

An expedition that should not have happened

After the last successful big tn8k expedition, part of the team decided on a more petite autumn activity. The group consists of OK6DJ, OK1BOA and OK1FCJ. After analyzing the activities from different countries, the choice fell on Uganda. QTH, we know from previous expeditions and a license will probably not be a problem. The following is communication with the hotel about our interest and the telecommunications office.

License obtained after three months. First, for 100w power, and then later, they approved 1kw out. We also secured the approval for OK2ZA, who might go with us. After purchasing three tickets, we learned a month before departure that Rudolf OK2ZA would accompany us. We have great enthusiasm for having Rudolf with us. It's a short mini-expedition, but we can do it in 4. This way, we have 80m and 160m with a beverage listening system. Not only Rudolph's operator but also technical and antenna knowledge will help in all aspects.

We also secured an e-visa. Simple online ordering with a \$50 fee and per Evisa is home for a few days.

A few weeks before departure, we all meet at QTH OK1FCJ. We decide on tasks and will prepare so that nothing surprises us. From the meeting, there is a to-do list for each of us.

We continuously communicate with the hotel and the contact person via email and WhatsApp. On Friday, September 8, the hotel manager, Mrs. Mercy, wrote that she would not always be on WhatsApp. Therefore, we will communicate more via email. We paid 200 euros by bank transfer for a taxi bill, airport to hotel and back. Soon, we received another email request for 100% pre-payment for accommodation and food. We don't want to pay the whole thing, but Mercy asks to pay everything via email. So we sent 3750 euros. The day after we sent the money, our Mercy called via WhatsApp from another number, as her previous one was allegedly blocked. We informed her we paid everything according to the instructions from the email. She told us that she didn't ask us for any money. We immediately reported the fraud to the police and the bank. We were shocked. Getting money back is very uncertain. It will be a miracle if the funds are returned to us. The police requested the entire communication, including all email headers.

QTH - Nyange Resort is pretending it's not their fault but ours, deciding what to do next. Four thousand euros are gone, plane tickets paid for, and we have nothing in our hands, only the costs. We hope that something will come back from the fraudulent bank.

It's the day before the flight. We need one more extra luggage. There is nowhere to put another 10 kg. We must buy another one for approx. Three hundred sixty euros. David purchases luggage through his cell phone. It does not pass authorization. He confirms it again. After 2 minutes, two confirmations will come on two purchased extra bags. 720 euros are gone. We called Turkish Airlines to Turkey, claimed the second payment, and drove to the airport in traffic to catch an employee of Turkish Airlines. At the airport, we learned that Turkish Airlines may not

return funds. Finally, they advised us to file a complaint with the call center.

We have the last, already short night at home. We have a few hours before our flight. OK6DJ goes from QTH Petr OK1FCJ. OK1BOA and OK2ZA from home. Check-in starts at 07:00. We are among the first to check in passports and evisa. Petr OK1FCJ's passport number did not match the e-visa. Petr was desperate. He took a second passport from home. If the correct passport is not brought within an hour, Peter doesn't fly. A quick phone call home, waking up Petr's girlfriend and asking for a fast pick-up passport. New passport we checked in a few minutes before the counter closed.

Hurray, we can all fly away.

There is a big storm in Istanbul, and our flight has delay 1 hour on departure. The flight to Istanbul took 2h30min. On arrival, we were having trouble. It was stormy weather in Istanbul. We waited until the departure. After an hour delay on departure, we waited another two hours in the plane before taking off. The aircraft is a Boeing 737 max. We have no comfort for the next 10 hours of flight via Kigali (Rwanda).

Upon arrival in Entebbe, we quickly received our passport visas, and after an impatient wait, we had our way to Uganda open. We soon find out our mistake. After an X-ray of the luggage, the customs officers put us aside. We show our licenses, a complete list of luggage, what we take and export back, and explain our hobby. That's not enough for them. We have to clear all goods through customs. We will get it released the next day at the earliest. We try to explain again. After an hour, the manager will come. We clarify everything again. Finally, it is called a senior manager. After the last round of explanation, we get a stamp, and we can also leave customs with our things—another 2-hour delay. After 28 hours, we are finally at our QTH, Nyange Resort.

We get a discount on accommodation and a conference room, but we pay another 2600 euros and 200 euros for a taxi. We have booked a conference room just for us. They informed us that there is a pending conference and that we will be here all Friday and Saturday, but instead, we can use the large entrance hall at the reception. What will happen next, we ask ourselves?

After a sleepless night and the stress of not releasing luggage at the airport, a little sleep is necessary in the afternoon. We are building the first verticals, and we are active on 40m and 30m in the evening.

Saturday 30.9

We are building 2 spiderbeams and other antennas. The receptionist informed us that an unexpected party in the reception hall would be several hours. People arrive in the morning, prepare the room, and plug in sound equipment. Around 11 in the morning, something so noisy starts that we are unable to do work on the radio. Loud music and moderator. There are about 80 guests. We can't operate on radio. It's not possible to receive weak CW signals and speakers roaring behind. SSB is useless to try. During TX, the radio is 100% excited. We can't even hear each other appropriately.

We continue to build antennas. The mentioned spiderbeams and verticals 80m/160m and dipole on 12m are ready.

Sunday 1.10

We want to cover all HF amateur bands. For listening to lower bands, we make beverages. We finally have two. One on the US-EU and the other on the JA direction. Both are short and not efficient. They are close to the transmitting antennas. We have space limitations. We are building the last spiderbeam to operate on SSB. There is a proper African rainstorm and a power failure in the afternoon. We are trying to make a workable schedule so that everyone at least sleeps a few hours daily. OK1FCJ goes to bed around 22 and wakes up at 03. The rest of the team goes to sleep between 01 and 03 in the morning.

Monday 2.10

At dawn, we try 80m. We finally have a transmission on lower bands. However, we are still unsatisfied with the listening capabilities. We need to move the beverage to another location. The upper bands are beautifully open. No music or noise behind us to disturb us anymore

Tuesday 3.10

160m vertical has SWR 2.3; we want to fix it. We have a common coaxial on 160 and 80. Conditions have worsened significantly. You can hardly hear anything in the afternoon. Peter OK1BOA is having a cold. Petr OK1FCJ was in a similar situation after arrival. The afternoon rolled around our QTH army helicopter, which we ignored it.

Wednesday 4.10

We still struggle with listening over the beverage. It is unusable at 160m. We are trying to agree with the security of the building to turn off the lighting of the entire area for a few hours so that we can hear better on the lower bands.

A visitor came around noon. The army representatives came to see what we were, what we were doing here, and whether we had everything authorized. He leaves after half an hour.

We have agreed to turn off the lights on the road where the beverage leads. Topband, 80, and 40 are finally great. After opening the 10/12 m to the USA, OK6DJ works on 160/80 m at night. Milan OK7GU has the best signal on CW, followed by OK1CF and OK2DA. DL8LAS has the weakest signal. We have not heard from another station.

Thursday 5.10

The internet goes down in the morning, and the livescore on clublog stops working. We explained to reception that we need internet 24/7 as we requested before arrival. Finally, after several emergency calls, they made us a hotspot. We were without internet for 5 hours. Africans have plenty of time for everything. No rush for anything.

Again, beautiful openings with a 10/12 m during the day and around 21 utc to USA, the night 160m was down, and we hear only stations call with excellent equipment.

Friday 6.10

Departure is coming, so we try to sit as much as possible with the radio, which, of course, we do previous days. On 15m, Rudolf Ok2ZA works RTTY.

10/12m has cw mod preference and ft8. Again, after closing the upper bands, we QSY to 160m, where we will make another 60 CW QSO. OK6DJ is already tired and doing a QSY on FT8. Here, he encounters a pirate station and is disaffected. He gives a spot to dxcluster that he ends work on 160m and returns on 80m.

Saturday 7.10

Since the morning, we have been gradually packing the individual antennas. Traffic is already minimal. Around noon, Mercy arrives. She probably came to get the present we have prepared, but she won't get it.

She tells us that she got a new iPhone 15 matched in color with a new branded handbag in green. To secure herself for the next time because "someone" hacks her mobile. We have no more words to comment on.

In the afternoon, we pack everything and gradually turn off our operation on the bands. Finally, around 10 pm, the water also stopped flowing. It is not possible to take a bath on the way, and it is not possible to flush the toilet. Rudolf and Petr wash themselves with the bottled water we still have left.

Sunday 8.10

Customs clearance at the airport is entirely problem-free. Followed by a 7-hour flight to Istanbul, and in the early evening, after more than 2 hours, we are in Prague.

Operation on 10m/12m

As on previous African expeditions, the second opening of the bands is exciting to North America. This time, due to the high SFI, it also affected a large part of the EU. The 10m and 12m bands close around 8 pm local time. Not even FT8 signals pass through. But around 22-23 hours, we start to see stations again and signals gradually rise. It is precisely the time to switch to CW or SSB. This second opening usually takes less than an hour. But some days it was open until 2am morning. After NA stations, there is still a short time for JA stations before the band closes completely.

Conclusion

This event has become very expensive for us. We don't write much about money, but this time, it's this one action that is expensive. Flight tickets 3500 EUR, extra luggage 750 EUR, fraud on us before departure EUR 4000 EUR. Own accommodation and transport 2800 EUR. A total of 11050 EUR comes out of more less 2750 EUR per person.

After a detailed fraud analysis by an IT specialist and communication with the police, we are sure that Mercy and her team are behind the scam. We paid for everything twice. We will never go to Uganda and Nyange Resort again, and we don't even recommend any further expeditions.

And the fact that we have booked four separate cottages and had just 3 is another Nyange Resort awful service. No conference room is available at the time of arrival. Petr OK1BOA's wireless headphones were stolen.

On the radio amateur side, we experienced a beautiful opening of the upper bands. It is also interesting to watch the leaderboard on clublog, which Milan OK7GU won this time leaderboard. We did not use FT4 and FM modes.

We made 60188 QSOs, of which 13855 CW, 10377 SSB, 751 RTTY, and 35205 FT8.

We thank all the sponsors who helped us. Please use OQRS on clublog to get QSL. David OK6DJ will quickly arrange them and of course, save the QSL manager time.