

VareseNews

Unwelcome in Mauritius, Emilietta's home remains the airport

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Emilietta is still living in Malpensa Airport. We wrote about her at the beginning of August, a month and a half ago, but nothing has happened. And from what we've been able to find out over this time, it's unlikely, if not impossible that **Mrs Cesira Ton, known to everyone as Emilietta, will return to Mauritius.**

This summer, the story was in all of the main Italian and foreign newspapers and news programmes; it was impossible for the story of this 71-year-old woman originally from Venice to go unnoticed. There was the departure for the African island, with her two children and her husband, the years of coming and going from Madagascar, the marriage that ended, the visa that expired and the expulsion from Mauritius; these are only some of the ingredients of this (in many ways, absurd) story.

Mrs Ton has been living in the airport for six years, and **before that, she was forced to spend months going from a tent in Busto Arsizio to a makeshift shelter in Gallarate Station.** She lives off the coins she collects from the airport trolleys, and the money she receives from a minimum state pension. She's there, watching the planes take off, in the hope that, one day, she'll be able to leave again. She doesn't want help, she's not asking for solidarity or even charity. She keeps clean by washing herself in the bathrooms when there's no one about in Malpensa; she sleeps on the marble benches on the Arrivals floor, living with her cases beside her, a few newspapers and a notepad on which she writes poems which she then gives away. She has a lot of friends, from the cleaning ladies to the bar staff, and the shop assistants that frequent the small/big world of Malpensa Airport every day.

VareseNews has recounted her story, but we wanted to understand it better, and, above all, we wanted to know if there was any chance of a solution. We **then tried to contact the consulates and embassies.** These are the answers we got. "Mrs Ton's story is partly true, we have indeed dealt with the case and, on two occasions, we tried to intervene with the local authorities, but without success. I can't comment on her family's situation," the honorary Italian consul in Mauritius, Stefano Zinno, explained to us. "At the beginning, we intervened on the request of the lady herself, so if she asks us again, we'll have no problem in following up. The fact of her being unwanted is a matter for Mauritian law."

We then contacted the Mauritian embassy in Italy. “According to the information we have, Mrs Cesira Ton is on the blacklist of people that are not welcome for the Mauritian Authorities, and, consequently, cannot go back to Mauritius without the authorisation of the local authorities concerned. However, if Mrs Cesira Ton **wants to go back to Mauritius to visit her family, she can apply, before her trip, with the necessary justification,**” Denis Cangy, the Mauritian consul in Italy, wrote. “Generally speaking, the people on the blacklist are foreign people that, **for one reason or another, have broken Mauritian law, and they are always informed of this by the local Authorities, at the time of repatriation.** So, they are aware of the crime they have committed. However, if a person claims not to know the reason for his repatriation, he can always write directly to the Prime Minister’s Office, or through the Italian Foreign Affairs Ministry, to ask for information about his case.”

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