RE questions adoption 12.7.2011.txt

From: Riedmann, Scott R
Sent: Wednesday, December 07, 2011 8:21 AM
To: 
Cc: Adams, Adoption
Subject: RE: questions

Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Sensitivity Code: Sensitive

Hi 

Please feel free to ask as many questions as you want. Our goal is to have well informed adoptive parents. The more you know about the process, the more likely nothing malevolent will happen. I have answered your questions below in turn. If you would also like to talk over the telephone, please let me know. I’ll call you.

All the best, Scott

[REVIEW AUTHORITY: Barbara Nielsen, Senior Reviewer]

SBU
This email is UNCLASSIFIED.
From: Riedmann, Scott R [RiedmannSR@state.gov]
Sent: Tuesday, December 06, 2011 12:17 AM
To: 
Cc: Addis, Adoption
Subject: RE: question 12.2.2011

Hi,

says we are against her because we hold her (as well as all agencies) to a high standard and require excellent documentation on children being placed in inter-country adoption. We have serious concerns that agencies are engaging in unethical recruitment practices in Ethiopia. This is why, for example, we now require an interview with any parent or relative relinquishing a child for adoption. Often we
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at the Embassy are the first to explain to a relinquishing relative what adoption truly means. Often relinquishing parents have been told fantastic stories about what will happen to their child.

and others view this as us making it hard for them or being against them. We are neither against her nor making things hard for her. We are simply making sure that adoptions processed in this country are transparent and ethical and in the best interest of the child and the adoptive parents. I think that is what everyone wants.

But it's easy to demonize the Embassy. That's why and others discourage communication with the Embassy, while we in fact encourage it. We want adoptive parents like yourself to know what we do, why we are doing it, and to question the process. Because our investigations often cast a negative pallor on the agencies, they don't like it.

The way forward? works for you and you have a contract with her. I know her contracts are very restrictive (You should definitely read “Finding Fernanda.” It is a good explanation of how this works and figures prominently in this book. It's a shocking story.), but I would seek to see all documentation on the child and satisfy yourself that this case is good and that this child is truly an orphan.

All communication that we send out regarding your case will be sent to you, and to if you want us to. If you don't, just tell us and we will send directly to you and you can decide what sees. Moreover, if you have any questions about the process and your case, please ask us. That's why we are here. will discourage communication with us: you need to ask yourself "why?"

with best regards,

scott

Privacy/PII
This email is UNCLASSIFIED.
From: Riedmann, Scott R [RiedmannSR@state.gov]
Sent: Monday, December 05, 2011 1:13 AM
To: 
Cc: Addis, Adoption
Subject: FW: question 12.2.2011

Dear Mr. and Mrs. [Redacted]

Thank you for your correspondence. I will try to clarify the situation for you.

Per our email below, we learned that 14 children in the inter-country adoption process would be released following a review of their cases by local authorities, with the assistance of UNICEF. Ten were released and four of the children unfortunately died due to a measles outbreak. We have no information that the child you were matched with, [Redacted] was one of the children that perished.

The local officials, in coordination with UNICEF, is trying to reunite some of the children from the closed orphanages in SNNPR with their family. This process was undertaken in an effort to ensure that all the children coming from the closed orphanages were truly orphans. We have only received general information about this process, and have not received any information about specific cases. Our understanding is that some children have already been reunited with their family, some are still under review, and others have been deemed unable to reunite and that their cases will move forward at some point.

Any information about specific cases will have to come through your adoption service agency, who should have case files for the children they are trying to match. Otherwise, how would they be able to know if the child they are matching you with is truly an orphan and eligible for inter-country adoption? If your adoption service agency is not forthcoming with information, it only begs the question “why?” Unfortunately, it is not a question we can answer; it is only something that can be answered by your agency.

Best regards,

Scott Riedmann
Chief of the Consular Section
U.S. Embassy, Addis Ababa
http://ethiopia.usembassy.gov

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This email is UNCLASSIFIED.
On Dec 2, 2011, at 2:37 AM, "Addis, Adoption" <ConsAdoptionAddis@state.gov> wrote:

Dear Mr. [-----------]

The consular section in Addis Ababa has been actively engaged on this issue. We have met with Government of Ethiopian officials to discuss children that were moved from the closed orphanages in SNNPR to other orphanages. Based on the information we received, there were 14 children in St. Francis orphanage that we had inquired about. Ten of those 14 children were released so that there adoptions could proceed. Four of the children died due to a measles outbreak. According to the information we received, [-----------] is not one of the children who died, but his case is still under review for possible family reunification by the local authorities in SNNPR.

That is all the information we have at this point. If we find out additional information, we will keep you posted.

Sincerely,
Adoption Unit
U.S. Embassy
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Dear Mr. and Mrs. [-----------]

Please find below the response our office received from the Embassy in Addis
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Regarding your adoption:

"This is in response to your email regarding the family adoption. Your constituents contacted you regarding this case.

We are aware of the difficult situation involving the children from the closed orphanages in Southern Nation's Nationalities and People's Region (SNNPR). We have made several requests to the Government of Ethiopia for information on these cases, including by diplomatic note, as well raised this issue in a meeting between the Minister of Women, Children and Youth Affairs (MOWCYA), Ms. Zenebu Tadesse, and Secretary Clinton's Special Advisor for Children's Issues, Ambassador Susan S. Jacobs, on September 26, 2011. Minister Tadesse told us that her office is working with the regional authorities to resolve these cases.

We met again last week with the State Minister of the Ministry of Women's, Children's, and Youth Affairs (MOWCYA) and transmitted a second diplomatic note requesting information regarding these cases, and Ambassador Booth raised the issue with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Tuesday. We continue to monitor this situation very closely.

Our records indicated that we have not yet received any case documents from the family’s adoption service provider, and therefore are unclear if this case has already been approved by the Ethiopian court. It is our understanding that referral cases which had not already been submitted to court would be reviewed again by local officials before the case was allowed to proceed. Those cases are still in the adoption service provider's hands to work through the review process and, if possible, submit the case to court.

For cases that have already passed court, our understanding is that the cases have already been reviewed and should be moving forward. If this is the family's situation, our section pledges that we will work with them to expedite a review of their case and a consular interview as quickly as possible once the child is released from the orphanage and able to be brought to Addis Ababa to obtain a passport, birth certificate, and the required medical exam."

Our office has worked with several families in your situation, and there is a direct line of communication open with the adoption team in Addis. Congressman Ben Chandler has expressed his sincere interest in your adoption, and I am encouraged and hopeful that everything will work out swiftly. Congressman Chandler has directed our office to do whatever we can to move this forward to a resolution as he knows the heartache this process brings to your family. Please review the Embassy response, and don't hesitate to contact me anytime with any updates or if you need anything. Thank you.

Sincerely,

James Kay
Constituent Services Representative
Office of Congressman Ben Chandler
1010 Monarch Street, Suite 310
Lexington, KY 40513
Phone: (859) 219-1366
Fax: (859) 219-3437