

REVIEW AUTHORITY: Robert Strand, Senior Reviewer

No. 10- 1872

**RELEASED IN PART
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The Embassy of the United States of America presents its compliments to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and has the honor to forward the following information to the Women's Affairs Directorate General of the Ministry, the Ethiopian Ministry of Women, Children, and Youth Affairs (Children and Youth Affairs and Oromiya Women's Affairs Bureaus), Ministry of Federal Affairs (Ethiopian Charities and Societies Agency), and the Federal First Instance Court of Ethiopia.

The consular section of the United States Embassy utilizes a thorough screening process for adoption cases involving U.S. immigrant visas to ensure transparency in the process and that all Ethiopian and U.S. laws have been followed in each case. This process requires adoption agencies to provide the consular section with all documents pertaining to each child's adoption. These documents include, but are not limited to, local government documents, orphanage documents, medical documents, and any other information pertinent to the child's care. The Embassy has dedicated staff members who thoroughly review and screen these documents.

On December 21, 2010, the U.S. Embassy received documentation for child Gimbi, Ethiopia, from the Children's House International adoption agency. During the review of

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orphanage, Twarina Wolaj Yatu Yemebeletoch Ena Yelijoch Bet, Wellega branch. This documents states "*If any contracting party [including the birth mother] tries to revoke this contract shall be fined birr 1000 to the party obeying the contract...*"

Our understanding from our close cooperation with MOWCYA and the Federal First Instance Court is that in Ethiopia, the legal decision to place a child in institutionalized care belongs to government officials, and that therefore a contract such as this directly between a birth mother and orphanage is in direct violation of your country's laws. Additionally, the United States finds unethical the punitive practice of placing monetary fines on birth parents who may later become able to care for a child or simply realize they made a mistake in relinquishing a child. This type of contract is in direct contradiction of our shared belief that inter-country adoption and institutionalized care should be the very last resort for children in difficult circumstances.

We have enclosed copy of the full documentation submitted to our Embassy for your review and prompt action. Our Embassy will continue to inform your government of any malpractice in regards to international adoption in the future.

The Embassy of the United States of America avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia the assurances of its highest consideration.

Embassy of the United States of America,

Encl: copy of contractual agreements and court decrees for child



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cc: Ato Tebeje Berha, Acting Director General for Europe and the Americas Ministry of Foreign Affairs

W/o Halima Mohammed, Director General of Women's Ministry of Foreign Affairs

W/o Mahder Bitew, Head of Children and Youth Affairs Ministry of Women and Youth Affairs

W/o Teiba, Head of the Oromiya Women and Youth Affairs Oromiya Regional Bureau

Ato Ali Siraj, Director of Charities, Societies Agency

Ato. Desalgen Berhe, President, Federal First Instance Court