



File photo: Stef Blok/Telegraph

Paramaribo/Amsterdam -

Netherlands' Foreign Minister Stef Blok faced serious backlash for his comments on Wednesday about Suriname being a “failed state”. The former Dutch colony was labelled by Blok as a “failed state” apparently its diverse ethnic population.

The small country on South America's Atlantic coast hosts a diverse population with citizens from East Indian, Chinese and Dutch ancestry as well indigenous peoples and descendants of escaped slaves.

Andre Misiekaba, a Member of Parliament of such maroon origin, told the website De Ware Tijd that Blok's comments were off the mark and offensive because Suriname boasts strong multicultural society. He was quoted saying that he felt the Dutch Minister didn't know the first thing about the “ins and outs of Suriname”. Chandrikapersad Santokhi of the opposition Progressive Reform Party commented on the issue by highlighting the fact that the view of Suriname as a “failed state” is largely due to its lack of good governance and chronic corruption.

Blok, a member of the conservative Dutch VVD party, made the comments at the gathering in The Hague on July 10, but the comments spread in the news only after the video appeared on a Dutch TV programme called Zembla on Wednesday.

The premise of the statement was an open question Blok asked an audience of Dutch employees of international organizations, regarding examples of countries which had achieved peaceful integration of its indigenous people. An audience member had suggested Suriname, to which Blok replied that he “admired his optimism” but Suriname was a “failed state” due to its diverse ethnic composition. It was later via Twitter did he apologise for his strong language.

However, Suriname after receiving independence from the Netherlands in 1975 has definitely been infamous for their occasionally politically troubled history, which even included a violent military coup.

Source: Reuters

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