

**REVIEW AUTHORITY: Robert Strand, Senior Reviewer**

ACTION OCS-01

**RELEASED IN PART B6**

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FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3361  
INFO AMEMBASSY NAIROBI  
AMEMBASSY ASMARA  
AMEMBASSY DJIBOUTI  
AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG  
AMCONSUL FRANKFURT  
AMEMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 ADDIS ABABA 002726

NAIROBI ALSO FOR DHS  
JOHANNESBURG AND FRANKFURT FOR REGIONAL CONSULAR OFFICERS

E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: KOCI, CASC, CVIS, ET  
SUBJECT: ETHIOPIA - AMERICAN ADOPTION AGENCIES - LICENSED AND  
OTHERWISE

1. ALL FOREIGN ENTITIES THAT OPERATE IN ETHIOPIA MUST BE LICENSED, INCLUDING NGOS, FAITH-BASED ORGANIZATIONS (WHETHER DOING DEVELOPMENT OR PURELY RELIGIOUS WORK) AND ADOPTION AGENCIES. VERY RECENTLY, THREE AMERICAN ADOPTION AGENCIES HAVE RECEIVED LICENSES TO FACILITATE THE INTERNATIONAL ADOPTION OF CHILDREN TO THE UNITED STATES.

#### THE PROCESS

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2. FOREIGN ENTITIES SEEKING TO OPERATE IN ETHIOPIA MUST HAVE A HEADQUARTERS IN THEIR HOME COUNTRY AND A LOCAL AGENT WITH A POWER OF ATTORNEY TO CONDUCT BUSINESS ON THE GROUP'S BEHALF. ORGANIZATIONS APPLY TO THE MINISTRY OF JUSTICE (MOJ) FOR A LICENSE. THE AMOUNT OF REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION YIELDS A FILE BETWEEN TWO AND FIVE INCHES THICK. AFTER THE MOJ DETERMINES THAT THE PAPERWORK IS COMPLETE, IT REFERS THE FILE FIRST TO THE MINISTRY HAVING JURISDICTION OVER THE ACTIVITIES OF THE ORGANIZATION IN ETHIOPIA. FOR ADOPTION AGENCIES THAT IS THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS, CHILDREN AND YOUTH AFFAIRS OFFICE (MOLSA, SOMETIMES REFERRED TO AS CYAO). AFTER THE JURISDICTIONAL MINISTRY SUBMITS ITS RECOMMENDATION TO THE MOJ, THE FILE IS SENT TO THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS (MOFA) FOR AN OPINION. MOFA SENDS A REQUEST FOR A BACKGROUND CHECK TO ITS EMBASSY IN THE HOME COUNTRY OF THE ORGANIZATION, AS WELL AS TO ITS EMBASSIES IN EVERY COUNTRY WHERE THE ORGANIZATION CLAIMS TO OPERATE OR HAVE OPERATED. THIS IS OFTEN A VERY SLOW PROCESS. ORGANIZATIONS SOMETIMES OPERATE IN OTHER COUNTRIES UNDER THE UMBRELLAS OF DIFFERENT ORGANIZATIONS. IF ALL THOSE OTHER NAMES ARE NOT LISTED IN THE APPLICATION, THE CLEARANCE

PROCESS HALTS. IF MOFA DOES NOT DEEM THE DOCUMENTATION IN THE FILE ADEQUATE, IT REQUESTS FURTHER DOCUMENTATION FROM THE AGENCY. AFTER MOFA SENDS ITS RECOMMENDATION TO THE MOJ, THE MOJ MAKES THE FINAL DECISION ON LICENSING. THE AGENCY MUST SIGN A CONTRACT WITH THE MOJ IN ORDER TO RECEIVE THE LICENSE.

THIS CONTRACT SPECIFICALLY LIMITS THE AGENCY'S ACTIVITIES IN ETHIOPIA. THE AGENCY MUST ALSO SIGN A CONTRACT WITH MOLSA IN ORDER TO BE ABLE TO APPEAR IN COURT ON BEHALF OF ADOPTIVE PARENTS.

AMFAA  
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3. AMERICANS FOR AFRICAN ADOPTIONS (WWW.AFRICANADOPTIONS.ORG) HAS OPERATED IN ETHIOPIA FOR MANY YEARS. THE CONSULAR SECTION HAS A VERY GOOD WORKING RELATIONSHIP WITH THIS GROUP. THEY UNDERSTAND THE GOE'S ADOPTION REQUIREMENTS, AS WELL AS OUR VISA REQUIREMENTS. THEIR CHILDREN HAVE CONSISTENTLY BEEN TRUE ORPHANS. AMFAA HAS A LICENSE.

AA INT'L  
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4. ADOPTION ADVOCATES INTERNATIONAL (WWW.ADOPTIONADVOCATES.ORG) HAS ALSO OPERATED IN ETHIOPIA FOR YEARS. THIS IS AN EXCELLENT AGENCY THAT HAS A VERY GOOD WORKING RELATIONSHIP WITH BOTH THE GOE AND OUR EMBASSY. MOST OF THE IR-3 AND IR-4 VISAS WE ISSUE ARE TO CHILDREN THAT COME THROUGH AA INT'L. AA INT'L HAS ITS LICENSE.

WIDE HORIZONS  
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5. WIDE HORIZONS FOR CHILDREN (WWW.WHFC.ORG) RECENTLY RECEIVED A LICENSE FROM THE MOJ TO OPERATE AS AN INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCY. THAT LICENSE ALSO ALLOWS THEM TO FACILITATE INTERNATIONAL ADOPTIONS TO THE UNITED STATES. THIS AGENCY IS NEW TO ETHIOPIA.

YEZELALEM MINCH  
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6. YEZELALEM MINCH (WWW.ZELALEM.ORG) IS A BRAND NEW ORGANIZATION THAT OBTAINED A LICENSE TO OPERATE FOSTER HOMES FOR AIDS ORPHANS. THE ORGANIZERS OF THIS AGENCY DID NOT REALIZE THAT THEY HAD BEEN LICENSED ONLY AS A LOCAL NGO, AND WERE NOT ALLOWED TO FACILITATE INTERNATIONAL ADOPTIONS TO THE UNITED STATES. WE UNDERSTAND THAT THEY ARE WORKING ON A PARTNERSHIP WITH BETHANY CHRISTIAN SERVICES (WWW.BETHANY.ORG) AND WILL BE APPLYING FOR LICENSING AS AN INTERNATIONAL AGENCY.

7. COMMENT. THERE HAVE BEEN SOME CONCERNS VOICED THAT YEZELALEM MINCH MAY BE A SUCCESSOR AGENCY TO ONE OF THE EXTINCT AMERICAN AGENCIES. THE EXTINCT AGENCIES ARE BELIEVED TO HAVE ALL TRAFFICKED IN CHILDREN, TO HAVE WHEEDED, BOUGHT OR STOLEN

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GET THEM OUT OF ETHIOPIA FOR VARIOUS REASONS. WE WILL FIND OUT WHEN THIS AGENCY IS LICENSED AND IN OPERATION.

CHILDREN'S HOME SOCIETY OF MINNESOTA  
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8. CHSM (WWW.CHSM.COM) RECENTLY ANNOUNCED ON ITS WEBSITE THAT IT IS FACILITATING ADOPTIONS FROM ETHIOPIA. WE CONTACTED CHSM AND ASKED THEIR LOCAL REP TO COME IN FOR A MEETING AND BRING COPIES OF THE AGENCY'S LICENSE AND CONTRACTS WITH MOJ AND MOLSA. WE HAVE HAD NO INDICATION FROM OUR INTERLOCUTORS AT MOJ, MOFA OR MOLSA THAT THEY HAVE A LICENSE APPLICATION PENDING. CHSM SAYS ITS LOCAL PARTNER, INTERNATIONAL SELF-RELIANCE AGENCY FOR WOMEN, HAS A LICENSE TO FACILITATE INTERNATIONAL ADOPTIONS. WE WILL ADVISE WHEN THAT INFORMATION IS CONFIRMED.

OTHERS  
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9. THE FOLLOWING AGENCIES CAN BE FOUND ON THE INTERNET, SOME CLAIMING TO FACILITATE ADOPTIONS FROM ETHIOPIA, BUT WE HAVE NEVER HEARD OF THEM OPERATING HERE. IF THEY HAVE A LOCAL PARTNER, WE ARE UNAWARE OF IT.

-- SIBLINGS ADOPTION (WWW.SIBLINGSADOPTION.COM)

-- YUNONA (WWW.YUNONA.ORG)

-- ANGELS' HAVEN OUTREACH (WWW.ANGELS-HAVEN.COM) IS LISTED ON SOME WEBSITES AS HAVING AN ETHIOPIAN PROGRAM, BUT ITS HOME SITE DOES NOT INCLUDE AN ETHIOPIA PROGRAM.

-- MAINE ADOPTION PLACEMENT SERVICE (MAPS) INTERNATIONAL (WWW.MAPSADOPT.ORG) IS LISTED ON SOME WEBSITES AS HAVING AN ETHIOPIAN PROGRAM, BUT ITS HOME SITE DOES NOT INCLUDE AN ETHIOPIA PROGRAM.

-- VERMONT CHILDREN'S AID SOCIETY (WWW.VTCAS.ORG) IS LISTED ON SOME WEBSITES AS HAVING AN ETHIOPIAN PROGRAM, BUT ITS HOME SITE DOES NOT INCLUDE AN ETHIOPIA PROGRAM.

-- RAINBOW KIDS (WWW.RAINBOWKIDS.COM) PROVIDES INFORMATION ON ETHIOPIAN ADOPTION, BUT DOES NOT SPECIFICALLY SAY IT FACILITATES SUCH ADOPTIONS.

AA INC  
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10. ADOPTION ADVOCATES INCORPORATED (521 WEBSTER ROAD, SHELburnE, VT, 05482-6513, 802-985-8289) APPLIED FOR A LICENSE. BECAUSE THERE HAVE BEEN ON-GOING PROBLEMS WITH AA INC'S LOCAL REPRESENTATIVE, AN AMERICAN NAMED JAYNE GALLAGHER, MOLSA DID

NOT PROVIDE A POSITIVE RECOMMENDATION. THE FILE HAS NOT YET GONE TO MOFA FOR AN OPINION. PROBLEMS THAT HAVE SURFACED THIS YEAR IN CONNECTION WITH THIS ORGANIZATION INCLUDE FRAUDULENT DOCUMENTS SUBMITTED TO THE COURT HERE, PRESENTATION OF CHILDREN TO THE COURT THAT ARE NOT DOCUMENTED AS BONA FIDE ORPHANS, AND AMERICAN PARENTS COMING TO VISIT OR ADOPT THEIR CHILDREN ONLY TO FIND OUT THAT THEY ARE "MISSING". ALTHOUGH THE OWNER OF THIS AGENCY HAS SAID IF SHE IS LICENSED, SHE WILL FIND A REPLACEMENT FOR MS. GALLAGHER, IT IS UNLIKELY THAT THIS ORGANIZATION WILL RECEIVE A LICENSE. AA INC HAS BEEN AROUND FOR ABOUT TWO YEARS, AND MANY CONSIDER IT A SUCCESSOR AGENCY TO ONE OF THE EXTINCT AGENCIES: PRECIOUS IN HIS SIGHT (PIHS).

A NEW ARRIVAL

11. SOME OF THE ADOPTIVE FAMILIES PREVIOUSLY REPRESENTED BY AA INC SHOWED UP IN ETHIOPIA BEING REPRESENTED BY CYNDI PECK, INTERNATIONAL DIRECTOR, A NEW ARRIVAL (WWW.ANEWARRIVAL.COM). WE WERE UNAWARE, INITIALLY, THAT MS. PECK AND JAYNE GALLAGHER WERE WORKING TOGETHER. ALTHOUGH MANY OF THESE PARENTS HAD BEEN WAITING FOR ETHIOPIAN CHILDREN THROUGH AA INC FOR UP TO TWO YEARS, THEIR I-600A FORMS LISTED A NEW ARRIVAL AS THEIR ADOPTION FACILITATOR. THEY CAME TO PROCESS PRIVATE ADOPTIONS. SOME OF THESE PARENTS ARRIVED TO FIND THAT SOME OF THE CHILDREN THEY HAD BEEN EXPECTING DID NOT EXIST, THAT COSTS WERE GREATER THAN EXPECTED, THE TIME REQUIRED WAS MUCH LONGER THAN ANTICIPATED, AND THAT BOGUS DOCUMENTS HAD BEEN PLACED IN THEIR DOSSIERS. AFTER MANY HOURS SPENT IN TEARS AND FRUSTRATION AT THE EMBASSY, AND AT THE MISSIONARIES OF CHARITY ORPHANAGE

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VED VISAS AND THESE PARENTS WENT HOME. WHEN CONFRONTED, MS. PECK REPUDIATED THE AA INC'S AMERICAN REP IN ETHIOPIA. INTERESTINGLY, A NEW ARRIVAL'S WEBSITE DOES NOT LIST ETHIOPIA AS ONE OF ITS SOURCE COUNTRIES.

PRECIOUS IN HIS SIGHT

[REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] IT IS WELL-ESTABLISHED THAT WHEN SHE COULD NOT GET BONA FIDE DOCUMENTATION FOR SOME ETHIOPIAN CHILDREN, SHE TOOK THEM ACROSS THE BORDER TO KENYA. WHEN SHE WAS ALSO UNSUCCESSFUL THERE, SHE THEN TOOK THEM TO HAITI. WE HAVE HEARD FROM OUR GOE CONTACTS THAT THOSE CHILDREN ARE LANGUISHING IN PORT AU PRINCE. RUMORS ABOUT THAT SHE HAS TRAFFICKED AFRICAN CHILDREN INTO THE U.S. VIA CANADA. ONE OF OUR CONTACTS RECENTLY SHARED WITH US AN E-MAIL FROM [REDACTED] ASKING [REDACTED] TO STEP DOWN AS DIRECTOR.

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13. ACCORDING TO GOE SOURCES [REDACTED] HERE WAS

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RUN BY A NOTORIOUS FATHER-SON TEAM WHO PROSTITUTED SOME OF THE CHILDREN AT LOCAL HOTELS, SHOWED THEM PORNOGRAPHIC VIDEOS BEFORE ALLOWING PAYING CUSTOMERS OR FRIENDS IN TO SEXUALLY USE THE CHILDREN, STARVED, AND NEGLECTED THE CHILDREN. THESE MEN ARE WELL-CONNECTED AND ALTHOUGH THEY HAVE BEEN INVESTIGATED, THEY HAVE NOT BEEN ARRESTED. THEY PRESENT THEMSELVES AS LOCAL ADOPTION EXPERTS (WHICH THEY IN FACT ARE) TO EVERY NEW GROUP THAT COMES TO ETHIOPIA. WE DO OUR BEST TO KEEP NEW AGENCIES INFORMED ABOUT THE UNSCRUPULOUS FACILITATORS WORKING HERE.

#### AFRICAN CRADLE

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14. THIS IS ANOTHER EXTINCT ORGANIZATION THAT WAS RUN BY AMBER STIME-KASSA, AN ETHIOPIAN-AMERICAN WOMAN. THE ETHIOPIAN GOVERNMENT CLOSED IT DOWN OSTENSIBLY BECAUSE THE AGENCY HAD NO LICENSE. OUR CONTACTS HAVE TOLD US THAT MOST OF THE CHILDREN WERE NOT BONA FIDE ORPHANS, AND THAT THEY BELIEVED THE OWNER AND SOME RELATIVES WERE PROSTITUTING SOME OF THE CHILDREN, BOTH HERE AND AFTER ARRIVAL IN THE UNITED STATES. THERE WAS A NIGHTTIME RAID ON THE HOME. THE POLICE ARRIVED TO FIND OUT THAT THE MANAGERS OF THE HOME HAD BEEN ALERTED TO THE RAID AND THE CHILDREN HAD BEEN ABANDONED. MOST OF THOSE CHILDREN HAVE SINCE BEEN RETURNED TO THEIR FAMILIES. ALL PENDING PETITIONS FOR AFRICAN CRADLE CHILDREN WERE RETURNED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY FOR REVOCATION.

#### PRIVATE ADOPTIONS

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15. EARLIER THIS YEAR, PRIVATE ADOPTION WAS THE ONLY AVENUE AVAILABLE TO INTERNATIONAL ADOPTIVE PARENTS OF ETHIOPIAN ORPHANS (FROM ALL ADOPTING COUNTRIES). SOME AT MOLSA BELIEVED THAT THE REQUIREMENT THAT AT LEAST ONE MEMBER OF AN ADOPTIVE COUPLE MUST TRAVEL TO ETHIOPIA AND PROCESS THEIR ADOPTIONS BY THEMSELVES WOULD PUT A STOP TO THE ACTIVITIES OF AA INC'S LOCAL REP. MOLSA NOW SEES THAT THIS TACTIC BACKFIRED. ADOPTIVE PARENTS, INCLUDING AA INC'S, FLOODED INTO ETHIOPIA, AND INTO MOLSA'S OFFICES. DEALING WITH HORDES OF PARENTS WHO DO NOT SPEAK AMHARIC, SUFFER FROM ALTITUDE SICKNESS, AND DO NOT WANT TO SPEND BETWEEN THREE AND TWELVE WEEKS IN ETHIOPIA, PROVED A GREATER BURDEN THAN DEALING WITH A SINGLE REP FOR ALL THE ADOPTIONS BEING FACILITATED BY AN AGENCY. NOW THAT THERE ARE THREE LICENSED AGENCIES, MOLSA HAS DECIDED TO LIMIT ALL INTERNATIONAL ADOPTIONS TO THOSE FACILITATED BY LICENSED AGENCIES. HOWEVER, THIS RULE WILL NOT BE IMPOSED ON ETHIOPIAN-AMERICANS WHO ARE ADOPTING ORPHANED RELATIVES (NEARLY 2% OF ETHIOPIA'S POPULATION IS MADE UP OF AIDS ORPHANS), NOR ON AMERICANS RESIDENT IN ETHIOPIA.

16. IN 2002, WE ISSUED 115 IR-3 AND IR-4 VISAS. SO FAR IN 2003, WE HAVE ISSUED 99 AND HAVE 99 PENDING FILES, SOME FOR MULTIPLE CHILDREN. THE FIRST FOUR AGENCIES MENTIONED ABOVE PLAN TO PROCESS BETWEEN 35 AND 50 CHILDREN ANNUALLY. BECAUSE OF RECENT ARTICLES IN READER'S DIGEST AND THE NEW YORK TIMES MAGAZINE, WE ANTICIPATE EXPLOSIVE GROWTH IN THE ADOPTION

INDUSTRY, AND NO LET UP IN THE NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS ATTEMPTING  
TO CASH IN ON THE PROCESS.  
BRAZEAL

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