

Action Report

on

International Child Abduction

July 2023

**REPORT TO CONGRESS ON THE SPECIFIC ACTIONS TAKEN AGAINST COUNTRIES
DETERMINED TO HAVE BEEN ENGAGED IN A PATTERN OF NONCOMPLIANCE
IN THE 2023 ANNUAL REPORT ON INTERNATIONAL CHILD ABDUCTION
JULY 2023**

**SUBMITTED PURSUANT TO
THE SEAN AND DAVID GOLDMAN
INTERNATIONAL CHILD ABDUCTION PREVENTION AND RETURN ACT
22 U.S.C. §9111, ET SEQ.**

INTRODUCTION

The U.S. Department of State's Office of Children's Issues serves as the U.S. Central Authority (USCA) under the 1980 Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction (Convention). In April 2023, the Department submitted its Annual Report on International Child Abduction (Annual Report) pursuant to the Sean and David Goldman International Child Abduction Prevention and Return Act (the Act).

Pursuant to 22 U.S.C. § 9122(c)(4), the Department submits this Action Report on International Child Abduction to Congress on the specific actions taken in response to countries determined to have been engaged in a pattern of noncompliance as defined by the Act.

The 2023 Annual Report provided an overview of the Department's efforts to support the resolution of international parental child abduction (IPCA) cases involving children whose habitual residence is reported to be the United States. We also reported on our engagement with foreign governments and authorities to promote procedures to encourage the prompt resolution of existing IPCA cases with the aim that, in general, international custody disputes should be resolved in the competent court of the country of the child's habitual residence. Further, the 2023 Annual Report discussed the Department's efforts to prevent abductions in coordination with foreign governments, law enforcement agencies, and airlines.

The Department's work does not end with the publication of the Annual Report. In countries that do not meet their Convention obligations or fail to work with the USCA to resolve IPCA cases, the Department takes appropriate actions as listed in the Act. In addition, the Department takes actions that are consistent with how we advance U.S. foreign interests in other high-priority areas. We establish and maintain communications, we identify challenges, we exchange information and technical expertise, and we press countries to meet their Convention obligations and resolve

abduction cases. This report outlines these actions to address systematic obstacles to the resolution and deterrence of IPCA.

THE DEPARTMENT'S ACTION REPORT ON INTERNATIONAL PARENTAL CHILD ABDUCTION

Diplomatic engagement is often our most effective tool to assist in resolving IPCA cases. We take every appropriate opportunity to raise these cases with foreign government officials at the highest appropriate levels, and to ensure that the foreign government understands the U.S. government's concern for the welfare of U.S. citizens overseas, especially children.

The Department continues to refine strategies for U.S. government engagement with numerous countries on IPCA. These country strategies provide a whole-of-government approach to combat and resolve abductions. We tailor each strategy to that country's evolving political and cultural environment.

Department professionals work with government officials in countries not yet party to the Convention, to encourage them to join the Convention and to resolve existing abduction cases. For Convention partners, we actively promote compliance with the Convention. In many countries, these efforts are producing results in handling IPCA cases.

We also seek to partner, when appropriate, with countries that have already joined the Convention.

In this Action Report, we share the specific actions the United States has taken regarding the countries we cited in the 2023 Annual Report for demonstrating a pattern of noncompliance and report on IPCA issues in these countries.

ARGENTINA

COUNTRY SUMMARY:

The Convention has been in force between the United States and Argentina since 1991. In 2022, Argentina continued to demonstrate a pattern of noncompliance. Specifically, the Argentine judicial authorities failed to regularly implement and comply with the provisions of the Convention. As a result of this failure, one case accounting for 50 percent of requests for the return of abducted children under the Convention remained unresolved for more than 12 months. Argentina was previously cited for demonstrating a pattern of noncompliance in the 2015-2022 Annual Reports.

REPORT OF ACTIONS TAKEN:

Department officials, in Washington, DC and at the U.S. Embassy in Buenos Aires, continued to raise concerns with Government of Argentina officials about Argentina's demonstration of a pattern of noncompliance.

In July 2022, the U.S. Ambassador to Argentina raised U.S. concerns about Argentina's demonstration of a pattern of noncompliance with the Argentine Minister of Foreign Affairs, International Trade, and Worship.

In August 2022, officials at the U.S. Embassy in Buenos Aires met with the Director of the Argentine Central Authority to discuss international parental child abduction issues.

In September 2022, the Consul General at the U.S. Embassy in Buenos Aires met with counterparts at the French Embassy in Buenos Aires to discuss shared experiences with Argentina's implementation of the Convention, specifically significant delays within the Argentine judiciary. This collaboration will allow the Department to target multilateral diplomacy initiatives and identify like-minded countries to explore areas of collaboration.

In May 2023, the Office of the Spokesperson released a media note to announce the release of the 2023 Annual Report on International Child Abduction and listed Argentina as a country cited for demonstrating a pattern of noncompliance.

Also in May 2023, the Deputy Chief of Mission at U.S. Embassy Buenos Aires delivered a demarche to the Argentine Undersecretary for Foreign Affairs in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Trade, and Worship. The Deputy Chief of Mission notified the Government of Argentina that the Department cited Argentina in the 2023 Annual Report on International Child Abduction for demonstrating a pattern of noncompliance in 2022. This demarche highlighted Argentina's persistent failure to comply with its Convention obligations. In particular, the demarche noted U.S. concerns with serious judicial delays and a legal system that allows multiple appeals both on the merits of the decision and on how decisions are enforced.

BELIZE

COUNTRY SUMMARY:

The Convention has been in force between the United States and Belize since 1989. In 2022, Belize demonstrated a pattern of noncompliance. Specifically, the judicial authorities failed to regularly implement and comply with the provisions of the Convention. As a result of this failure, one case accounting for 25 percent of requests for the return of abducted children under the Convention remained unresolved for more than 12 months.

REPORT OF ACTION TAKEN:

Department officials, in Washington, DC and at the U.S. Embassy in Belmopan, continued to raise concerns with the Government of Belize about Belize's demonstration of a pattern of noncompliance.

In December 2022, officials at the U.S. Embassy in Belmopan met with the Director of the Belize Central Authority (BCA) to discuss Belize's pattern of noncompliance and its obligations under the Convention, and proposed actions to improve Convention compliance.

Also in December 2022, officials at the U.S. Embassy in Belmopan attended a BCA-organized training on the Convention for BCA employees, local law enforcement, and child protective services.

In May 2023, the U.S. Ambassador to Belize met with representatives from the Belizean judiciary, central authority, law enforcement, and legal community who were selected for an International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP) focused on IPCA. The group discussed objectives for the IVLP and laid the foundation for a follow-on seminar for Belizean IPCA stakeholders who did not participate in the IVLP.

Also in May 2023, the Office of the Spokesperson released a media note to announce the release of the 2023 Annual Report on International Child

Abduction and listed Belize as a country cited for demonstrating a pattern of noncompliance.

In May 2023, the Consular Chief at the U.S. Embassy in Belmopan delivered a demarche to the Belizean Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade concerning Belize's citation for demonstrating a pattern of noncompliance in the 2023 Annual Report.

Also in May 2023, Department officials met in Washington, DC with 10 officials from the Belizean judiciary, central authority, law enforcement, and legal community to share best practices for implementing the Convention. This meeting was part of an IVLP sponsored by the U.S. Embassy in Belmopan that focused on improving Belize's compliance with the Convention.

BRAZIL

COUNTRY SUMMARY:

The Convention has been in force between the United States and Brazil since 2003. In 2022, Brazil continued to demonstrate a pattern of noncompliance. Specifically, the Brazilian judicial authorities failed to regularly implement and comply with the provisions of the Convention. As a result of this failure, 33 percent of requests for the return of abducted children under the Convention remained unresolved for more than 12 months. On average, these cases were unresolved for 13 years and seven months. Brazil was previously cited for demonstrating a pattern of noncompliance in the 2006–2022 Annual Reports.

REPORT OF ACTIONS TAKEN:

Department officials, in Washington, DC and across the U.S. Mission to Brazil, continued to raise concerns with Government of Brazil officials about Brazil's repeated demonstration of a pattern of noncompliance.

In August 2022, U.S. and Brazilian high-ranking officials participated in the 20th Annual U.S.-Brazil Consular and Migration Dialogue. In conversations with Brazil's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Justice and Public Security, the U.S. delegation emphasized the importance of Brazil's compliance with the Convention and stressed that Brazil should use the most expeditious procedures available to resolve cases of international parental child abduction.

In November 2022, the Consular Chief at the U.S. Embassy in Brasilia met with the Director of the Brazilian Central Authority. The Director had recently launched a public awareness campaign highlighting the benefits of the Convention to the Brazilian public.

In March 2023, Department officials presented on the role of central authorities and best practices for Convention implementation at a

conference attended by Brazil's International Hague Network Judges, key officials from the Brazilian Foreign and Justice Ministries, and other judicial and private sector stakeholders. The conference also included presentations from the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children, as well as delegations from Canada, the United Kingdom, and Australia. Additionally, the Consular Chief at the U.S. Embassy in Brasilia met with the new Director of the Brazilian Central Authority to underscore the U.S. Mission to Brazil's support role in assisting Brazil to meet its Convention obligations.

Also in March 2023, the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Overseas Citizens Services and the Special Advisor for Children's Issues discussed IPCA and the need for the Brazilian judiciary to expedite the processing of Convention cases with the Chief Justice of Brazil's Superior Court of Justice.

In April 2023, the U.S. Embassy in Brasilia's Consular Chief discussed the ongoing need for Brazilian-led efforts to expedite Convention cases with the Chief of Staff of the incoming Chief Justice of Brazil's Supreme Federal Court.

In May 2023, the Office of the Spokesperson released a media note to announce the release of the 2023 Annual Report on International Child Abduction and listed Brazil as a country cited for demonstrating a pattern of noncompliance.

Also in May 2023, the Minister Counselor for Consular Affairs at the U.S. Mission to Brazil delivered a demarche to the Secretary of Brazilian Communities and Consular and Legal Affairs within the Brazilian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, notifying Brazil that the Department cited Brazil in the 2023 Annual Report on International Child Abduction for demonstrating a pattern of noncompliance during 2022. This demarche expressed concern about Brazil's persistent failure to comply with its Convention obligations. In particular, the demarche noted U.S. concerns with delays in Convention cases within

Brazil's judiciary. The demarche also conveyed concerns with the ongoing vacancies in the Brazilian Central Authority, which arose in late 2022 and appeared to cause delays in case processing. The Minister Counselor for Consular Affairs also met with Brazil's Special Advisor on International Affairs for the Minister of Justice and Public Security to discuss demarche points and emphasize the importance of Convention compliance.

BULGARIA

COUNTRY SUMMARY:

The Convention has been in force between the United States and Bulgaria since 2005. In 2022, Bulgaria demonstrated a pattern of noncompliance. Specifically, the Bulgarian Central Authority failed to fulfill its responsibilities pursuant to the Convention, and law enforcement failed to enforce a return order rendered by the judicial authority in an abduction case. As a result of this failure, one case accounting for 25 percent of requests for the return of abducted children under the Convention remained unresolved for more than 12 months. This case has been unresolved for two years and two months. As a result, Bulgaria was cited for demonstrating a pattern of noncompliance in the 2023 Annual Report.

REPORT OF ACTIONS TAKEN:

Department officials, in Washington, DC and at the U.S. Embassy in Sofia, continued to raise concerns over Bulgaria's pattern of noncompliance with Government of Bulgaria officials.

In October 2022, Department officials from Washington, DC and U.S. Embassy Sofia met with the Bulgarian Central Authority and other Bulgarian stakeholders to discuss international parental child abduction issues. The Bulgarian Central Authority reported on efforts to resolve enforcement issues concerning Bulgarian court-ordered returns.

In November 2022, Department officials proposed an International Visitor Leadership Program on international parental child abduction. The purpose of this program was to conduct an informational exchange between U.S. and Bulgarian officials who are responsible for implementing the Convention. The program is scheduled to take place in July 2023.

In April 2023, the Special Advisor for Children's Issues and U.S. Embassy Sofia met again with the Bulgarian Central Authority and key stakeholders to

improve Bulgaria's processing of IPCA cases. Stakeholders included the Deputy Minister of Justice, President of the Sofia City Court, and the Chairman of the Bulgarian Chamber of Private Enforcement Agents. The priorities of the meeting were highlighting enforcement challenges in Convention cases, discussing current IPCA cases, and proposing opportunities for continued engagement.

In May 2023, the Office of the Spokesperson released a media note to announce the release of the 2023 Annual Report on International Child Abduction and listed Bulgaria as a country cited for demonstrating a pattern of noncompliance.

In May 2023, the Senior Consular Representative at the U.S. Mission to the European Union informed the EU of Bulgaria's citation.

In May 2023, Consular staff at U.S. Embassy Sofia delivered a demarche to the Bulgarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs notifying Bulgaria that the Department cited Bulgaria in the 2023 Annual Report on International Child Abduction for demonstrating a pattern of noncompliance during 2022.

In June 2023, Department officials DC discussed international parental child abduction at the Bulgarian Embassy in Washington, DC.

ECUADOR

COUNTRY SUMMARY:

The Convention has been in force between the United States and Ecuador since 1992. In 2022, Ecuador continued to demonstrate a pattern of noncompliance. Specifically, Ecuadorian judicial authorities failed to regularly implement and comply with the provisions of the Convention and Ecuadorian authorities failed to take all appropriate measures to locate children in a timely manner. As a result of this failure, two cases accounting for 40 percent of requests for the return of abducted children under the Convention remained unresolved for more than 12 months. On average, these cases were unresolved for one year and five months. Ecuador was previously cited for demonstrating a pattern of noncompliance in the 2015-2022 Annual Reports.

REPORT OF ACTIONS TAKEN:

Department officials at the U.S. Embassy in Quito continued to raise concerns with Government of Ecuador officials about Ecuador's demonstration of a pattern of noncompliance.

During the October 2022 U.S.-Ecuador Consular and Migration Bilateral Meeting, Department officials called on the Government of Ecuador to improve coordination between the Ecuadorian Central Authority, police, and public defenders. The Government of Ecuador affirmed its commitment to an inter-institutional dialogue on IPCA.

In November 2022, Department officials provided technical assistance to the National Court of Justice for an Ecuadorian judicial seminar on best practices in the resolution of Convention cases. The seminar included presentations by Ecuadorian Central Authority officials, public defenders, and international Convention experts, including the representative for Latin America and the Caribbean at the Hague Conference on Private International Law (Hague Permanent Bureau) and a Canadian Hague Network Judge.

In February 2023, Department officials participated in the Government of Ecuador's first inter-institutional IPCA working group. The working group included technical experts from Ecuador's Central Authority, National Court of Justice, Judiciary Council, National Police, Public Defender's office, and the Hague Permanent Bureau. Over the course of multiple meetings in February and March 2023, the working group prepared a legislative reform proposal to quicken IPCA response times.

In April 2023, the Minister of Women and Human Rights and the President of the National Court of Justice presented the working group's legislative reform package to the President of Ecuador's National Assembly as part of efforts to reform Ecuador's Children's Code and presented an administrative protocol to expedite IPCA cases.

Since June 2022, the U.S. Central Authority has held quarterly video conferences with the Ecuadorian Central Authority, National Police, and Public Defender's Office to discuss pending IPCA cases and strategies to improve Convention implementation in Ecuador.

In May 2023, the Office of the Spokesperson released a media note to announce the release of the 2023 Annual Report on International Child Abduction and listed Ecuador as a country cited for demonstrating a pattern of noncompliance.

Also in May 2023, the U.S. Embassy in Quito delivered a demarche to the Ministry of Women and Human Rights. The Department noted that Ecuador has been cited for demonstrating a pattern of noncompliance in the 2023 Annual Report. Specifically, the judicial authorities failed to regularly implement and comply with the provisions of the Convention, and Ecuadorian authorities failed to take all appropriate measures to locate children in a timely manner.

EGYPT

COUNTRY SUMMARY:

Egypt does not adhere to any protocols with respect to international parental child abduction. In 2003, the United States and Egypt signed a Memorandum of Understanding to encourage voluntary resolution of abduction cases and facilitate parental access to abducted children. In 2022, Egypt continued to demonstrate a pattern of noncompliance. Specifically, the competent authorities in Egypt persistently failed to work with the Department to resolve abduction cases. As a result of this failure, nine cases accounting for 53 percent of requests for the return of abducted children remained unresolved for more than 12 months. On average, these cases were unresolved for two years and nine months. Egypt was previously cited for demonstrating a pattern of noncompliance in the 2015-2016 and 2019-2022 Annual Reports.

REPORT OF ACTIONS TAKEN:

Department officials continued to engage with the Government of Egypt on the issue of IPCA. Department officials pressed the Egyptian government to assist with resolving abduction cases and to take the steps necessary to ratify the Convention.

In August 2022, the Special Advisor for Children's Issues met with the Egyptian Deputy Chief of Mission in Washington, DC, to notify the embassy that the Department had cited Egypt in the 2022 Annual Report for demonstrating a pattern of noncompliance. They also discussed possible actions that may lead to the Egyptian government's ratification and implementation of the Convention.

In November 2022, the U.S. Embassy in Cairo delivered a diplomatic note to the Egyptian government requesting assistance in resolving abduction cases.

In May 2023, the Office of the Spokesperson released a media note to announce the release of the 2023 Annual Report on International Child Abduction and listed Egypt as a country cited for demonstrating a pattern of noncompliance.

Also in May 2023, the Consul General at the U.S. Embassy in Cairo delivered a demarche to the Assistant Foreign Minister for Consular Affairs notifying the Egyptian government that the Department had cited Egypt in the 2023 Annual Report for demonstrating a pattern of noncompliance and once again requesting Egypt's assistance with resolving reported cases.

HONDURAS

COUNTRY SUMMARY:

The Convention has been in force between the United States and Honduras since 1994. In 2022, Honduras demonstrated a pattern of noncompliance. Specifically, the Honduran Central Authority regularly failed to fulfill its responsibilities pursuant to the Convention. Honduras was previously cited for demonstrating a pattern of noncompliance in the 2015, 2016, and 2022 Annual Reports.

REPORT OF ACTIONS TAKEN:

Department officials in Washington, DC, and at the U.S. Embassy in Tegucigalpa continued to raise concerns about Honduras's demonstration of a pattern of non-compliance with Government of Honduras officials.

In October 2022, Department officials worked closely with the Honduran Central Authority to help organize a judicial training focused on child abductions in Honduras, which included judges, attorneys, central authority participants, and other stakeholders. The Department presented on the role of the U.S. Central Authority. Other experts highlighted the need for expediency in processing Hague cases.

In October 2022, Department officials met with the Director of the Honduran Central Authority to discuss concerns about Honduras's implementation of the Convention. The Department also recognized the Honduran Central Authority's efforts, including hiring a designated team to handle abductions, and hosting a judicial training.

In April 2023, Department officials met with Embassy of Honduras representatives in Washington, DC, and discussed concerns with Honduras's Convention compliance. The Department emphasized the Honduran Central Authority's delays in processing cases as an area of concern.

In May 2023, the Office of the Spokesperson released a media note to announce the release of the 2023 Annual Report on International Child Abduction and listed Honduras as a country cited for demonstrating a pattern of noncompliance.

In May 2023, U.S. Embassy Tegucigalpa officials delivered a demarche to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs stating the Department cited Honduras in the 2023 Annual Report on International Child Abduction for demonstrating a pattern of noncompliance during 2022.

INDIA

COUNTRY SUMMARY:

India does not adhere to any protocols with respect to international parental child abduction. In 2022, India continued to demonstrate a pattern of noncompliance. Specifically, the competent authorities in India persistently failed to work with the Department of State to resolve abduction cases. As a result of this failure, 68 cases accounting for 65 percent of requests for the return of abducted children remained unresolved for more than 12 months. On average, these cases were unresolved for three years and ten months. The Mediation Cell, established in 2018 by the National Commission for the Protection of Child Rights with the objective of mediating custody disputes, has yet to resolve any abduction cases between the United States and India. India was previously cited for demonstrating a pattern of noncompliance in the 2015-2022 Annual Reports.

REPORT OF ACTIONS TAKEN:

Officials at the highest levels of the Department engaged with the Government of India on the issue of IPCA. Senior U.S. government officials pressed the Indian government to assist with resolving abduction cases and accede to the Convention.

The U.S. Embassy in New Delhi delivered Diplomatic Notes in May 2022, June 2022, August 2022, and December 2022, requesting the Government of India work with the Department through dedicated bilateral meetings to resolve abduction cases.

These Diplomatic Notes to the Ministry of External Affairs also called for high-level dialogue between the Special Advisor for Children's Issues and the Indian Ministry of Women and Child Development outside of the annual U.S.-India Consular Dialogue.

In April 2022, the Secretary of State met with the Indian Minister of External Affairs as part of the U.S.-India 2+2 Ministerial and pressed the Indian government to assist with resolving all pending abduction cases while highlighting the lack of progress on IPCA cases since his first visit in July 2021.

In October 2022, a Department delegation, led by the Special Advisor for Children's Issues, met with Indian officials from the Ministry of Women and Child Development and Ministry of External Affairs, marking the first high-level engagement on IPCA outside the annual U.S.-Indian Consular Dialogue.

In December 2022, Department officials briefed Indian judges and child advocates during an International Visitor Leadership Program on child protection. Briefers discussed preventing and resolving IPCA cases and provided information on U.S. law and the International Hague Network of Judges.

In January 2023, the Special Advisor for Children's Issues met with the Indian Deputy Chief of Mission in Washington, DC, and discussed ways to improve bilateral cooperation on IPCA, including through increased outreach on U.S. resources available to families in the United States to prevent abductions.

In March 2023, Embassy New Delhi hosted a legal symposium with over 400 attendees. The child-centric discussion brought together Indian judicial leaders and government officials to discuss issues surrounding and the effects of international custody disputes.

In April 2023, the Assistant Secretary for Consular Affairs raised IPCA as a leading issue during the U.S.-India Consular Dialogue with the Indian Joint Secretary of External Affairs and Joint Secretary of Women and Child Development. The Indian government requested additional details regarding a U.S. proposed working group to address IPCA and related consular issues.

In May 2023, the Office of the Spokesperson released a media note to announce the release of the 2023 Annual Report on International Child Abduction and listed India as a country cited for demonstrating a pattern of noncompliance.

Also in May 2023, U.S. Embassy New Delhi delivered a demarche to the Ministry of External Affairs notifying the Indian government that the Department had cited India in the 2023 Annual Report for demonstrating a pattern of noncompliance. The Special Advisor for Children's Issues also delivered the demarche to the Indian Embassy in Washington, DC.

JORDAN

COUNTRY SUMMARY:

Jordan does not adhere to any international protocols with respect to IPCA. In 2006, the United States and Jordan signed a Memorandum of Understanding to encourage voluntary resolution of abduction cases and facilitate parental access to abducted children. In 2022, Jordan continued to demonstrate a pattern of noncompliance. As a result of this failure, four cases accounting for 67 percent of requests for the return of abducted children remained unresolved for more than 12 months. On average, these cases were unresolved for one year and six months. Jordan was previously cited for demonstrating a pattern of noncompliance in the 2015-2022 Annual Reports.

REPORT OF ACTIONS TAKEN:

Senior officials in the Bureau of Consular Affairs engaged with the Government of Jordan on the issue of IPCA. Department officials pressed the Jordanian government to assist with resolving abduction cases and to accede to the Convention.

In March 2023, the U.S. Embassy in Amman delivered a diplomatic note to the Jordanian government requesting their assistance in resolving existing child abduction cases.

In May 2023, the Office of the Spokesperson released a media note to announce the release of the 2023 Annual Report on International Child Abduction and listed Jordan as a country cited for demonstrating a pattern of noncompliance.

Also in May 2023, Department officials met with the Canadian Central Authority to identify potential avenues of multilateral collaboration to urge the Jordanian government to resolve reported cases.

In May 2023, U.S. Embassy Amman delivered a demarche notifying the Jordanian government that the Department cited Jordan in the 2023 Annual Report for demonstrating a pattern of noncompliance and requested Jordan's assistance to resolve reported cases.

In June 2023, the Special Advisor for Children's Issues traveled to Jordan for meetings with Jordanian officials to discuss areas of cooperation and concerns with resolving international parental child abduction cases. The visit included meetings with a local non-governmental organization to discuss the new Child Rights Act, the Mediation Directorate, and Sharia court judges. In addition, the Special Advisor oversaw a roundtable discussion with foreign mission consuls from Canada, the United Kingdom, and Australia to explore solutions to issues of common concern.

PERU

COUNTRY SUMMARY:

The Convention has been in force between the United States and Peru since 2007. In 2022, Peru continued to demonstrate a pattern of noncompliance. Specifically, the Peruvian Central Authority regularly failed to fulfill its responsibilities under the Convention, and judicial authorities failed to regularly implement and comply with the provisions of the Convention. As a result of this failure, three cases accounting for 27 percent of requests for the return of abducted children under the Convention remained unresolved for more than 12 months. On average, these cases were unresolved for three years. Peru was previously cited for demonstrating a pattern of noncompliance in the 2014-2022 Annual Reports.

REPORT OF ACTIONS TAKEN:

The Department frequently raised concerns with the Government of Peru about Peru's repeated demonstration of a pattern of noncompliance.

In July 2022, Department officials met with Embassy of Peru representatives in Washington, DC. The Department raised concerns about judicial delays, enforcement challenges for court-ordered returns, and the Peruvian Central Authority's lack of participation in safe-return planning.

In September 2022, Department officials met with Embassy of Peru representatives in Washington, DC, to emphasize compliance concerns, safe return planning for a longstanding case, lack of enforcement of a court-ordered return, and opportunities for collaboration.

In October 2022, Department officials met with Embassy of Peru representatives in Washington, DC, to discuss a longstanding unresolved case and potential collaboration on judicial training for judges hearing Convention cases in Peru.

In November 2022, at the U.S.-European Union Consular Dialogue, Department officials discussed a multilateral approach to address shared concerns with Peru's noncompliance with the Convention.

In December 2022, Department officials coordinated a meeting between the Embassy of Peru and the U.S. Department of Justice to discuss how the AMBER Alert system for missing and abducted children works in the United States, and the potential for implementing a similar system in Peru.

In February 2023, Department officials met with Peruvian Central Authority representatives to discuss Convention case developments.

In March 2023, Department officials met with Embassy of Peru representatives in Washington, DC. Department officials raised concerns about the lack of enforcement of a court-ordered return and offered to support future judicial training for judges in Peru.

In April 2023, the U.S. Embassy in Lima met with the Peruvian Hague Network Judge and discussed how Convention cases are processed in the Peruvian judiciary and the possibility of planning a judicial training in Peru for judges hearing Convention cases.

In May 2023, the Office of the Spokesperson released a media note to announce the release of the 2023 Annual Report on International Child Abduction and listed Peru as a country cited for demonstrating a pattern of noncompliance.

Also in May 2023, the Deputy Chief of Mission and the Consul General at the U.S. Embassy in Lima delivered a demarche to the Peruvian Ministry of Foreign Affairs stating the Department cited Peru in the 2023 Annual Report for demonstrating a pattern of noncompliance. The demarche expressed the Department's concern regarding Peru's pattern of noncompliance, including the Peruvian Central Authority's lack of effective communication with the U.S. Central Authority and not adequately participating in safe-return planning related to a court-ordered return of a child to the United

States. The demarche also expressed concerns about judicial delays in Convention cases.

REPUBLIC OF KOREA

COUNTRY SUMMARY:

The Convention has been in force between the United States and the Republic of Korea (ROK) since 2013. In 2022, the ROK continued to demonstrate a pattern of noncompliance. Specifically, ROK law enforcement authorities regularly failed to enforce return orders in abduction cases. As a result of this failure, 50 percent of requests for the return of abducted children under the Convention remained unresolved for more than 12 months. On average, these cases were unresolved for two years and 10 months. The ROK was previously cited for demonstrating a pattern of noncompliance in the 2022 Annual Report.

REPORT OF ACTIONS TAKEN:

Department officials in Washington, DC, and at the U.S. Embassy in Seoul continued to raise concerns about the ROK's failure to enforce Convention return orders.

In October 2022, the Department's Office of Children's Issues met with the ROK Embassy in Washington, DC, to urge compliance with the Convention.

In December 2022, the Special Advisor for Children's Issues met with various ROK government officials in Seoul, including MFA, Ministry of Justice, and Supreme Court representatives, to discuss the country's pattern of noncompliance with the Convention and to offer assistance to improve compliance.

In January 2023, the U.S. Ambassador to ROK and Consul General met with the Minister of Justice in Seoul and urged prompt resolution of outstanding child abduction cases.

In February 2023, the Assistant Secretary of State for Consular Affairs met with senior MFA officials in Seoul to express concerns regarding the ROK's failure to resolve outstanding child abduction cases under the Convention.

In February 2023, the Special Advisor for Children's Issues wrote an editorial article for a popular Korean newspaper. The article urged the resolution of child abduction cases.

In March 2023, the Special Advisor for Children's Issues raised the country's pattern of noncompliance with ROK Embassy officials in Washington, DC, and offered assistance to improve compliance.

In April 2023, officials from the Department's Bureaus of Consular Affairs and East Asia and the Pacific met with a senior advisor to the ROK President in Washington, DC, to discuss the pattern of noncompliance with the Convention and offer any necessary assistance to improve compliance.

Also in April, the Special Advisor for Children's Issues met with the ROK Counselor for Legal Affairs in Washington, DC, to discuss ROK's formation of a task force to address challenges with child abduction cases.

In May 2023, the Office of the Spokesperson released a media note to announce the release of the 2023 Annual Report on International Child Abduction and listed ROK as a country cited for demonstrating a pattern of noncompliance.

In May 2023, the Deputy Chief of Mission at the U.S. Embassy in Seoul delivered a demarche to the Deputy Minister for Overseas Koreans and Consular Affairs at the ROK Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) regarding the country's noncompliance and requesting information on plans to improve the enforcement of Convention return orders.

ROMANIA

COUNTRY SUMMARY:

The Convention has been in force between the United States and Romania since 1993. In 2022, Romania continued to demonstrate a pattern of noncompliance. Specifically, law enforcement failed to enforce a return order issued by the judicial authority in an abduction case. As a result of this failure, one case accounting for 50 percent of requests for the return of abducted children under the Convention remained unresolved for more than 12 months. The case has been unresolved for more than four years. Romania was previously cited for demonstrating a pattern of noncompliance in the 2022 Annual Report.

REPORT OF ACTIONS TAKEN:

Department officials, in Washington, DC, and at the U.S. Embassy in Bucharest, continued to raise concerns about Romania's demonstration of a pattern of noncompliance with Government of Romania officials.

In October 2022, Department officials and U.S. Embassy Bucharest officials met with the Romanian Central Authority to raise concerns over the lack of enforcement of Convention return orders, as well as judicial delays.

In May 2023, the Senior Consular Representative at the U.S. Mission to the European Union informed the EU of Romania's citation.

In May 2023, the Office of the Spokesperson released a media note to announce the release of the 2023 Annual Report on International Child Abduction and listed Romania as a country cited for demonstrating a pattern of noncompliance.

On June 13, 2023, U.S. Embassy Bucharest delivered a demarche to the Romanian government stating the Department had cited Romania in the

2023 Annual Report for demonstrating a pattern of noncompliance and requesting assistance in resolving the existing abduction cases.

RUSSIA

COUNTRY SUMMARY:

While Russia became a party to the Convention in 2011, the Convention is not in force between Russia and the United States. As a result, the Convention is not available for resolving cases at this time. In 2022, Russia demonstrated a pattern of noncompliance. Specifically, the Russian government failed to work with the U.S. Central Authority to resolve abduction cases. The competent authorities in Russia persistently failed to resolve abduction cases in a timely fashion, and there is a lack of clear viable options for addressing international parental child abduction cases from the United States under Russian law. As a result of this failure, one case accounting for 50 percent of requests for the return of abducted children remained unresolved for more than 12 months. Additionally, parents face difficulties attempting to resolve custody disputes in local courts. Of the abduction cases for which we are aware judicial proceedings have been initiated, all have remained pending for more than one year due to repeatedly delayed hearings and the failure of hearings to render a decision.

REPORT OF ACTIONS TAKEN:

In May 2023, the Office of the Spokesperson released a media note to announce the release of the 2023 Annual Report on International Child Abduction and listed Russia as a country cited for demonstrating a pattern of noncompliance.

In May 2023, the Department delivered a demarche to the Embassy of Russia, stating the Department cited Russia in the 2023 Annual Report for demonstrating a pattern of noncompliance and requesting assistance in resolving the existing abduction cases. In particular, we urged the Russian government to expedite the resolution of all pending cases.

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

COUNTRY SUMMARY:

The United Arab Emirates does not adhere to any protocols with respect to international parental child abduction. In 2022, the United Arab Emirates continued to demonstrate a pattern of noncompliance. Specifically, the competent authorities in the United Arab Emirates persistently failed to work with the Department of State to resolve abduction cases. As a result of this failure, two cases accounting for 29 percent of requests for the return of abducted children remained unresolved for more than 12 months. On average, these cases were unresolved for eight years and six months. The United Arab Emirates was previously cited for demonstrating a pattern of noncompliance in the 2018-2022 Annual Reports.

REPORT OF ACTIONS TAKEN:

Department officials pressed the Government of the United Arab Emirates to assist with resolving abduction cases and to accede to the Convention.

In August 2022, the U.S. Embassy in Abu Dhabi met with Emirati government representatives stating the Department had cited the United Arab Emirates in the 2022 Annual Report for demonstrating a pattern of noncompliance and requesting assistance in resolving existing abduction cases.

In September 2022 and February 2023, the U.S. Embassy in Abu Dhabi delivered diplomatic notes to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation informing the Emirati government of unresolved abduction cases and requesting Emirati government officials work with the Department to resolve these cases.

In May 2023, the Office of the Spokesperson released a media note to announce the release of the 2023 Annual Report on International Child Abduction and listed United Arab Emirates as a country cited for demonstrating a pattern of noncompliance.

In May 2023, U.S. Embassy Abu Dhabi met with the Emirati government at the Consular Dialogue to seek cooperation in resolving abduction cases.

In June 2023, the U.S. Embassy Abu Dhabi delivered a demarche notifying the Emirati government that the Department had cited the United Arab Emirates in the 2023 Annual Report for demonstrating a pattern of noncompliance and once again requesting the United Arab Emirates' assistance with resolving reported cases.

In June 2023, Department officials met with the Embassy of the United Arab Emirates in Washington, DC, to deliver a demarche notifying the Emirati government that the Department had cited the United Arab Emirates in the 2023 Annual Report for demonstrating a pattern of noncompliance. At the meeting, Department officials suggested a working group to discuss open cases, raised concerns about the lack of options for resolution, and encouraged the Emirati government to accede to the Convention.