RESPONSE

1. Do courts or other authorities in Ethiopia routinely or ever endorse a person's identity card to show that an individual has a case outstanding to prevent them from leaving the country? If so, what is the purpose of the endorsement?

2. Are persons departing Addis Ababa airport for overseas routinely required to show their identity cards. If so, what is the purpose (given that a passport would presumably serve as proof of identity)?

3. Is there any other way that authorities at the airport would know that a person had an outstanding court case?

These issues were referred to the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade on 5 March 2009 (RRT Research & Information 2009, Email to DFAT: ‘RRT Information Request: ETH34594’, 5 March - Attachment 1)

On the 7th May 2009 DFAT provided the following response:

A. Do courts or other authorities routinely or ever 'endorse' a person's identity card in the circumstances described above (ie in ref tel)? If so, what is the purpose of the endorsement?

DFAT contacts (and contacts who frequent court hearings) have never heard of or seen this practice occurring.

B. Are persons departing Addis Ababa airport for overseas routinely required to show their identity cards? If so, what is the purpose (given that a passport would presumably serve as proof of identity)?
Kebele or other identity documents are not 'routinely' required at airport departures. Because immigration staff have electronic copies of passports they would normally cross-check the electronic copy with the hard copy.

If there is doubt regarding a person's identity, then a secondary ID may be requested (not necessarily Kebele IDs). DFAT are advised that these are very rare incidents.

C. Is there any other way that authorities at the airport would know that a person had an outstanding court case?

If the courts consider that a person should not leave the country, they issue a letter informing Ethiopian Immigration to that effect. The Immigration office then sends to departure control officers a list of those people who should not be permitted to leave. However, DFAT are advised that the fact that someone has a pending case does not necessarily result in the court issuing a prohibition against departure. It is only in cases where the court considers that the departure will render the implementation of the eventual decision impossible that it gives such orders (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade 2009, DFAT Report No.997 – Ethiopia: RRT Information Request ETH34594, 7 May – Attachment 2)

List of sources consulted
Databases:
FACTIVA (news database)
BACIS (DIAC Country Information database)
REFINFO (IRBDC (Canada) Country Information database)
ISYS (RRT Country Research database, including Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, US Department of State Reports)
MRT-RRT Library Catalogue

List of Attachments