



Republic of Djibouti
Unity – Equality – Peace

Ceremony for the Presentation of Letters of Credence

Ministry of Foreign Affairs and
International Cooperation

State Protocol Directorate



Introduction

The presentation of letters of credence is one of the most solemn and symbolic acts of diplomatic life. It officially marks the assumption of duties by an ambassador to the receiving State and, through a precise ceremonial, embodies the mutual recognition between the two countries.

In Djibouti, this process, conducted under the authority of the State Protocol, takes place in several stages, ranging from the procedure of obtaining the agrément prior to the ambassador's arrival, to his or her installation and the formal submission of copies of credentials, culminating in the official ceremony at the Presidential Palace. Each of these phases follows a strict code, blending republican traditions, diplomatic practices, and symbols of sovereignty.



Protocol Proceedings of the Credentials Ceremony

I. Before the Ambassador's Arrival

1.1 Agrément Procedure

The presentation ceremony of letters of credence begins well before the ambassador's arrival in the host country. It is part of a rigorous diplomatic process, marked by several essential protocol stages.

First, the end of the mission of the outgoing ambassador paves the way for the sending State to designate a successor. This designation is followed by a request for agrément, officially submitted to the receiving State. This request serves to ensure that the proposed diplomat is accepted by the local authorities, in accordance with diplomatic practice.

Once the agrément is granted by the President of the Republic, the Protocol Directorate, responsible for organizing the ceremony, sets the official date for the presentation of the letters of credence.

1.2 Protocol and Logistical Preparations

To this end, the Protocol Directorate sends a verbal note to newly accredited ambassadors, informing them of the scheduled date and the practical arrangements for the ceremony. In return, the ambassadors confirm their attendance and provide the Protocol Directorate with the speech they will deliver before the Head of State during the formal presentation of their letters of credence.

Finally, in the immediate preparations prior to their arrival, ambassadors are requested to bring their national flag. This flag will be placed on the official vehicle transporting them to the Presidential Palace, immediately following the presentation of their letters of credence, thereby signifying their official recognition as representatives of their State.

II. Upon the Ambassador's Arrival in the Republic of Djibouti

2.1 Protocol Reception and Accommodation

Upon his or her arrival in Djibouti, the designated ambassador is received by an advisor from the State Protocol. The ambassador is then escorted to the honor lounge before being taken to one of the hotels selected by the Protocol—Kempinski Palace, Sheraton, Acacia, or Résidence d'Europe—according to their preference.

2.2 Submission of Copies of Credentials to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs



Photo: The Ambassador of Ireland presenting her copies of credentials to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation

The Protocol vehicle collects the ambassador from the hotel, in accordance with the established schedule, to take them to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (MAECI). There, they are received by the Minister for the submission of copies of credentials. This protocol step, which does not involve an escort or honor guard and during which the flag is not displayed on the vehicle, lasts approximately 15 minutes.

It should be noted that until the designated ambassador has presented their letters of credence to the President of the Republic, they are not permitted to participate in official events, meet with Djiboutian officials, or address the media.

III. Official Ceremony for the Presentation of Letters of Credence

3.1 Sequence of the Protocol Ceremony

During the presentation of Letters of Credence to the President of the Republic, Head of Government, an advisor from the State Protocol visits the designated ambassador's place of residence (hotel or residence). The advisor invites the ambassador to sit in the rear right-hand seat of the State Protocol vehicle, while the advisor takes the left-hand seat. Before departure, the advisor ensures that the ambassador has the Letters of Credence in their possession.



Photo: The Ambassador of the Republic of Azerbaijan entering the Presidential Palace.

The vehicle carrying the ambassador is escorted by two motorcyclists from the Republican Guard. Upon arrival, the ambassador passes through a guard of honor formed by members of the Republican Guard without saluting.

If the ambassador wishes, two diplomats may accompany them, seated in a second vehicle (from the embassy if the ambassador is resident).

The Director of State Protocol, Ambassador Mohamed Ali Djama, receives the ambassador at the entrance of the Hall of the Presidential Palace.

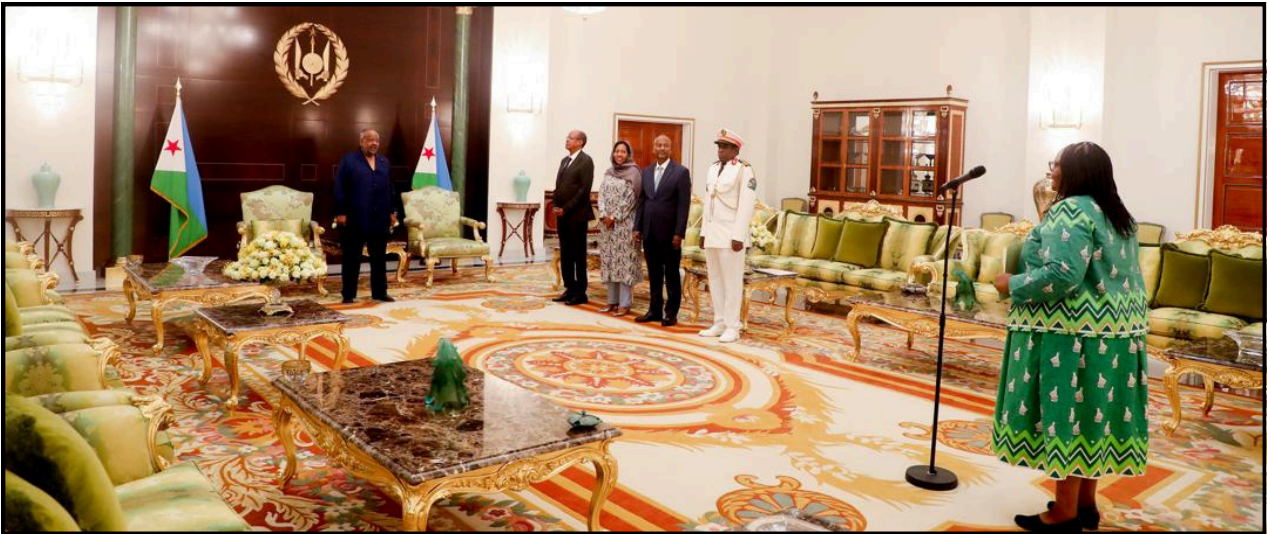


Photo: The Ambassador of the Republic of Zimbabwe delivering her speech to the President of the Republic.

3.2 Presentation of Letters of Credence to the President of the Republic

The ceremony brings together several ambassadors, who are seated in a lounge while awaiting their turn, determined according to the date of their agrément.

The Director of Protocol introduces the ambassadors one by one to the Head of State, before whom they deliver the protocol formula:

"Mr. President, I have the honor to present to Your Excellency the Letters of Credence accrediting me as Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Ambassador of (name of the country), as well as the letters of recall of my predecessor."

The Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, along with the President's Diplomatic Advisor, attend the ceremony, standing to the left of the Head of State.



Photo 1: The Ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands presenting her letters of credence to the President of the Republic.

Photo 2: Meeting between the Head of State and the Ambassador of the Republic of India.

The Head of State shakes hands with the ambassador, who is then invited to sit to his right for a brief discussion. Meanwhile, the accompanying diplomats remain in the background before taking their turn to greet the President.

3.3 Accompanying Delegation of the Ambassador

The designated format is (1 + 2), including spouses, meaning that the ambassador may be accompanied by a maximum of two people, whether diplomats or their spouses.

3.4 Closing of the Ceremony and Associated Traditions

At the conclusion of the audience, which marks the end of the ceremony, the ambassador signs the Presidential guestbook in the Ambassadors' Lounge. The ambassador is then escorted by the Director of State Protocol to the exit, passing in front of the honor guard, before returning to their residence accompanied by a protocol advisor and escorted by motorcyclists from the Republican Guard.

Finally, after signing the guestbook, the ambassador may, if they wish, present a gift to the Director of State Protocol. In return, a gift is offered, typically symbolizing the richness of Djibouti's wildlife and flora. It is important to note that ambassadors are not obliged to bring a gift.