

REVIEW AUTHORITY: Robert Strand, Senior Reviewer

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RELEASED IN PART B6

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ACTION OCS-03

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FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9686

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 ADDIS ABABA 001309

FOR CA/OCS/CI AND CA/VO/F/P

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: CVIS, CASC
SUBJECT: ADOPTIONS IN ETHIOPIA: AFRICAN CRADLE
AGENCY'S SITUATION WORSENS

REF: ADDIS ABABA 513

1. SUMMARY: BOARD MEMBERS OF AFRICAN CRADLE ADOPTION AGENCY VISITED ADDIS ABABA RECENTLY IN AN EFFORT TO PATCH RELATIONS WITH THE GOVERNMENT OF ETHIOPIA. HOWEVER, THE GOVERNMENT'S VIEW OF AFRICAN CRADLE HAS INSTEAD GROWN DIMMER. ON MARCH 15, THE ADOPTION AGENCY WAS THE SUBJECT OF A HIGHLY NEGATIVE FRONT-PAGE ARTICLE IN A LOCAL ENGLISH-LANGUAGE NEWSPAPER. THE ARTICLE CONTAINS EXCERPTS OF A REPORT PREPARED BY THE MINISTRY OF LABOR AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS, WHICH DETAILS EPISODES OF CHILD MOLESTATION OF
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ORPHANS BY A PHYSICIAN WORKING AT THE AFRICAN CRADLE CLINIC. AFRICAN CRADLE BOARD MEMBERS REQUESTED USG TO ALERT STATE OF CALIFORNIA OFFICIALS REGARDING THE CASE OF [REDACTED] AN ORPHAN ADOPTED BY AN AMERICAN COUPLE WHO WAS LATER RETURNED TO ETHIOPIA TO LIVE. ACTION REQUEST IN PARAGRAPH 5. END SUMMARY.

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2. ROBERT BENSON AND BRENDA ADAMS, WHO ARE VOLUNTEER BOARD MEMBERS OF AFRICAN CRADLE ADOPTION AGENCY, VISITED CONOFF RECENTLY DURING A VISIT TO ADDIS ABABA. MR. BENSON AND MS. ADAMS WERE MAKING THE ROUNDS OF GOVERNMENT OF ETHIOPIA OFFICES INVOLVED WITH INTERNATIONAL ADOPTIONS IN HOPES OF OBTAINING A GREEN LIGHT TO RESUME PROCESSING ORPHANS FOR INTERNATIONAL ADOPTION.
3. AS REPORTED IN REFTTEL, MUCH OF THE GOVERNMENT'S OPPOSITION TO AFRICAN CRADLE STEMS FROM THE CASE OF [REDACTED] A TEENAGED GIRL WHO WAS ADOPTED BY AN

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AMERICAN FAMILY BUT THEN SENT BACK TO ETHIOPIA [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] CONOFF SUGGESTED THAT IF THE BOARD MEMBERS COULD HELP RESOLVE THE [REDACTED] CASE BY FACILITATING HER RETURN TO THE U.S., IT WOULD BE A HELPFUL GESTURE. BENSON AND ADAMS RESPONDED THAT THEY WERE AWARE OF THE PROBLEMS THAT THE [REDACTED] CASE HAD CAUSED, BUT THAT THEY WERE LEGALLY UNABLE TO INTERCEDE.

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4. BENSON AND ADAMS SAID THEY FIND [REDACTED] RETURN TO ETHIOPIA TO BE REPREHENSIBLE. THEY ASKED UNCLASSIFIED

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PAGE 03 ADDIS 01309 01 OF 02 130359Z THAT THE STATE DEPARTMENT BE MADE AWARE OF AFRICAN CRADLE'S EFFORTS TO MEDIATE WITH ADOPTIVE MOTHER [REDACTED] AND ASKED THAT THE USG CONTACT THE APPROPRIATE OFFICIALS IN THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA REGARDING THIS MATTER.

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5. ACTION REQUEST: DEPARTMENT IS REQUESTED TO CONTACT EITHER THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES IN CALIFORNIA, OR [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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6. IN CONNECTION WITH AFRICAN CRADLE'S EFFORTS TO CONTINUE TO OPERATE IN ETHIOPIA, THE BOARD MEMBERS SAID THEY WERE TRYING TO MEET THE OFFICE OF CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILY AFFAIRS' REQUIREMENT THAT THEY HAVE A HOME STUDY LICENSE FROM THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA. ALTHOUGH AFRICAN CRADLE ALREADY HAS A NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION LICENSE FROM THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA, AS WELL AS AN ADOPTION FACILITATOR STATUS, THE ETHIOPIAN AUTHORITIES ALSO WANT AFRICAN CRADLE TO HAVE A HOME STUDY AGENCY LICENSE. AFRICAN CRADLE SAYS THIS HAS BEEN SEVERAL YEARS IN THE WORKS.

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7. THE AFRICAN CRADLE REPRESENTATIVES ADMITTED THAT THEY WOULD SOON BE FACED WITH PANICKY CLIENTS WORRIED THAT THEIR AFRICAN CRADLE ADOPTIONS WOULD FALL THROUGH. THEY ASKED WHETHER, IF CONTACTED BY ANY OF THE PARENTS, THAT EMBASSY COULD ASSURE THE PARENTS THAT THEIR CASES WOULD BE PROCESSED IF CHILDREN,

YOUTH AND FAMILY AFFAIRS APPROVAL HAD BEEN GAINED. CONOFF SAID IF CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILY AFFAIRS APPROVAL WAS GIVEN, THAT THIS SHOULD BE NO PROBLEM. (THIS WAS BEFORE THE STORES ABOUT THE MOLESTATIONS HIT THE NEWSPAPERS, HOWEVER).

8. ON MARCH 15, 1999 A LOCAL PAPER GAVE PROMINENT PLAY TO A STORY BASED ON A REPORT ISSUED BY INSPECTORS FROM THE MINISTRY OF LABOR AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS, THE PARENT MINISTRY TO THE OFFICE OF CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILY AFFAIRS. THE INSPECTORS HAD VISITED THE AFRICAN CRADLE ORPHANAGE ON FEBRUARY

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29 AND INTERVIEWED SEVERAL CHILDREN WHO TOLD THEM ABOUT UNWANTED ADVANCES MADE BY A PHYSICIAN WHO TREATS THE CHILDREN.

9. IN RESPONSE, AFRICAN CRADLE HAS FIRED THE DIRECTOR OF ITS CHILDREN'S CENTER. IT CHARGES THAT THE DIRECTOR HAD ADVANCE KNOWLEDGE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOR INSPECTION, AND COACHED THE CHILDREN TO IMPLICATE CERTAIN TARGETED INDIVIDUALS THAT THE DIRECTOR WANTED CUT OUT OF THE PICTURE.

10. FURTHER NEWS STORIES APPEARED IN THE SAME PAPER
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CHRONICLING AFRICAN CRADLE'S APPARENT DISPUTE TWO YEARS AGO WITH FAMILY CONNECTIONS ADOPTIONS, WHICH IS THE ADOPTION AGENCY OPERATED BY [REDACTED] (ADOPTIVE MOTHER OF [REDACTED]) THE STORIES, WHICH WOULD SEEM TO BE OF LITTLE INTEREST TO THE

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GENERAL ETHIOPIAN PUBLIC, ALLEGE THAT AFRICAN CRADLE IMPROPERLY OPERATED IN ETHIOPIA BY USING THE LICENSE THE GOVERNMENT OF ETHIOPIA HAD GRANTED TO FAMILY CONNECTIONS. THE STORIES ARE REMARKABLY DETAILED AND CONTAIN REPRINTS OF CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN AFRICAN CRADLE AND FAMILY CONNECTIONS REGARDING USE OF AN OPERATING LICENSE. FAMILY CONNECTIONS HAS NOT OPERATED IN ETHIOPIA FOR AT LEAST THE PAST TWO YEARS.

11. COMMENT: WITH THE ISSUANCE OF THE REPORT ALLEGING MOLESTATION, AND CONTINUED NEGATIVE NEWS COVERAGE, IT SEEMS THAT AFRICAN CRADLE MAY NEVER BE ABLE TO RETURN TO THE ADOPTION SCENE IN ETHIOPIA.
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