. The office of the Dalai Lama was informed of this. The original passport was only submitted on 20 September 2011.

Furthermore, we would like to reiterate that the South African government did not refuse to grant The Dalai Lama a visa. He cancelled the trip whilst his application was still under consideration.

The Department of International Relations and Cooperation would also like to categorically state that our foreign policy is independent and decisions are made based on our domestic interests.

For further information please contact Mr. Clayson Monyela, spokesperson for DIRCO, on 082 884 5974

ISSUED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND COOPERATION

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