



The Executive Council of the Island Territory Saba

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To His Excellency
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Your number (letter): Your letter of: Our number: **1145/09**

Subject : Intention of Secession from the Netherlands Antilles for the Island Territory
of Saba.

Total pages : 3

Saba, September 1, 2009

Your Excellency;

It is with a sense of great concern that the government of Saba wishes to approach your government on the following.

On the island territory of Saba on November 5th 2004, a referendum was held so that the people of Saba, using their right of self determination, could express their wishes for a new relationship within the Kingdom of the Netherlands. This referendum was supervised by the United Nations. On U.N. instructions the government of Saba revised the options put forth to the people in order to fall within compliance of international regulations.

An amount of 78% of the eligible voting public of Saba took part in the referendum, wherein a majority of 86% voted in favor of establishing direct ties with The Netherlands. Following the referendum Saba made compromises with St. Eustatius, Bonaire and The Netherlands in order to make it easier for the government of The Netherlands to effectuate the transition from the so-called country the Netherlands Antilles, to a direct relationship with the Netherlands. This was done in accordance with article 1541 of the Fourth Committee of the United Nations.

Following the departure of Aruba from the Netherlands Antilles on January 1st 1986, the Central Government of the Netherlands Antilles on Curacao has been treating Saba as if we were part of a country called the Solidarity Fund. In recent years Saba has had to resort to such measures as asking the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela for financial aid in order to cover some of our medical costs. During this period the island government of Saba has carried its case to the United Nations on three occasions.

The upcoming election for the Parliament of the Netherlands Antilles, called for by Prime Minister Mrs. Emily de Jongh-El Hage, has made it very clear to the Executive Council of Saba that there is no political will on behalf of the Central Government of the Netherlands Antilles to dismantle itself and bring the transition period to any form of closure. It is not hard to imagine considering the fact that many of the larger political parties on the island of Curacao are involved in all four levels of government namely, Parliamentary, Ministerial, Island Council and Executive Council. Many, if not most, of the members of these parties holding political offices will be forced to leave these posts once the four layers

of government on Curacao via the Netherlands Antilles are reduced to two layers in the autonomous status of country Curacao.

Once again the fate of the other islands of the Netherlands Antilles is solely based on the local political situation on Curacao. It has long been an underlying tactic by Curacao politicians to delay any changes throughout this country. Besides the political realities, it is a known financial fact that the Central Government has a surplus in revenue of more than one hundred and fifty million guilders annually generated by the island territory of St. Maarten. The vast majority of this financial gain by the central government of the Netherlands Antilles is spent on the island of Curacao.

The Prime Minister of the Netherlands Antilles has based her decision to call for elections on the fact that the Council of Advice has declared a two-thirds majority insufficient to ratify the constitution of the Netherlands Antilles and postpone elections. If this justification can be given solely by a declaration from the Council of Advice, we are certain that the requirements for the dissolution of the Netherlands Antilles will call for an even greater majority, possibly so far as that of an absolute majority of all 22 members of Parliament.

Our government has now reached the conclusion that there will never be change in our relationship as it will never get the approval of the parliament of the Netherlands Antilles. Because of this political reality, which has been made almost undeniable by the recent actions of Prime Minister De Jongh-El Hage, the Executive Council of Saba sees no other alternative than to begin the process of secession from the Netherlands Antilles.

We see the act of secession as the only alternative for us to carry out the wishes of our people as expressed almost five years ago through their legitimate referendum. The right to self determination of our people has led to our political instruction of removing Saba from the country of the Netherlands Antilles, and establishing direct ties with the Netherlands. The Executive Council of Saba also considers our call for secession to be justified internationally within the concept of Irredentism, which is defined as a territory's right to call for secession from one country to the annexation of another country based on prior historical ties.

Therefore, on behalf of the people of Saba we request your government meet its obligation towards Saba as mandated by various resolutions on decolonization by the United Nations. We request that you do this by making available to us one or more constitutional experts and advising us how Saba can secede from the Netherlands Antilles. The legal option, as proposed by the island territory of Saba, is to have us removed from the country of the Netherlands Antilles within the framework of the Statute of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, and have the island placed under article 134 of the Constitution of the Netherlands as a special public entity. Based on the agreements made by the various entities, it is the request of the island territory of Saba to have this guaranteed by the Netherlands to take place no later than the date of October 10th 2010.

At the same time we request your government to use its supervisory role to put a measure of higher supervision on the Government of the Netherlands Antilles so that they, and the Antillean Parliament, would have to transfer all authority of the Government of the Netherlands Antilles to the island territories by no later than January 1st 2010.

Without guarantees in these areas the island territory of Saba sees no other alternative than to start the necessary steps to begin the process of secession from the Netherlands Antilles. This will mean that the Executive Council will present its position to the members of the Island Council through the form of a Motion of Secession. If this meets the approval the following steps will have to be taken. The first step will be to stop the financial transfer of the turn over tax to the central government. This will be followed by the symbolic lowering of the national flags of the Netherlands Antilles on all island government buildings

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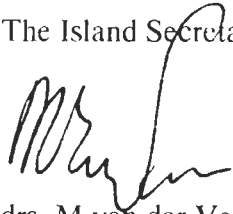
throughout the island territory during the month of November, marking the fifth anniversary of the referendum on Saba.

There are those who will say that all of Saba's concerns are like a tempest in a teapot, but we live in that teapot however small it may be and we are therefore quite concerned as to what is to become of us. We appeal to you to take the responsibility of The Netherlands seriously where it concerns the obligation to assist Saba in seceding from the Netherlands Antilles.

Sincerely,

The Executive Council of the Island Territory of Saba

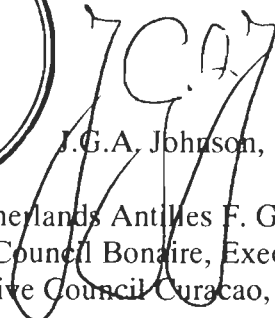
The Island Secretary,



drs. M. van der Velde



The Lt. Governor,



J.G.A. Johnson, M. Ed

c.c. IC members, Governor General Netherlands Antilles F. Goedgedrag, PM Netherlands Antilles E. de Jongh-Elhage, Executive Council Bonaire, Executive Council Sint Eustatius, Executive Council Sint Maarten, Executive Council Curacao, Government Aruba, Member of Parliament R. Hassell, VNNA R. Vermaas