

Manzu Gerald Simon Kenyi

Student Representative, South Sudanese Students in Japan

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2024.04.20

To:

**Embassy of Japan, Juba – South Sudan,
Office of the MEXT Scholarship Representative,
WATANABE Mina 様、**

Re: Clarification on the status of Mr. Francis Agreement Felix LITANG

Greetings from Tokyo, Japan.

I am called **Manzu Gerald Simon KENYI**. I am kindly writing in reference to the above subject.

I am a 3rd Year Ph.D. MEXT Scholar at the University of Electro-Communications under the Joint Doctoral Program for Sustainability Research (JDPSR), Graduate School of Information Systems and Engineering – Chofu, Tokyo.

First and foremost, I would like to thank and emphasize our indebtedness to the generosity of the Japanese Government and the People of Japan for continuously offering South Sudanese with educational and capacity building opportunities under various scholarships notably, MEXT, and JICA scholarships and programs. As recipients and beneficiaries, we shall continue doing our best to build bridges between Japan and South Sudan, learn and share our experiences both in Japan and South Sudan in particular, and the African continent in general.

Among the current South Sudanese studying in Japan under various Scholarships offered by the Japanese Government, I have been in Japan the longest (five years), having been awarded the MEXT scholarship in 2019. As a result, I have interacted with several South Sudanese scholarship recipients including those who are currently in Japan, and those who completed their studies and returned to South Sudan. We have an unofficial association of South Sudanese Students in Japan, in which we have felt as a community.

As a senior member of the unofficial association of South Sudanese students in Japan, kindly, I would like to bring to your attention, and clarify an issue with one of our members, **Mr. Francis Agreement Felix Litang**. Mr. Francis informed us of the turn of events following his unsuccessful

admission for continued pursuance of his studies at the same graduate school. He has also informed us of him being contacted by multiple contacts instructing him to return to South Sudan.

I am writing to clarify to your esteemed office and the Embassy of Japan in South Sudan, of Mr. Francis' presence in Japan following his successful graduation. At the same time, kindly accept my assurances that **Mr. Francis** does not intend to stay in Japan illegally.

Mr. Francis is the 2020 recipient of the Embassy Recommended MEXT Scholarship in South Sudan. He was admitted for postgraduate studies (master's degree) in environmental science under the Graduate School of Environmental Science, Hokkaido University – Sapporo, Japan. Due to the COVID Pandemic, his departure was effectively delayed and rescheduled for July 2021. He was a research student (**irregular student – mandatory unless deemed unnecessary by a recipient's supervisor at the graduate school**) for the first 6 months between October 2021 and March 2022. **Mr. Francis** proceeded to enroll as a regular student in April 2022 and successfully completed his studies in March 2024. He had initially opted to extend his scholarship and enroll for Ph.D. studies at the same University under MEXT provisions.

MEXT recipients can opt to extend their scholarship from one degree to the other, if they meet the set requirements. However, the procedures vary from one University to another. At our university for instance, one must get admitted to a graduate School first, before extending the Scholarship. For Francis' case, it was the reverse - application for the extension of Scholarship precedes acceptance at the graduate school for the intended degree.

As a result, his extension of scholarship was granted, however, as the graduate school deemed fit, Mr. Francis did not submit all the required documents on time. As a result, he was not eligible for admission even though MEXT had already granted him an extension of scholarship effective from April 2024. This process took a considerable amount of time before he could opt for applying for a return ticket to South Sudan.

Under MEXT's regulations, recipients are provided with two tickets – a one-time ticket to travel to Japan from a recipient's home country, and a one-time return ticket (to return to the recipient's home country) after the completion of studies. However, there is a timeline to apply for the return ticket, of which in Francis' case, it was too late.

At the same time, a recipient can choose to decline a return ticket, if either the recipient (student) has applied and got a job offer (in Japan), or, if the recipient (student) hardly had enough time to do job hunting due to rigorous research work. In the latter's case (which is appropriate and applicable to Mr. Francis' case), if the student is planning to do job hunting after graduation, the student MUST obtain an official document from the University, signed by the student's supervisor and stamped with the seal of the graduate School and apply for a six (6) months VISA extension.

After the submission of the above, the applicant's residence permit will be stamped by the Immigration Department, indicating a pending process. At the same time, the applicant is given a legal paper document to present to authorities in case the process of VISA extension goes beyond the date of the expiry of the VISA.

Hence, Mr. Francis submitted the VISA extension documents on Thursday, 18th April 2024. His current VISA expires on May 4th, 2024.

In case the results of his VISA extension request delay past the expiration date of the period of stay in his current VISA, he has been guided by the Immigration Department as quoted below:

“In case the result of your application is not disposed by the expiration date of the current period of stay, you (the applicant), may reside in Japan until the date of the disposition or for another two months after the expiration date in the longest case” – a verbatim excerpt from the notice provided to Mr. Francis by the Immigration Department.

Therefore, if his (Mr. Francis’) request for a VISA extension is denied (not granted), Mr. Francis will legally and immediately LEAVE and return to South Sudan.

With this, I would kindly like to assure you of **Mr. Francis’** legality and intentions of conforming to the regulations of being a MEXT scholarship recipient, given the fact that he currently has applied for VISA extension. Much as I cannot share **Mr. Francis’** reasons for opting to extend his VISA, **Mr. Francis** appreciates the guidance and support accorded to him at his graduate school, Hokkaido University, and he has decided to look beyond the circumstances under which his admission failed, wholeheartedly focusing on a new future and a new trajectory. kindly accept my assurances of **Mr. Francis’** conformity to Japanese regulations.

I hope this explanation clarifies the information gap concerning the stay of **Mr. Francis** in Japan, following the events that happened prior to his graduation. I look forward a continued communication with you and your office.

Thank you very much,

Sincerely yours



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