The death of a relative or a friend can be a traumatic experience. When the death occurs overseas, family and friends in the UK can feel additional distress as they are unfamiliar with foreign procedures and perhaps are unable to communicate in the language of the country where the death occurred. Consular Directorate of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) and our Embassy in Ethiopia is ready to help as far as they can. You may be uncertain about what to do next or who to contact for advice. These notes are designed to help you through the practical arrangements you will need to make. You should be aware that Ethiopian procedures differ significantly to those in the United Kingdom and that, while we understand your need for arrangements to be made quickly, this is not always possible.

*The information contained in this document is not meant to be a definitive statement of the law, nor is it to be taken as a substitute for independent legal advice.*

**What we can/cannot do**

Following the death of a British national in Ethiopia, the next of kin (NoK), or their formally appointed representative, must decided whether to:

i) Repatriate the deceased remains to the UK
ii) Have a local cremation and the ashes repatriated to the UK or
iii) Have a local cremation and the ashes scattered locally, or
iv) A local burial in Ethiopia

Consular staff in London will pass the wishes of the NoK on to the Consular staff at our Embassy in Ethiopia, and details of who will be responsible for the costs involved.

If the deceased had travel insurance, it is important that NoK to contact the insurance company without delay. If the insurance company grants cover, you should check with them what the funeral arrangements they will cover. If the deceased had no insurance cover, the cost of repatriation or cremation will have to be met by the family. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office and our Embassy in Ethiopia do not have funds to meet the costs of cremation, burial or repatriation.

If the deceased was travelling as part of an organised tour, then the tour operator’s local representative will be a valuable source of assistance and advice.

The NoK should be aware that all hospital bills must be paid before the remains can be released.

The Hindu Mahajan is the only one cremation place in Ethiopia.

The documents required for cremation are:

1. Death Certificate
2. Passport of the deceased
3. A letter from British Embassy addressed to the Indian Embassy, Addis Ababa with a c.c. to The Hindu Mahajan, Addis Ababa, requesting the cremation
4. Based on the above, the Indian Embassy will issue you a letter to the Hindu Mahajan
5. Post mortem report (if it has been the practice but depend on the case is treated by the local authorities)
6. A letter of authorisation from the next of kin to conduct the cremation with a copy of passport
7. Picture of the corpse for identification.

**Autopsies (Post Mortems)**

Autopsy is always carried out for unexpected or sudden deaths. The only exception is at the discretion of the hospital doctors for natural deaths for overseas citizens who have family in Ethiopia.

The Embassy has no authority to stop autopsy to be carried out.

Autopsy reports are usually issued on the same or next day when the death has occurred due to natural causes for repatriation and funeral purposes.
Autopsy reports are given to the Federal Police or Addis Ababa Police Commission.

Next of Kin can obtain the Autopsy report from the Federal Police or Addis Ababa Police Commission.

In cases of sudden or unexpected death, for example by accident or misadventure or where a person dies unattended, the police will prepare an initial report of their findings. A copy is usually sent to the NoKs or the Embassy, but this is not always the case.

If death is deemed a criminal act a police will be ordered to conduct a full investigation.

During an autopsy, samples of organs can be removed for testing, including toxicological studies, at the discretion of the doctor without consent of NoK. NoK may not be informed about the removal of these samples. All organs remove put back after the autopsy process finished.

Once the Ethiopian authorities are content that no further examinations need to be made, the deceased’s remain can be repatriated to the UK or any other country, or buried or cremate in Ethiopia. Samples of organs or the organs themselves cannot be removed for any purpose other than testing without prior consent of the deceased (for research or transplants).

**Mortuary Facilities**

There are mortuaries at the Menilik hospital the place where autopsies carried out and at Betezata, Hale Luya, Hayat, St Gabriel, and Korea Hospitals. All Mortuaries are in a good condition. Although we will do everything we can to ensure appropriate storage, we cannot guarantee that suitable facilities will always be available.

**Repatriation and Burial**

**Letter of Release**

Local authorities (the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia) generally require written authorisation/facilitation request letter from the Embassy for the NoK, undertaker or other authorised representative before they release a body for cremation/repatriation/burial.

The Embassy will need written confirmation from the NoK informing the Embassy who they have requested to organise the funeral/repatriation before the Letter of Release can be issued.
**Repatriation**

Repatriation to the UK may cost 50,000 to 100,000 Ethiopian Birr plus a cargo cost of up to a maximum of 50,000 Ethiopian birr. The repatriation cost varies with the type of coffin and the service quality.

Undertakers in Ethiopia are quipped to carry our repatriation procedures. Ethiopian undertakers will provide the special caskets required for the international carriage of human remains. Local death certificates, a certificate/letter permitting transfer of a remain to the UK or foreign country from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia is required to repatriate the deceased. These will be arranged by local undertakers/funeral directors. Our Embassy can provide a facilitation request letter for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Local formalities for repatriation normally take a week or more to complete.

If the deceased was covered by travel insurance, the insurance company will normally have a standing agreement with an international funeral director in the UK and will arrange reparation on your behalf. If the deceased was not covered by insurance, the NoK will need to appoint their own international funeral director or local funeral directors.

If, for some reason, repatriation is not possible, our consular staff will try and inform NoK as soon as possible.

**Local Burials**

Local burials are allowed for foreign nationals, if it is a wish of the NoKs.

Misrake Teshaye Gabriel Church is a Common local burial place in Addis Ababa regardless of religion.

To get a local burial place there, below listed documents are require

3. No objection and/or facilitation latter from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
4. Local death certificate
5. Passport of the Deceased
6. payment

The Embassy provides a list of local funeral service providers on our website, please click [https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ethiopia-list-of-lawyers](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ethiopia-list-of-lawyers)
**Registration of the death**

Ethiopia will issue a standard death certificate in Amharic/English, but may take longer time than hospital death certificates. This is likely to take weeks. Ethiopia’s standard death certificates may not give details of the cause of death, as would be the case in the UK. However, hospital death certificate or report may give details of the cause of death.

Deaths of British Nationals overseas are not automatically recorded in the UK Register Office, nor is there any obligation for the death to be registered with the British Embassy in Addis Ababa. However NOKs may find that there are advantages in doing so a British form of death certificate is then available and a record of it would then be held at the General Register Office in the UK.

To register a death overseas in the UK Please visit [https://www.gov.uk/general-register-office](https://www.gov.uk/general-register-office)

**Return of Personal Effects**

Personal effects are normally returned to NoK, or their authorised representative without any formalities. Usually the undertaker will assist with returning of belongings. Please note that the FCO cannot assist with the cost of returning personal effects to the NoK.

**UK Coroners**

If the body is repatriated to England or Wales, a coroner may decide to hold an inquest if the death was due to unnatural causes, sudden or violent. An inquest will not be held if a post mortem renders this unnecessary by demonstrating a cause of death that is certain, and neither violent nor unnatural. Coroners will only look into the deaths of those persons whose bodies physically lie in their districts (this does not include cremated ashes). An inquest allows the coroner to confirm the identity to the deceased, the place and date of birth, how the cause of death arose and to give an official verdict. The Coroner can only give one of the following verdicts on how death was caused.

- Natural Causes
- Accident or Misadventure
- He or she killed him/herself (i.e. suicide)
Legal Aid

Legal Aid is not available for legal representation in Ethiopia, but sometimes it may be given to the poor or other disempowered groups by licensed advocates, legal aid programmes run by professional associations or NGOs, and legal aid clinics.

Under certain circumstances, such as a suspicious death, you may wish to use a local lawyer to represent your interests should a trial be necessary. Please visit this link to see the list of English speaking lawyers list. [https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ethiopia-list-of-lawyers](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ethiopia-list-of-lawyers)

Compensation for Victims of Crime or a Fatality

Ethiopian government does not have a comprehensive statutory or administrative scheme for compensating victims of crime. Nevertheless, the idea of compensation to victims of crime does appear in the Ethiopian Criminal Code.

You may wish to consult a local lawyer to advise you how to seek compensation.

Please visit this link to see the list of English speaking lawyers list in Ethiopia. [https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ethiopia-list-of-lawyers](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ethiopia-list-of-lawyers)