

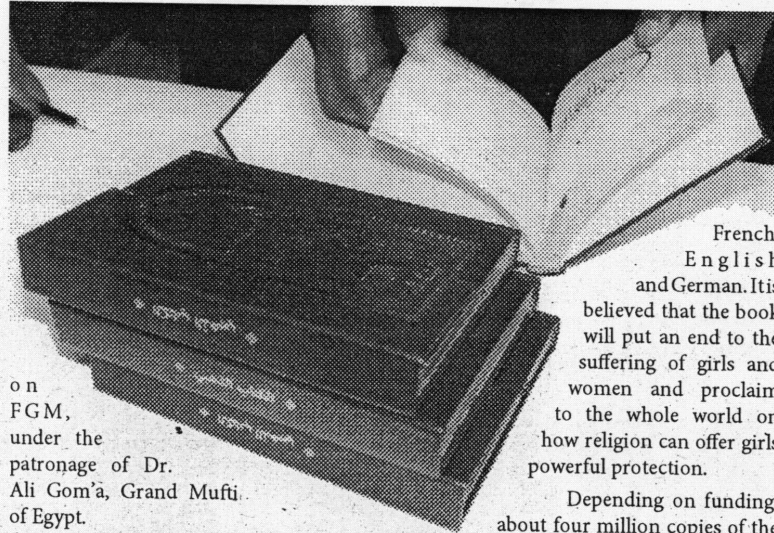
# Golden Book against FGM distributed

BY YELIBENWORK AYELE

The International Ulema Conference distributed last Wednesday the "Golden Book for East Africa" in Addis Ababa.

Organized by Target, a German NGO and Pro Islamic Alliance against Female Genital Mutilation, the objective of the conference is to send a clear message that female genital mutilation (FGM) was a crime against humanity, against female dignity and contrary to the teachings of Islam.

The Golden Book documents a piece of Islamic history and contains the Fatwa from Al Azhar University in November 2006 and excerpts from speeches by prominent Islamic leaders as part of the international conference of scholars on the



on FGM, under the patronage of Dr. Ali Gom'a, Grand Mufti of Egypt.

The Book is written in Arabic,

French, English and German. It is believed that the book will put an end to the suffering of girls and women and proclaim to the whole world on how religion can offer girls powerful protection.

Depending on funding, about four million copies of the Golden Book will be produced.

It is designed to be used exclusively by Imams in the 35 countries where FGM is still practiced. For Ethiopia and Djibouti, 50,000 copies have been designated. Excerpts from the book were scheduled to be read yesterday to the audience of thousands of worshippers at midday prayers in the Grand Mosque in Addis Ababa.

"Addis Ababa is one of the cities in East Africa where the practice of FGM is most widespread and therefore it is appropriate that this conference is held here from which the Golden Book will be distributed," Dr. Claas Dieter Knoop, Ambassador of Germany to Ethiopia, said in his speech at the conference.

Pro Islamic Alliance against FGM is a Target initiative. Leading Islamic dignitaries have sided with Target's fight against FGM by basing their arguments on religion and the Qur'an itself.