

The Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers

23 November 2011

Mr. Moustapha Guirassy Minister of Communication Telecommunications and ICT Republic of Senegal 58 Boulevard de la Republique Dakar, Senegal

Dear Minister Guirassy,

On behalf of ICANN, I am writing to express our deep disappointment in the quality of accommodation provided by the Hotel des Almadies to 169 delegates attending ICANN's 42nd Public Meeting, held in Dakar on 24-28 October 2011.

The extremely poor quality of the Hotel and its services, noted in detail on the basis of our delegates' feedback, has damaged ICANN's reputation, as well as the reputation of the Hotel and Senegal.

ICANN wishes to lodge a formal complaint, in particular about the failure of Hotel management to implement the improvements that they committed to make when, on behalf of our delegates, I met with Hotel management on Monday, 24 October 2011.

ICANN's decision to bring our conference to Senegal was based, in part, on the Hotel's pledge to renovate all of its rooms by the time our conference began. Nick Tomasso, ICANN's Senior Director, Meetings and Languages, visited Dakar in August 2011 and personally examined Hotel des Almadies. He was shown a number of rooms and received management's assurance that all rooms had renovated.

That proved to be untrue. The Hotel failed to renovate the rooms as had been promised. Based on information received, we believe less than one third had been renovated at the time of our conference, leaving many of our delegates to face the presence of insects and rodents, inadequate security, the failure of the most basic services such as toilets and air conditioners, and incidents of raw sewage in the bathrooms.

Sydney



All of these problems and more have contributed to the unhappy memories of Senegal that our delegates have now taken away.

We believe compensation from the Hotel for our delegates is in order.

Sincerely,

Barbara Ann Clay

cc: Ms. Ndéye Maimouna Diop Diagne, Director of ICT, Ministry of Communication, Telecommunications and ICT, Government of Senegal

Mr. Thierno Lo, Minister of Tourism and Air Transport, Government of Senegal

Mr. Jamie Hedlund, ICANN Vice President, Government Affairs

General Manager, Hotel des Almadies

Members of ICANN Governmental Advisory Committee

Members of ICANN At-Large Advisory Committee

Attachment: ALAC survey results



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AT-LARGE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Report of the ALAC on Meeting Accommodation Failures at Hotel Almadies in Dakar

Introduction

By the Staff of ICANN

The first draft of this document was written on 3 November 2011 by Olivier Crépin-Leblond, Chair of the ALAC, after receiving very negative feedback throughout the week about accommodation provided to At-Large delegates by the Almadies Hotel in Dakar.

On 22 October 2011, the ALAC Chair and Evan Leibovitch, ALAC Vice-Chair, went to the Almadies Hotel to speak to At-Large members staying there, and to take pictures of the hotel after receiving a torrent of complaints about accommodation provided. Those pictures are provided in the current document.

They also initiated an online survey for members of At-Large staying at the Almadies, in order to accurately document their experiences. A total of 25 responses were received and collected for use in the report.

This document was circulated amongst ALAC Executive Committee members and reviewed, with amendments made in the text so as to reflect exactly the experience encountered by At-Large members. On 7 November 2011, it was circulated among all ALAC members and regional leaders, more comments collected and included in this final version.

On 16 November 2011, the report was transmitted to the ICANN CEO, Rod Beckstrom, the Chairman of the ICANN Board, Steve Crocker, and a copy to the ICANN Board Secretary.

[End of Introduction]

The original version of this document is the English text available at www.atlarge.icann.org/correspondence. Where a difference of interpretation exists or is perceived to exist between a non-English edition of this document and the original text, the original shall prevail.

Report of the ALAC on Meeting Accommodation Failures at Hotel Almadies in Dakar

During the recent ICANN meeting taking place in Dakar, Senegal, a total of over 50 delegates from At-Large were funded to travel and be accommodated to attend the meeting in person. These comprised the members of the At-Large Advisory Committee and Regional Leaders, plus 17 At-Large Structures, funded as part of a program of AFRALO Events including a showcase, early morning capacity building sessions as well as an AFRALO General Assembly.

A very small subset (6 people) of the At-Large Advisory Committee stayed at the main conference hotel the "Méridien Président" ("Méridien") due to their roles in the ALAC Executive Committee requiring close access to ICANN and other community leaders, or due to medical conditions; however all others stayed at the "Hotel des Almadies" ("Almadies").

The aim of this document is to clearly set minimum conditions needed for At-Large delegates to be able to function and to remind the community about the terms under which ICANN Constituency Travel should operate with regards to At-Large.

A lot of the following can surely apply to other members of the ICANN community who where also accommodated at the Almadies Hotel.

The At-Large Review

The At-Large Review is an ICANN By-Law mandated periodic review process of the At-Large and the At-Large Advisory Committee and overseen by the Board's Structural Improvements Committee. The 2008 independent review of the ALAC resulted in the <u>Final Report of the ALAC Review Working Group on ALAC Improvements</u> (9 June 2009; ALAC Review Final Report). This report presented 13 recommendations focusing on key areas within At-Large.

In August 2010, the Board approved, with Resolution **2010.08.05.12**, the ALAC/At-Large Improvements Implementation Project Plan (7 June 2010), which outlined the specific steps planned by the ALAC to implement 12 of these recommendations presented in the ALAC Review Final Report, the 13th one being the selection of a voting Board Director.

In Section 3.2.2.5. Travel Policy, of the ALAC Review Final Report, mention is made of (page 18):

"The WG acknowledges that ICANN meetings are complex events that require an enormous amount of organization and that at times some participants will have more or less desirable accommodation than others. To ensure fair treatment of all funded participants, the WG recommends that At Large representatives be treated equally with other funded participants when accommodation is being organized."

Recommendation 20 from the WestLake Consultants report specifically notes:

"That the ICANN Board should amend the Travel Policy to pay for accommodation expenses (including breakfast and internet access fees) and where practicable accommodate At-large members at or very near the main conference venue. The per diem amount (to cover other appropriate daily expenses) should also be available as a cash advance for those that require it."

From these two extracts, it is clear that the At-Large community delegates that are funded to come to ICANN meeting should be treated equally with other funded participants when accommodation is being organized, yet approximately 10% of At-Large delegates were accommodated at the main Hotel, the *Méridien*, whilst 90% were accommodated at the *Almadies*. Bearing in mind the allocation of rooms for ICANN at the *Méridien* was 150 rooms, an allocation of 6 rooms at the *Méridien* to At-Large community delegates fails to meet the above recommendations. Whilst we agree that the *Almadies* was geographically close to the main conference hotel, its standard of accommodation and amenities fell short of comparison by several magnitudes vis à vis the *Méridien*.

At-Large Delegate Requirements

Traditionally, the At-Large community members travelling to meetings have a very busy schedule. In Dakar, the usual schedule of 17 sessions in 6 days was supplemented by daily capacity building sessions starting at 7:00am in the main conference building. This early start resulting in a total of 25 sessions, accompanied with transit time required between the *Almadies* and the *Méridien* required a daily departure time from the *Almadies* at 6:45am.

At-Large delegates therefore required:

- Early Breakfast (need to be in Conference starting at 7:00am daily)
- Internet access (Many At-Large volunteers are small business owners and must keep in touch with their businesses and families around the world as well as with each other to co-ordinate activities during the multi-track meeting.)
- Clean Water (a daily bottle in the room is a minimum for late arrivals, but also for delegates who are always on the go)
- Sound rest (very demanding daily schedule) in a clean room
- Sufficient supplies (toilet paper, towels, soap) and washroom facilities to enable room guests to maintain basic hygiene

Failures of the Almadies

Hotel Management

Hotel "management" (a misnomer when it comes to that hotel) and staff had, for the most, a callous attitude to the plight of hotel guests. There are examples cited in the report, specifically under Pests, ("We live with rats, so should you") that could be pulled under such a heading. Some guests almost came to blows with the hotel management and staff because of hotel's attitude and responses which defies comprehension. During our visit, several displeased guests spent time waiting at the reception – but we did not wait to find out whether their concerns were addressed.

Overall Structure

The hotel was under construction/refurbishment. Some parts of the hotel looked as though they were under refurbishment. Other parts looked as though they needed to be refurbished. Construction areas were not delimited in a satisfactory manner.



Partly demolished/constructed wing of the Almadies hotel.

Lights out in main corridors

Sunrise took place at 7:03am – but our delegates left the building at 6:45am latest. Most returned to their rooms after sunset. The common parts and corridors of the hotel were poorly lit, if at all. Areas close to the reception and hotel entrance were lit whilst further along, corridors were completely dark.

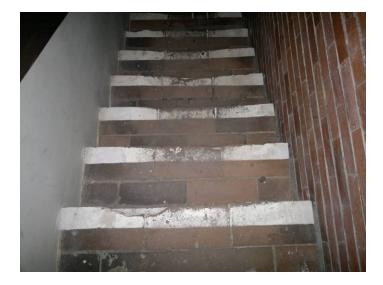


Long dark unlit corridors at night (photo taken with flash)

Delegates used the dim light of their mobile phone screen to make their way to their room.

Broken staircases

Damage in the staircases leading to the upper floors, due to wear and tear, became a tripping risk in the darkness when combined with the lack of lighting at night.



A dark, steep Staircase

Room Failings

Basic Services (Electricity, Water, Telephone)

A majority of the *Almadies* guests answering our survey had problems with basic amenities to be supplied by the hotel.

- Only 40% had fully functioning toilets, sinks and showers.
- 48% received insufficient hygenic supplies
- 36% reported non-functional or non-existent telephone services which in itself constitutes a security risk particularly for female guests. Only 50% had a fully functional landline phone.
- 32% reported non-functioning or non-existent air conditioning
- 92% reported room safes that were missing or not fully functional another security risk
- 100% felt a strong musty smell in rooms and common areas

Internet

Only those rooms which were located close to the reception and the temporarily-designated "Internet room" actually had Internet WIFI coverage. All other rooms had no Internet access whatsoever and therefore required a trip to the "Internet room" where only the most basic amenities were supplied, that is, desks and chairs. Particularly surprising is the lack of mains extension distributing boards and power sockets. The "Internet room" only had **three sockets**, one of which being non functional. No extension or multi-plug anywhere.



The "Internet Room" / no 24H access and a 5-10 minute walk away from many rooms

After initial complaints on Sunday, a promise was made by ICANN logistics and the local hosts to do everything possible to extend the WIFI coverage zones to the rest of the hotel. With both people from the Network Startup Resource Center, plus personnel from VeriLan, ICANN's contractors running the ICANN network at the *Méridien* and engineers from local TelCo SONATEL, one would have thought that this task could be undertaken in 24H. This was not the case and **no WIFI access was possible throughout the week**. Conditions in the "Internet room" did not improve either, with the room closing and being locked at night. This really impeded the ability of our members to work. A multi-plug extension cord was never supplied. Nada.

Bathroom

In the survey which was filled by our delegates, 44% spoke of a problem in the bathroom with one even mentioning a missing wash basin. That's right: no wash basin. Problems ranged from mold on the walls and floor to an exploding shower, no water at all (air lock in the pipes) as well as bathroom fittings being loose. For example, the photo illustrates a basin plug being stuck with no way of taking it out and the resulting stagnant water developing bacteria.



Plug stuck in washbasin with no way to extract it



Shower with walls covered in mold and often no light whatsoever.

16% report no water, thus needing to take showers in their colleague's room.

A Strong musty smell was found in many bathrooms.

Electrical amenities (desk light; refrigerator; television)

The survey shows random distribution of such amenities, either missing or not working. In one instance, with the only socket of the room not working, any electrical equipment is unusable anyway. In other instances, the lack of a TV remote made the TV unusable. See pictures of two examples of room decor.





Spot the differences

Health, Safety and Security

Locks and windows

In several instances we were notified of a missing or non-functional window lock at ground level, or the inability to lock the door of the room. This posed a severe security risk both for our members' personal safety at night but also for their belongings during the day.



A ground floor door that does not lock



Broken windows that do not close

Air Conditioning

Several of our delegates reported a non functioning Air Conditioning unit, one reporting 101°F in his room in the morning. Some reported noxious smelly fumes coming out of the unit. Others reported ice being blown out of it. Others reported lack of a remote control thus resorting to having the device on or off. Only a small minority had no trouble with the Air Conditioning. In any case, with windows not closing, the efficiency of temperature control was far from adequate.

Safes

Some rooms had no safe. Some rooms had one. Some rooms had two. 100% of the rooms with safes had non-functional safes (low battery or no battery at all)

Floor

Whilst some rooms had newly tiled floors, others had loose tiles, with what appears to be mold or damp.



Fire Safety

The Fire alarm was non functional. Please find a picture of the alarm call system. This is inadmissible since it endangers guest safety and open ICANN to serious litigation should a catastrophe happen.



Electrical Safety

Several of our members have reported loose and damaged cables hanging from the ceiling and from the wall. It was impossible to find out if these cables were decommissioned or not. Other members reported constantly flickering lights probably caused by unsafe and obsolete electrical wiring.

Pest Control (or lack thereof)

Several of our delegates reported large flying insects in their room, thankfully kept at bay using the mosquito netting provided. Several – including the authors of this report – discovered large crawling insects of the bug or beetle type. Several delegates reported seeing rats including one who had a family of rats living in his room, entering via wiring columns and a grating in the bathroom. This delegate, after complaining vehemently for several days and being told by reception staff that "In Senegal we live with rats, so can you", asked to be repatriated to his country before the end of the conference. It is the view of the authors of this report that we would have done the same and probably earlier too.

Access Security

The Almadies compound consists of extended dark corridors with open access to the outside world. There is a main gate, casually watched by staff at the front desk when it was attended, as well as a secondary gate, where on the night of our visit, nobody could be seen and access from the street was only 20 meters away from the first bungalows. The authors of this report, who were not guests of the hotel, were able to walk freely into the hotel and throughout the grounds and corridors. A break-in, robbery, kidnapping, rape or other such incident looked ever so likely especially in the light of no security camera monitoring system being in place and no

security personnel patrolling the hotel. Add to this, the lack of locks on doors and windows – some delegates lost much sleep on this fear, which was exacerbated by the fact that guests were frequently accosted by vendors and petty hustlers when walking the short distance between the *Almadies* and the conference venue.

LOCAL SUPPORT

Ms. Fatimata Seye Sylla, AFRALO Chair but also representative of Bokk Jang / Bokk Jef, an At-Large Structure based in Senegal, and hence with extensive knowledge of the local environment, attempted to have the situation fixed in the hotel once informed of the problems, by involving the Ministry of Tourism of Senegal. Conditions for some guests barely improved after the Ministry got involved, but it would be wise, in the future, for ICANN travel to engage with local ALAC/ALS members/ICANN constituency members prior to signing contracts/finalizing usage agreements in ensuring the amenities being looked into are "appropriate". This is beyond an ICANN staff looking around: nothing beats localized knowledge and insight.

We believe that the fault was not with the country itself. Indeed, accommodation at several other hotels in town, including the *Méridien Président* was of good standard and value. The problem lies in the issue of diligence in planning with right checks and balances. We emphasize the fact that rather than being "antimeetings in developing environments" (note we say environments not just countries), ICANN should as part of developing its profile globally actively work to be seen as engaging in bringing awareness and development across a range of sectors by having its meetings in more than polished and shiny cities. But it must do its homework.

CONCLUSION

First and foremost, an important reminder: this report does not constitute a report against holding ICANN meetings in developing environments. It is a report specifically targeted at avoiding a repeat in the future hotel accommodations. The conditions which At-Large delegates were subjected to at the *Almadies* failed to meet any level of reasonable standard for comfort and safety. These were by far the worst living conditions which our community has been subjected to in the history of At-Large. Whilst some delegates were treated fairly by the *Almadies* hotel's management, this depended largely on their background, their fluency in French, and on the person they spoke to at the hotel. Furthermore, some delegates gave up asking for work to be done after they had been switched rooms several times during the week, as if a game of "dancing rooms" was taking place for the management to buy time.

Two delegates cut short their stay during the week, their level of "acceptance" having been exceeded, compounded with nights without sleep. One of them, after having rats in the room, also had the floor of the bathroom flooded with excrement (plumbing works) upon his return in the evening.

Living under such conditions is not only demeaning to the At-Large members themselves, it is damaging to the global reputation of ICANN and also to the host country and sponsors. Let this not become a repeatable offense.

On the balance of the evidence and after careful thought, the At-Large Advisory Committee is resolved that should such incidents be repeated in the future, the Chair of the ALAC will have the discretion to call a vote at once, deciding whether the whole Committee (and other At-Large delegates) would leave the meeting and return home. Under such circumstances, ICANN Constituency Travel would cover all expenses related to such itinerary changes, and should not penalize either the delegates individually or At-Large/ALAC collectively. (If necessary, a mutually-agreed protocol to determine such a situation may be developed.)

Appendix A: Survey results

Which of the following was functioning in your room?

	Yes	Partially	No	Missing	Total
Fridge	12.0%	4.0%	20.0%	64.0%	100%
	3	1	5	16	25
Table Lamp	44.0%	28.0%	16.0%	12.0%	100%
	11	7	4	3	25
Hotel Safe	8.0%	20.0%	44.0%	28.0%	100%
	2	5	11	7	25
Television	68.0%	20.0%	4.0%	8.0%	100%
	17	5	1	2	25
Television	56.0%	8.0%	12.0%	24.0%	100%
remote control	14	2	3	6	25
Room Lights	64.0%	36.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100%
	16	9	0	0	25
Air	48.0%	44.0%	8.0%	0.0%	100%
conditioning	12	11	2	0	25
Air	56.0%	12.0%	20.0%	12.0%	100%
conditioner	14	3	5	3	25
remote control					
Wash basin	72.0%	12.0%	12.0%	4.0%	100%
	18	3	3	1	25
Toilet	80.0%	12.0%	8.0%	0.0%	100%
	20	3	2	0	25
Bath/Shower	40.0%	44.0%	16.0%	0.0%	100%
	10	11	4	0	25
Electrical	48.0%	40.0%	4.0%	8.0%	100%
outlets	12	10	1	2	25
Room	48.0%	16.0%	24.0%	12.0%	100%
telephone	12	4	6	3	25

Have you...

Yes	No	Unsure	Total
52.0%	28.0%	20.0%	100%
13	7	5	25
16.0%	68.0%	16.0%	100%
4	17	4	25
56.0%	32.0%	12.0%	100%
14	8	3	25
4.0%	84.0%	12.0%	100%
1	21	3	25
36.0%	48.0%	16.0%	100%
9	12	4	25
	52.0% 13 16.0% 4 56.0% 14 4.0% 1	52.0% 28.0% 13 7 16.0% 68.0% 4 17 56.0% 32.0% 14 8 4.0% 21 36.0% 48.0%	52.0% 28.0% 20.0% 13 7 5 16.0% 68.0% 16.0% 4 17 4 56.0% 32.0% 12.0% 14 8 3 4.0% 1 3 36.0% 48.0% 16.0%

${\it Did you \ contact \ hotel \ management \ about \ any \ problems?}$

Value 	Count	Percent %
Yes	17	68%
No	8	32%

If you answered "YES",

	Yes	Parti ally	No	Unsu re	Total
Did management respond to you in a timely manner?	17.6 % 3	47.1 % 8	29.4 % 5	5.9 % 1	100 % 17
Did management treat you politely?	52.9 % 9	41.2 % 7	5.9 %	0.0 % 0	100 % 17
Did management promise to address your problems?	41.2 % 7	29.4 % 5	23.5 % 4	5.9 %	100 % 17
Were any repairs done (or supplies delivered)?	23.5 % 4	23.5 % 4	47.1 % 8	5.9 % 1	100 % 17
Were enough repairs done (or supplies delivered) to address your issues?	12.5 % 2	37.5 % 6	37.5 % 6	12.5 % 2	100 % 16

Appendix B: example complaints from our delegates

- A Room is not well maintained or clean, ICANN could got a better hotel
- ♠ floor dirty, towels old
- Food substandard. Orange squash for breakfast not juice. Linen not clean. Towels too old. On going construction. Room stuffy. No Internet access in room. Internet access in lobby erratic. Staff clueless. Service very slow at restaurant. Hotel not yet fit for human habitation.
- The heater in my room is not working. The distance from the Bungalow to the reception is strenuous. Security is unsure because of the isolation of the bungalows, just two security men is not enough to cover the entire surroundings, In case of any emergency, we are cut off! No means of communication. NO INTERNET CONNECTION IN THE WHOLE OF THE BUNGALOWS. The beds are too elementary-like a refugee camp to me.... One of my colleagues from Nigeria [...] refused to stay in her room and has offered to go and pay for another hotel in town and she's First time Fellow! There is serious language barrier, as the service staffs in an international hotel as this are not bilingual. Communication is impaired! Lastly are the numbers of cats allowed to move freely around the hotel compound and reception not every guest are pet friendly. Guest should be moved to the main hotel building please.
- A I asked to change the room at the first day which was processed at a short notice. The first room was unacceptable, because it had fungi on the walls in the bathroom, which made the entire room smells moldy. Another embarrassing thing was, to get some water by arrival at 3 am after travelling all day. This was difficult. A machine at the lobby would serve this purpose or at least one bottle in the room.
- Almadies seems just to be a bad choice. I have been in Senegal many times in the past and I know many other small hotels with better condition that Almadies. Hope to have also access to WIFI soon.
- There were instances where they were missing/unsupplied, indicated and after much below par response, I put on my thatcher face and dragged the manager along to have it fixed/supplied? My suitcase (the back handle with tires) was broken: by the porter and no mention of it/apologies was given even when I said so I was just literally stared at incomprehensively. I arrived at about 4:30 am and was allocated a room with cobwebs and peeling paint only 2 hours later. Got there after a dark maze and the room was not clean! I cleaned it up as much as I could (realizing I was not going to get much help - staff where asleep in the lobby when we arrived and did not get up to help still) then proceeded to take a shower and it was broken! I went to reception and said ok - please find me another room I was told come back at 8 am. I did. Was told in a very patronizingly rude way come back at ten. I indicated no and was then given keys to a room further down the dark maze which had its own issues. I went to reception informed them and asked that they kindly please allocate another room. I was told in very this won't change anything tone: room 82 only available. Eventually just had breakfast and tried to go ahead with the day but got progressively worse when I realized there was no tissue, having asked 2.5 hours later no tissue and no way to call as the land line was not working. At 6 minutes after noon I headed to reception and insisted that the manager come with me to see the room and give me toilet roll. By the time we got to the room shower was fixed and tissue had miraculously appeared! Halleluya! The room was eventually not very efficiently cleaned at about 6:30pm, landline phone finally was fixed at about 8:30pm. This morning had an incident with a non-paying guest in the shower - just dealt with it as I am tired of calling/going to reception to have them address issues. This is not my first time in Dakar and as such I can say this is not norm - just a very bad example of a series of events. Hope it gets better somehow...it's a long week ahead of us!

- As the air-cond. is not working, the air is very sticky -- the only relief is opening the windows during night. And the floor in the room needs to be cleaned! 1 Shower area looked that it has not been cleaned for a long time for it has dark looking fungus. The ceiling in the bathroom looks like it will fall down at any moment. The A/C unit pipes kept a whole set of windows open, i.e. you could not close them. No Wifi in the room or lobby.
- ▲ J'ai l'impression qu'une fenêtre ne se ferme pas correctement et il y a de l'espace entre la porte et le plancher.
- I had to change room for 3 times. Every night I slept in a different room. The night I arrived that I encountered you in the "lobby", they gave me a dirty and used one. Requested for another one which "apparently" was in better conditions. I accepted it since I had 32 hours of flying without sleeping and I really needed a rest to participate in the meeting and do my work later.

I had to change the second time because the air conditioning was not working. Gave me another which "was working" but expelled some kind of powder that made me impossible to breathe. At 1 am I went to the reception desk to ask for another room and they told me there was no clean room available and that I had to wait for the next morning. I went back to my room because I did not dare to sleep in the lobby since it was not safe at all. Not saying that the room were safe either or even clean. Earlier in the morning I went back to the front desk to ask for a new room. A lady promised me that by 11 they would give me a better one. I went back at 6pm thinking they would have had a new room for me but they didn't. I had to argue for like an hour to get a new one.

The hotel manager was never there to solve the problems. They do had better rooms but didn't want to give them to us. Apparently they were reserved for someone else. They cheated on ICANN staff telling that everything was solved and sent them pictures but the situation in situ was totally different. I even witnessed when some girls from Jamaica almost went on a fight with the reception lady.

The third room they gave me had electricity problems. The light went out every 5-10 minutes.

None of the rooms were clean, safe, illuminated and ventilated. Not to mention all the rats, fleas and bed bugs we found.