

3/4-10

1 Requested on: _____

Reported on: ^{December 2011}
~~April 11, 2012~~

2 Requesting Officer: Esther Bell

RELEASED IN PART B6

3 Assigned Fraud Investigator: Merid Asfaw and Esther Bell

4 Subject/Applicant Name(s):

REVIEW AUTHORITY: Barbara Nielsen, Senior Reviewer

5 Case type & Number:

6 Type of document / information to be verified : how abandoned children cases are processed and handles in Bahar Dar

7 Dates & Location of all visits: 11/15/2011 Bahar Dar

8 People contacted:

1. Bahir Dar Police Department Women's & Children's support officer

Sergeant Melese Alemu Yenante Cell phone Office 0582200938

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2. Women's and Children's Affairs Officer

W/ro Werknesh Admassu

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3. Bahir Dar Bethetsanat orphanage

Ato. Tefera Tegn (Manager)

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Ato. Eyayu (Deputy Manager)

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4. Bahir Dar SOS Enfants,

W/ro. Tiru Genet Zgeaye (Administrator)

5. Mary Stop Higher Clinic,

Str. Amelework Mossisa 0582200749

Result of Investigation: Genuine Fraudulent Other

Details of Investigation report:

On November 15, 2011, a consular officer and a local staff consular investigator travelled to Bahar Dar to investigate several adoption cases presenting similar fact patterns. These cases were all abandonment

cases, processed through the same police officer, given to the SOS Enfants in Bahar Dar and then placed by Dove Adoptions.

Sergeant Melese Alemu Yenante - The police officer

The consular team began by visiting the police officer who handled all of these cases. Ato Melese had excellent records and statistics regarding abandonment cases in Bahar Dar over the past four years. He stated that there are only two orphanages in Bahar Dar, SOS Enfants and Bethatsanat, and these two orphanages receive all the abandoned children found in four zones. He went on to say that there were 53 abandoned children in 2003 EC, 48 in 2002 EC, 37 in 2001 EC, 46 in 2000 EC. In 2002 EC, the police located two birth mothers and in 2003 the police located one birth mother.

Ato Melese went on to say that most of these children are found near the Felegot Hospital in kebele 13. The standard police procedure is to call the orphanage that is closest to where the child was found. Currently, SOS Enfants is filled to capacity so children are only being sent to Bethatsanat. In 2003 EC, 32 abandoned children were placed with SOS Enfants and 21 with Bethatsanat.

W/ro Werknesh Admassu – Women’s and Children’s Affairs Officer

Following our conversation with Ato Melese, he brought us to the Women’s and Children’s Affairs office to speak with W/ro Werknesh. She explained that the standard procedure is that Women’s and Children’s Affairs will fill out a form about an abandoned child and then call an orphanage to pick up the child. Ato Melese clarified his earlier point and said that it is Women’s and Children’s affairs who contact the orphanage. W/ro Werknesh said that they try to call the orphanages equally but now they are only calling Bethatsanat because they arrive quickly. The Women’s and Children’s affairs office has only existed for the past eight months in Bahar Dar. Prior to that time it was the Office of Social Affairs. The current Women’s and Children’s affairs office does not have the old records of the Office of Social Affairs.

W/ro Werknesh said that they have only seen 11 abandonment cases in the past eight months. They processed 7 of these cases during krempt, between July and October. No explanation was offered for this reduction.

Ato Tefera Tegn - Orphanage director at Bethatsanat

Bethatsanat orphanage was clean, well kept and had a staff of 25. The orphanage itself is seven or eight years old but it moved to its current location in 2009. The orphanage director, Ato Tefera, arrived soon after we reached the orphanage and agreed to speak with us. He spoke English and had a masters degree in social work. He said that there are currently 41 children permanently in the orphanage. 48 other children are available for intercountry adoption. 41 of these adoptable children were found abandoned and 8-10 are double orphans.

The children are kept at the Bethatsanat Orphanage until a family has been found for them and then they are transferred to the head office in Addis Ababa to complete the adoption process. According to the director, most of the children from this orphanage are sent to France. He estimated that one or two each year are sent to the U.S. Ato Tefera said that he receives infrequent visits from Adoption Service Providers. He did not recognize the names of several U.S. based ASPs. This likely indicates that the ASPs do not provide any oversight for this orphanage.

Ato Tefera's staff provided us with statistics on the number of children admitted to the orphanage over the past two and a half years. In 2002 EC the orphanage admitted 31 children and sent 18 children for intercountry adoption. In 2003 EC they admitted 40 children and sent 15 for intercountry adoption. So far in 2004 EC they have admitted 5 children to the orphanage. This number roughly agrees with the Ministry of Women's Affairs statement that they send all abandoned children to Bethatsanat and that 7 children were found between July and October.

W/Ro Tiru Genet – SOS Enfants Orphanage

The SOS Enfants Orphanage in Bahar Dar is located in a rental house on an unpaved road. The orphanage is clean and well kept. The yard is small and there are not many areas for the children to play. The orphanage building has a temporary feel as it appears likely that no significant improvements have been made in the past five years of occupancy.

W/ro Tiru is the orphanage director. She informed us that they currently have 14 children in the orphanage. She stated that 5 of these children are double orphans and 9 were abandoned. Previously children used to move through the orphanage in 3-4 months but now it is taking up to six months. Currently, the Women's and Children's Affairs Bureau will not release 6 children for adoption. All of these children were abandoned children. The zonal level of Women's and Children's Affairs is waiting for final guidance from the regional MOWA before they proceed with these cases.

W/ro Tiru said that there are six employees at the orphanage. The monthly budget for the orphanage is 20 to 25 thousand birr per month. W/ro Tiru stated that she currently spends 5 thousand birr per month renting the orphanage's house. This is roughly 300 USD. The orphanage has not spent a significant amount of money establishing itself in Bahar Dar. Additionally, given the quickness by which it was passing children into the intercountry adoption process the orphanage was likely created for the purpose of facilitating the intercountry adoption process.

According to W/ro Tiru, the majority of children from the Bahar Dar branch of SOS are adopted by French families. She said that very few adoption agencies ever visit her in Bahar Dar to check up on their cases. W/ro Tiru admitted that she had never heard of Dove Adoptions and then went on to say that the name sounds familiar. She has relatively little knowledge of what happens to the children once they leave her care.

W/ro Tiru permitted us to look at her records of the children that passed through the orphanage. The records are kept on paper in binders. There are no original documents as those are transferred to Addis Ababa when the child leaves Bahar Dar. The documents present for each child include a medical report, police report and MOWA letter. The SOS Enfants records were adequate.

W/ro Amelework Mossisa -Mary Stop Higher Clinic

Our final stop of the day was the Mary Stop Higher Clinic. This clinic was located in a quiet part of town. It was clean and well kept.

This is one of the abortion clinics in Bahar Dar. W/ro Amelework Mossisa stated that at Mary Stop they only perform abortions up to the third month of pregnancy. After the third month a woman must go to a private clinic. She went on to say that they have 200-300 women each month who are beyond the third month and would like to have an abortion. She believed that many of the abandoned children in Bahar Dar came from these women.

W/ro Amelwork said that most of these women are university students or commercial sex workers. Mary Stop runs information sessions with the university students to inform them that abortion is an option. W/ro Amelwork suspects that many of the commercial sex workers have been trafficked to Bahar Dar and that they are frequently underage.