



UNIVERSAL
POSTAL UNION

Berne, 8 December 2003

International Bureau Circular

421

Guinea (Rep.) – Illegal postage stamp issues

Dear Sir/Madam

The postal administration of the **REPUBLIC OF GUINEA** asks me to inform you of the following:

"The *Office de la Poste Guinéenne* (OPG) has just been informed that a considerable number of illegal postage stamps bearing the name of the Republic of Guinea have been produced and freely disseminated on the philatelic market by private companies and dealers. We utterly condemn such activities and protest against them in the strongest and most severe terms. These postage stamps not only damage our reputation and tarnish our image, but also inflict even greater damage on philately as a whole and on the Universal Postal Union.

"The very existence of such stamps is illegal and offensive to the Republic of Guinea. It is, in particular, a violation of the national legislation of the Republic of Guinea, and specifically of its postal law and provisions on the production of its postage stamps. Under the terms of this law, the postal administration of Guinea is the only body authorized to issue and disseminate postage stamps in the name of the Republic of Guinea. Moreover, it is a flagrant violation of article 6 of the Universal Postal Convention and the associated provisions of the Letter Post Regulations, as well as of the Union's Congress decisions in this regard.

"It is regrettable to note the diversity of the means of disseminating these illegal stamps, which appear on numerous websites and in publications promoting philately in general. It is even more worrying to note the extent to which genuine postage stamps are mingled with illegal postage stamps, totally confusing collectors and potential buyers as to the authenticity of all the postage stamps they see in the name of the country concerned.

"We have ourselves identified several hundred such illegal stamps, whose deceitful advertising even affirms the following: *'The origin of these stamps may be questionable and may be listed as illegals. We therefore suggest that you buy them only because you like them. We offer them because they are on the market.'* This same advertisement has been used with reference to illegal postage stamps issued in the name of other African countries suffering from a similar situation. The fraud even

promotes these illegal stamps at a relatively high price, with one price for perforated formats and twice as much for imperforate ones. There are also pre-cancelled versions bearing false postmarks and cancellation dates.

"This situation is exacerbated by the fact that the logos of various organizations are reproduced on many illegal postage stamps. These organizations might take legal action against us for abusing their intellectual property, but, we hereby disclaim all responsibility for such abuse.

"To put an end to this scourge, we are counting on the initiatives of the World Association for the Development of Philately, the Pan African Postal Union and the Universal Postal Union. We once again call upon all parties to redouble their efforts and vigilance regarding illegal stamps which may be produced, disseminated and sold on their territory, with the postal service being used as the preferred means of transmission. We request that they undertake the necessary investigations and transmit all relevant materials to the UPU. We are counting on everybody's cooperation to identify and track down the criminals.

"In conclusion, we would like to take this opportunity to give the address of our philatelic bureau, which aims to facilitate contacts amongst philatelists and to promote our country's true philately:

"Bureau philatélique de Guinée
Office de la Poste Guinéenne
Direction Générale
BP 2984
CONAKRY, GUINEA
Tel: (+224) 453 401/411 422
Fax: (+224) 41 40 45
E-mail: ousmane@sotelgui.net.gn or opg@biasy.net."

A list of the illegal postage stamps identified to date is annexed.

Yours faithfully,

K J S McKEOWN
Director of Markets

Illegal postage stamp issues produced in the name of the Republic of Guinea

(An incomplete summary of the illegal postage stamps discovered. Certain illegal postage stamps may be dated 2002 or 2003).

Issue: "Celebrities/famous figures"

Immoral scenes, sexually explicit and completely unethical

Details: */** Five miniature sheets in the same vertical format, each containing four postage stamps. At the top of each miniature sheet, in the middle, there is the inscription "Pin-Up" in English. In the top right-hand corner, there is a picture of the actress Marilyn Monroe (different for each miniature sheet) with the inscription "Marilyn Monroe". In the top left-hand corner, there is a picture of a person lying down (the same one for each miniature sheet). A different woman is depicted on the left-hand side of each miniature sheet, with the picture of a different man below (Bill Medcalf, Dil Elvgren, Fritz Willis, George Petty and Ted Withers). Each postage stamp depicts a half-naked woman sitting in a different position. Each postage stamp, on each miniature sheet, is inscribed with a value of 950 F and with an illegible year. The "Scouts" logo is in the bottom right-hand corner.

Issue: "Fairy tales, fantastic tales, cartoons"

Details: * Ten miniature sheets, each depicting a scene from a different fairy tale in the background, with a series of five postage stamps. At the top of each miniature sheet, in the middle, there is the inscription "Les contes populaires du monde" ("Folk tales of the world"). The left-hand side of each miniature sheet features a Walt Disney oval, with the name inscribed at the bottom of the picture. There is also part of the cartoon character that the miniature sheet depicts. Each postage stamp reproduces a different scene from the cartoon depicted by each miniature sheet, and is inscribed with a value of 1,200 F; it is not clear whether it is also inscribed with the year. The miniature sheets are identified as illustrating the following tales: "Aladdin, Alice in Wonderland, Cat in Boots, Cinderella, Maugli, Peter Pan, Pinocchio, Red-Riding Hood, Sleeping Beauty and Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs".

Issue: "Paintings"

Details: */** Fifteen miniature sheets, each depicting a painting by the artist concerned in the background, with a series of four postage stamps. At the top of each miniature sheet, in the middle, there is the inscription "American Impressionists" in English. Each postage stamp depicts a different painting and is inscribed with a value of 850 F; it is not clear whether they are also inscribed with the year. The "Rotary International" logo is in the bottom right-hand corner of each postage stamp. The miniature sheets are identified as the works of the following artists, whose names and years feature on the top right-hand side of the miniature sheets: "Alexis-Jean Fournier 1865–1948, Childe Hassam 1859–1935, Custis Eleanor Parke 1897–1983, Edgar Alwin Payne, Frank Weston Benson 1862–1951, Frederick Carl Frieske 1874–1939, John Henry Tuwachtman 1853–1902, James McNeill Whistler 1866–1937, Lever Hayley 1876–1958, Paul Cornoyer 1864–1923, Richard Emil Miller 1875–1943, Theodore Wendel 1859–1932, Thomas W. Dewing 1858–1923, William Mervitt Chase 1849–1916 and Zaring Louise Eleanor" (dates missing).

Issue: "Vehicles (Transport)"*Trains and locomotives*

Details: */** Nineteen miniature sheets, each depicting a different locomotive in the background, with a series of four postage stamps. In the top left-hand corner there is the inscription "Les trains legendaries du monde" ("Legendary trains of the world"). On the top right-hand side there is the "Rotary International" logo. Each postage stamp depicts a different train and includes the value of 1000 F; it is not clear whether they are also inscribed with the year. The miniature sheets are identified as representing the following trains: "American Passenger Trains/Amtrak, American Short Lines, American Tourist Lines, British Main-Line Freight, British Main-Line Shunters and Industrials, Canadian Passenger Trains, Canadian Freight Trains European Main-Line Electrics, European EMUs, European Freight, European Rack Railways, European Shunters, South American Steam and Locomotives".

*These sheets and miniature sheets are sold in euros in perforated, imperforate and first day cover formats.

**These sheets and miniature sheets are also sold via a website, at a high price for the perforated format and twice as much for the imperforate one!

49 miniature sheets containing 206 stamps.

Conakry, 27 November 2003

(This list is not exhaustive. We will provide a follow-up as and when further cases are identified).