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Ethiopia

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Notice

In recent months, a number of changes within the Ethiopian government have resulted in processing delays for intercountry adoptions. The State Department engages with Ethiopian officials at every possible opportunity to advocate for the timely and transparent processing of all intercountry adoption cases. The U.S. Embassy in Addis Ababa continues to prioritize adoption cases, to communicate regularly with the Ethiopian government on these issues, and to process adoption cases as efficiently as possible. The Office of Children's Issues will travel to Addis Ababa to meet with Ethiopian officials to discuss adoption policy and processing.

Interviews with Government Officials

U.S. Embassy Addis Ababa reports recent increased difficulty securing interviews with Ethiopian government officials, primarily police officers, which are necessary in some cases to complete the I-604 Orphan Determination. Ethiopian officials now require that the Embassy request such interviews officially through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA). The Embassy is complying with this new requirement, but notes that it may add time to the overall adoption process. Although the Embassy advocates for processing of intercountry adoption cases as efficiently as possible, the Embassy has limited influence over how quickly the MFA responds to official requests for interviews.

Ministry of Women and Children Affairs (MOWCA) Internal Changes

In February, MOWCA, Ethiopia's adoption authority, underwent extensive personnel turnover that significantly diminished its capacity to process adoption cases. As a result, processing delays have occurred in many cases. Despite continuing attempts by the State Department to obtain information on the current status of adoption processing in general and on specific cases, it is unclear when MOWCA will be able to resume regular adoption processing. The Embassy remains in regular contact with MOWCA about these internal changes and their impact on adoption processing.

Court Delays

Ethiopia's First Instance Court Adoptions Bench will adjourn for its annual summer recess beginning August 5 and will come back into session beginning September 30. No adoption cases will be adjudicated by the court during this time period, which may result in delays in case processing.

If you have any questions about your pending case, please write to ConsAdoptionAddis@state.gov. The Office of Children's Issues supports the U.S. Embassy in Addis Ababa on intercountry adoption processing and policy. You may copy Adoption@state.gov on your email to the Embassy if you wish.