

Action Report on

International Child Abduction

July 2020



**REPORT ON THE SPECIFIC ACTIONS TAKEN AGAINST COUNTRIES
DETERMINED TO HAVE BEEN ENGAGED IN A PATTERN OF NONCOMPLIANCE
IN THE 2020 ANNUAL REPORT ON INTERNATIONAL CHILD ABDUCTION**

July 2020

**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 2020, 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 2020 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 2020 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 and dialogues undertaken to address systematic obstacles to the resolution and deterrence of international parental child abduction.

THE DEPARTMENT'S ACTION REPORT ON INTERNATIONAL PARENTAL CHILD ABDUCTION

Diplomatic engagement remains our most effective tool with all countries 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.

This year, the Department released the Annual Report in the midst of the global coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19). Despite unprecedented challenges related to the pandemic, the Office of Children's Issues has continued to improve international response to IPCA and support treaty compliance.

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. For example, although the Department cited Lebanon as demonstrating a pattern of noncompliance in the 2019 Annual Report, the Department did not cite that country in the 2020 Annual Report and noted improvements the country made in handling parental child abduction cases.

INTRODUCTION

In this Action Report, we share the specific actions the United States has taken with regard to the countries we cited in the 2020 Annual Report for demonstrating a pattern of noncompliance. We also report on IPCA issues in these countries.

We also seek to partner, when appropriate, with countries that have already joined the Convention. In January 2019, the United States accepted Jamaica's accession to the Convention, which entered into force between our two countries on April 1, 2019, making Jamaica our seventy-ninth Convention partner. Parents or legal guardians reporting abductions occurring after April 1, 2019 between the United States and Jamaica will now be able to apply for their children's return under the Convention. Parents may also apply for access to children through either the USCA or the Jamaican Central Authority under the Convention, as appropriate.

Country Summary:

The Convention has been in force between the United States and Argentina since 1991. In 2019, Argentina continued to demonstrate a pattern of noncompliance. Specifically, the Argentine judicial authorities persistently failed to implement and comply with the provisions of the Convention. As a result of this failure, 100 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 five years. Argentina was previously cited for demonstrating a pattern of noncompliance in the 2014-2019 Annual Reports.

Report of Action Taken:

Department officials both in Washington, D.C., and at the U.S. Embassy in Buenos Aires continued to raise concerns at all levels of the Argentine government regarding the judiciary's persistent failure to regularly implement and comply with the Convention.

In 2019, the U.S. Embassy in Buenos Aires built on the momentum of its 2018 International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP) which brought important officials and private sector representatives to the United States for an international parental child abduction (IPCA) focused program. IVLP program participants participated in monthly online training sessions organized in coordination with the Argentine Central Authority and Argentina's Hague Network Judge for judges and judicial clerks in each of Argentina's 23 provinces.

In November 2019, two officers from the Office of Children's Issues presented in Argentina at the Second Patagonia Training on International Child Abduction and Access, a nationwide judicial training conference. This event was coupled with a two-day meeting of the National Network of Family Judges in International Child Abduction, an Argentine domestic judicial network comprising judges from each of the country's 23 provinces. The Office of Children's Issues' team outlined U.S. programs designed to prevent international parental child abduction and shared U.S.-based resources available to authorities and families in Argentina to help facilitate the safe return of children back to the United States.

Also in November 2019, after sustained U.S. engagement to raise the profile of judicial delays, the Argentine Senate approved a national draft procedural law. The Argentine government reports that this legislation is designed to help expedite the resolution of abduction cases by removing some delays in the judicial process. According to Argentine officials, the legislation must pass in a vote in the lower house of the Argentine legislature and receive the President's signature before becoming law. The Argentine government further reports the deadline for approving the law in the lower house is March 2021.



Argentina (continued)

In December 2019, the Director of the Office of Children's Issues met in Washington with the Director of the Argentine Central Authority to discuss bilateral and multilateral efforts to promote expeditious resolutions for parents involved in IPCA cases both in Argentina as well as across Latin America.

In February 2020, the U.S. Embassy and the Office of Children's Issues organized a visit to Argentina planned for April 2020 by the Special Advisor for Children's Issues, for meetings with the Argentine Central Authority, judges, and legislators, in coordination with the Deputy Chief of Mission to address IPCA issues. Unfortunately this trip was postponed due to COVID-19.

In May 2020, the Consul General at U.S. Embassy Buenos Aires delivered a demarche to the Argentine Ministry of Foreign Affairs, notifying Argentine officials that the Department again cited Argentina in the 2020 Annual Report on International Child Abduction for demonstrating a pattern of noncompliance during 2019. This demarche expressed concern about Argentina's continued failure to comply with Convention obligations and encouraged improved Convention compliance.



Country Summary:

The Convention has been in force between the United States and Brazil since 2003. In 2019, Brazil continued to demonstrate a pattern of noncompliance. Specifically, the Brazilian judicial authorities persistently failed to implement and comply with the provisions of the Convention. As a result, 55 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 four years and one month. Brazil was previously cited for demonstrating a pattern of noncompliance in the 2006-2019 Annual Reports.

Report of Actions Taken:

Department officials including the Secretary of State, the U.S. Chief of Mission in Brazil, Assistant Secretaries of State for Western Hemisphere and Consular Affairs, the Minister Counselor for Consular Affairs in Brazil, and officials of the Office of Children's Issues, frequently and robustly engaged with Brazilian counterparts on the issue of international parental child abduction (IPCA). Department officials highlighted the Brazilian judiciary's persistent failure to implement and comply with the provisions of the Convention with examples extending over the last 15 years, and insisted on concrete reforms across institutions including the Brazilian federal courts, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Ministry of Justice to help the children and families involved in IPCA matters.

In June 2019, the Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs met with the Brazilian Minister of Justice and Public Security and urged Brazil to support legislative mechanisms to expedite Convention cases in the court system.

In July 2019, the Department hosted Brazilian judges participating in an International Visitor Leadership Program on protecting women and children. The program's goals included creating linkages among professionals in the legal field working to promote international cooperation.

In September 2019, during the U.S.-Brazil Strategic Partnership Dialogue, the Acting Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs and other senior Department officials urged the Brazilian Ministry of Foreign Relations' Secretary for National Sovereignty and Citizenship Affairs to address longstanding unresolved cases and pressed for support for effective reforms in the Brazilian judiciary to facilitate the expeditious resolution of abduction cases.

In November 2019, the Secretary of State delivered a letter to the Brazilian Foreign Minister. In addition to pressing for the resolution of individual cases, this letter called on the Government of Brazil to prioritize and expedite systemic changes in the Brazilian judiciary for the benefit of all children involved in Convention matters.



Brazil (continued)

In December 2019, Department officials traveled to Brasilia to urge Brazilian federal government officials to improve compliance with their obligations under the Convention and to identify areas where the U.S. government could provide further support.

Also in December 2019, the Chargé d’Affaires, a.i., at U.S. Embassy Brasilia met with the Brazilian Minister of Justice and Public Security, underscoring U.S. concerns with longstanding unresolved cases and urging procedural changes in the Brazilian judiciary to expedite Convention cases.

In January 2020, the Chargé d’Affaires, a.i., met with the President of the Supreme Federal Court of Brazil to exchange information on the creation of a group of Brazilian judges and advocates tasked with implementing a Judicial Ordinance targeting Brazil’s Convention obligations.

In February 2020, the Chargé d’Affaires, a.i., participated in a press roundtable where he raised the Department’s concern with the lengthy delays Convention cases often experience in the Brazilian court system.

In April 2020, the U.S. Ambassador to Brazil asked the Brazilian Minister of Justice and Public Security for support advancing a 2018 Brazilian Executive Order meant to improve Brazil’s handling of Convention cases in accordance with its National Justice Council.

In May 2020, the Twentieth Annual U.S.-Brazil Consular Dialogue, during which the Department planned to raise concerns with Brazil’s pattern of noncompliance on IPCA, was postponed due to COVID-19.

Also in May 2020, the Deputy Chief of Mission at U.S. Embassy Brasilia delivered a demarche to the Brazilian Ministry of Foreign Relations’ Secretary for National Sovereignty and Citizenship Affairs, noting the Department had cited Brazil in the 2020 Annual Report on International Child Abduction for continuing to demonstrate a pattern of noncompliance for the fifteenth consecutive year.



Country Summary:

The Convention has been in force between the United States and Costa Rica since 2008. In 2019, Costa Rica demonstrated a pattern of noncompliance. Specifically, Costa Rican judicial authorities failed to regularly implement and comply with the provisions of the Convention. The Department previously cited Costa Rica in the 2011 – 2016 Annual Reports but did not cite Costa Rica in the 2017, 2018 or 2019 reports.

Report of Actions Taken:

Department officials raised continuing concerns with the Government of Costa Rica about the Costa Rican judiciary's persistent failure to regularly implement and comply with the Convention. Specifically, the Department raised concerns with delays in the judicial process and Costa Rican adherence to Convention best practices.

The Office of Children's Issues and the U.S. Embassy in San Jose have continued to work on all abduction cases by communicating with the Costa Rican Central Authority PANI (Patronato Nacional de Infancia), as well as addressing judicial delays at the highest levels of the Costa Rican Government.

In May 2019, U.S. Embassy San Jose officials met with Costa Rica's Central Authority, as well as its Immigration Legal Department, Refugee Unit and the MFA Consular Division. They expressed concerns regarding delays in IPCA cases and the judiciary's persistent failure to regularly implement and comply with the Convention. They also discussed opportunities to increase cooperation and information-sharing with respect to the Hague Convention cases.

In July 2019, U.S. Embassy San Jose met with Costa Rica's MFA Consular Division to raise concerns regarding judicial delays in Hague Convention proceedings and the interplay between refugee status requests and IPCA cases.

In October 2019, U.S. Embassy San Jose officials met with Costa Rica's Central Authority, as well as its Immigration Legal Department, Refugee Unit and the MFA Consular Division. U.S. Embassy officials again raised concerns about proper implementation of the Convention, including concerns about Convention decisions made on the basis of refugee claims and urged these entities to take all appropriate steps to help expeditiously resolve abduction cases.



Costa Rica (continued)

In November 2019, U.S. Ambassador to Costa Rica Sharon Day, met with President Carlos Alvarado of Costa Rica and raised the issue of Costa Rica's failure to comply with its obligations under the Hague Convention and specific cases of concern. In November 2019, the Office of Children's Issues raised the Costa Rican judicial authorities' failure to implement and comply with provisions of the Convention with the Hague Convention Regional Office on Latin America and Caribbean, and discussed a way forward to organize judicial training for the Costa Rican judges.

In December 2019, the Department delivered a diplomatic note to the MFA strongly urging Costa Rica to expeditiously resolve all abduction cases involving the United States and Costa Rica.

In December 2019, the Office of Children's Issues, in collaboration with the U.S. Embassy San Jose and the Hague Conference on Private International Law, developed a plan for strengthening relationships with key stakeholders in Costa Rica, as well as building capacity for future training of the judges, by engaging in a positive dialogue. This plan included an International Hague Convention Best Practices Seminar in San Jose in 2020. The desired outcome would be for the Costa Rican Judiciary to consider Convention best practices in their adjudication of Convention cases. The idea received strong support from Costa Rican Judges, the Bar Association, and in legal academic circles.

In February and March 2020, Consul General of the U.S. Embassy San Jose had several phone conversations with Costa Rica Ministry of Foreign Affairs Director of Consular Affairs Rodolfo Rodriguez regarding ongoing IPCA cases and the need to process them in accordance with Hague Convention provisions.

In May 2020, Ambassador Day presented a formal demarche to Foreign Minister Solano regarding Costa Rica's pattern of noncompliance with Hague Convention obligations as cited in the 2020 Annual Report and reiterated the need to establish a protocol to expedite the resolution of IPCA cases.



Country Summary:

The Convention has been in force between the United States and Ecuador since 1992. In 2019, Ecuador continued to demonstrate a pattern of noncompliance. Specifically, the Ecuadorian judicial authorities persistently failed to regularly implement and comply with the provisions of the Convention. As a result of this failure, 67 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 ten months. Ecuador was previously cited for demonstrating a pattern of noncompliance in the 2015-2019 Annual Reports.

Report of Actions Taken:

Department officials continued to raise concerns about the Ecuadorian judiciary's persistent failure to regularly implement and comply with the Convention.

Since June 2019, the U.S. Central Authority held periodic digital video conferences with the Ecuadorian Central Authority, Ecuador's specialized law enforcement unit for children *Dirección Nacional de Policía Especializada para Niños, Niñas y Adolescentes* (DINAPEN), and Ecuador's Public Defender's Office. During these conferences, participants discussed case updates and strategies for improving implementation of the Convention in Ecuador. These conferences have increased the understanding of the Convention among the different offices involved in resolving abduction cases in Ecuador, and have led to increased cooperation and communication between the U.S. and Ecuadorian Central Authorities.

In July 2019, the National Court of Justice (NCJ) hosted a judicial seminar for Ecuadorian judges on best practices in the resolution of Convention cases. The NCJ brought together the Ecuadorian Central Authority officials, public defenders, and international Convention experts, including one of the U.S. Hague Network Judges. Following the training, the NCJ committed to convene further discussions on developing protocols to expedite Convention cases in the Ecuadorian court systems and clarify the roles of different Ecuadorian government agencies in Convention cases in the administrative and judicial phase.

In December 2019, Department officials traveled to Quito to meet with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ecuadorian Central Authority, DINAPEN, the president of the National Court of Justice, and the Director of Access to Justice at the Judiciary Council to continue engagement initiated during the December 2018 visit by then-Special Advisor for Children's Issues. During these meetings, Department officials noted a need for increased judicial training for judges on the Convention to achieve compliance.



Ecuador (continued)

In May 2020, the U.S. Embassy in Quito delivered a diplomatic note to the Ecuadorian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, giving official notice that the Department cited Ecuador for demonstrating a pattern of noncompliance in the 2020 Annual Report on International Child Abduction.



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 2019, Egypt continued to demonstrate a pattern of noncompliance. Specifically, the competent authorities in Egypt persistently failed to work with the Department of State to resolve abduction cases. As a result of this failure, 46 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 six months. Egypt was previously cited for demonstrating a pattern of noncompliance in the 2015, 2016, and 2019 Annual Reports.

Report of Actions Taken:

Officials at the highest levels of the Department engaged with the Government of Egypt on the issue of international parental child abduction. Department officials pressed the Egyptian government to assist with resolving abduction cases and to work on preparing the legal infrastructure needed to ratify and successfully implement the Convention.

In August 2019, the Deputy Consul General in Cairo raised IPCA concerns with the Egyptian Deputy Assistant Foreign Minister who confirmed that technical meetings within the Government of Egypt regarding the Convention will continue.

In October 2019, the Department met multiple times with the Consul General at the Egyptian Embassy in Washington. During these meetings Department officials raised IPCA issues and discussed the potential passage of legislation to implement the Convention in Egypt.

In January 2020, U.S. Embassy Cairo delivered a Diplomatic Note to the Assistant Minister for Consular Affairs informing the Government of Egypt of unresolved abduction cases and requesting Egyptian government officials work with the Department of State to help resolve these cases. The Consul General also held separate discussions with Egyptian government officials, including the Good Intentions Subcommittee, which is identified as the lead Egyptian entity on IPCA in the U.S. Egypt Memorandum of Understanding on IPCA, on ways to improve cooperation and the need to see progress on specific cases.

Upon release of the 2020 Annual Report, U.S. Embassy Cairo delivered a demarche notifying the Egyptian government that the Department had cited Egypt in the 2020 Annual Report for demonstrating a pattern of noncompliance and once again requesting Egypt's assistance with resolving reported cases.



Country Summary:

India does not adhere to any protocols with respect to international parental child abduction. In 2019, 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, 41 percent of requests for the return of abducted children remained unresolved for more than 12 months. On average, these cases were unresolved for 3 years and 6 months. India was previously cited for demonstrating a pattern of noncompliance in the 2015-2019 Annual Reports.

Report of Actions Taken:

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

In June 2019, the U.S. Ambassador to India raised concerns about international parental child abduction, as well as the need for resolving cases, and urged the Government of India to take steps to address these concerns in meetings with senior Indian government officials from the Ministry of External Affairs, the Ministry of Home Affairs, and the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

In December 2019, U.S. Embassy New Delhi delivered a Diplomatic Note to the Ministry of External Affairs expressing concern to the Government of India regarding unresolved abduction cases and requesting Indian government officials work with the Department of State to resolve these cases.

Also in December 2019, the U.S. Secretary of State and the Indian Minister of External Affairs made a Joint Statement for the U.S.-India 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue, which included increasing cooperation on familial matters including child custody issues.

In January 2020, the Assistant Secretary for Consular Affairs raised IPCA as the leading issue in the U.S.-India Consular Dialogue. As part of the Dialogue, the United States proposed the formation of a U.S.-India Joint Committee on International Child Abduction to create bilateral fora for direct lines of communication on relevant issues, such as conducting training and exchanges of experience for judges, encouraging access between parents and children, preventing abductions, and facilitating information sharing on matters related to the Convention.



India (continued)

In February 2020, the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Overseas Citizens Services traveled to New Delhi and Hyderabad, where she met with Indian government interlocutors, including the Joint Secretary for the Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD), the Joint Secretary for the Americas Division at the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), and the Telangana Inspector General for Law and Order, Women's Safety Wing. The Deputy Assistant Secretary stressed the urgency of resolving all existing abduction cases and pressed the MWCD and the MEA to work with the Department by accepting the proposal to form a Joint Committee on International Child Abduction.

U.S. Embassy New Delhi has continued to attend sessions of the Government of India's Mediation Cell, since its inception in 2018, to observe the processing of requests submitted to the Mediation Cell by left-behind parents.

Upon release of the 2020 Annual Report, the Mission India's Minister Counselor for Consular Affairs delivered a demarche to Ministry of External Affairs Office of Overseas Indian Affairs II Joint Secretary. The demarche notified the Indian government that the Department had cited India in the 2020 Annual Report for demonstrating a pattern of noncompliance and once again requested India's assistance in resolving existing cases.



Country Summary:

Jordan does not adhere to any protocols with respect to international parental child abduction. 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 2019, Jordan continued to demonstrate a pattern of noncompliance. Specifically, the competent authorities in Jordan persistently failed to work with the Department of State to resolve abduction cases. Jordan was previously cited for demonstrating a pattern of noncompliance in the 2015-2019 Annual Reports.

Report of Actions Taken:

Officials at the highest levels of the Department engaged with the Government of Jordan on the issue of international parental child abduction. Department officials pressed the Jordanian government to assist with resolving abduction cases and to accede to the Convention.

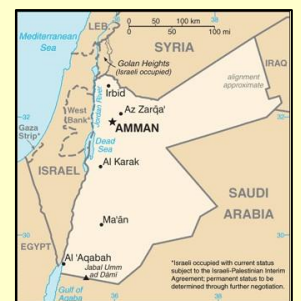
In June 2019, the Undersecretary of State for Political Affairs raised IPCA issues in a meeting with the Jordanian Ambassador. Also in June 2019, the Consul General in Amman raised IPCA issues with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

In July 2019, U.S. Embassy Amman met with Jordan's mediation directorate to review services that may be available to left-behind parents. Embassy officials confirmed that the mediation directorate is the main point of contact for IPCA issues in Jordan and discussed ways in which information about the mediation program could be shared with parents.

In November 2019, U.S. Embassy Amman delivered a Diplomatic Note to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Director for the Consular Affairs Department informing the Government of Jordan of unresolved abduction cases and requesting the Jordanian government officials work with the Department of State to resolve these cases.

Also in November 2019, U.S. Embassy Amman participated in a seminar hosted by the Hague Conference on Private International Law's Working Party on Mediation regarding child rights in international family disputes. Among those present included a Jordanian Supreme Judge and other embassies' representatives. Participants from Morocco, Tunisia, and Pakistan provided their experiences of working on Convention cases and how they made the Convention fit into their own legal systems.

In December 2019, U.S. Embassy Amman met with Sharia Court Judges, including a Supreme Judge, to discuss abduction cases and develop a working relationship with them. Embassy officials explained the Department's role in abduction cases and made the judges aware of the pending cases that were previously shared with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.



Jordan (continued)

In January 2020, U.S. Embassy Amman met with a Jordanian Ecclesiastical Court Judge to discuss IPCA issues and gain a better understanding of their laws and how they relate to the Sharia courts. The Judge explained that all cases must be presented to them formally and that like Sharia courts, the Judges will attempt informal mediation first before ruling on a decision.

Upon release of the 2020 Annual Report, U.S. Embassy Amman delivered a demarche to the Jordanian government noting that the Department had cited Jordan in the 2020 Annual Report for demonstrating a pattern of noncompliance and requesting assistance in resolving existing abduction cases.



Country Summary:

The Convention has been in force between the United States and Peru since 2007. In 2019, Peru continued to demonstrate a pattern of noncompliance. Specifically, the Peruvian Central Authority regularly failed to fulfill its responsibilities pursuant to the Convention, and judicial authorities failed to regularly implement and comply with the provisions of the Convention. As a result of this failure, 45 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 11 months. Peru was previously cited for demonstrating a pattern of noncompliance in the 2014-2019 Annual Reports.

Report of Actions Taken:

Throughout the past year, the Department frequently raised concerns in both public and private fora about Peru's persistent failure to regularly implement and comply with the provisions of the Convention.

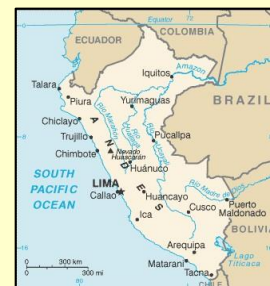
In June 2019, the U.S. Embassy Lima Consul General met with Peru's Director General for Consular Affairs to raise U.S. concerns with Peru's Convention compliance.

In July 2019, the U.S. Embassy Lima Consul General met with representatives from Peru's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), Ministry of Women and Vulnerable Children (MIMP), where the Peru Central Authority (PCA) is located, and the Poder Judicial (Peru's Judicial Authority) to raise U.S. concerns with Peru's Convention compliance.

In July 2019, U.S. Embassy Lima representatives attended a conference, organized by the Poder Judicial, of Peruvian legal professionals regarding the Convention. The conference addressed topics regarding Peru's commitment to child custody law and the Convention. Participants included Peru's Hague Convention Network Judge and a judge from the Peru Supreme Court, who appeared on behalf of the President of the Poder Judicial. During the conference, initiatives to improve Peru's judicial delay in Convention cases were discussed.

In September 2019, the U.S. Embassy Lima Acting Consul General met with a Peru MFA representative regarding U.S. concerns with Peru's Convention compliance.

In September 2019, U.S. Embassy Lima presented a demarche pursuant to ICAPRA to the Peru Ministry of Foreign Affairs expressing concern about Peru's persistent trend of demonstrating a pattern of noncompliance with the Convention and notifying them of the possibility of additional consequences unless Peru begins to take steps to improve its Convention implementation prior to the end of October 2019.



Peru (continued)

In October 2019, the Peru MFA sent a diplomatic note to U.S. Embassy Lima describing a new judicial protocol that was being drafted in the Poder Judicial. The protocol, intended to streamline Convention case processing, has not yet been implemented.

In December 2019, U.S. Embassy Lima, along with the Embassies of Spain, Belgium, UK, Germany, Italy, Austria, Australia, Canada, and the European Union sent a joint letter to the PCA expressing concern about Peru's Convention compliance and requesting a group meeting on the issue.

In January 2020, U.S. Embassy Lima officials met with the Director General of MIMP regarding U.S. concerns with Peru's Convention compliance.

In January 2020, Department officials, including the Director of the Office of Children's Issues and the Deputy Director of WHA/AND affairs, met with the Deputy Chief of Mission for the Embassy of Peru in Washington D.C. regarding U.S. concerns with Peru's Convention compliance. Issued discussed included longstanding Convention cases from the U.S. to Peru and the status of Peru's draft judicial protocol. Department officials recommended approval of the protocol to address delays in the processing of Convention cases.

In February 2020, U.S. Embassy Lima's Acting Consul General met with Peru's Director General for Consular Affairs to urge increased Convention compliance and improved communication by the PCA with the U.S. Central Authority.

Also in February 2020, U.S. Embassy Lima and the Office of Children's Issues organized a visit to Peru planned for April 2020 by the Special Advisor for Children's Issues, for meetings with the PCA, judges, and other officials. However, this trip was postponed due to COVID-19.

In March 2020, Office of Children's Issues representatives met with Embassy of Peru representatives in Washington D.C. regarding U.S. concerns with Peru's Convention compliance. The status of Peru's draft judicial protocol were among the issues discussed.

In June 2020, U.S. Embassy Lima presented a diplomatic note to the Peruvian Ministry of Foreign Affairs to press the government about Convention cases that have been pending with Peruvian courts for more than one year.

In June 2020, the Department delivered a demarche to the Peruvian Ministry of Foreign Affairs stating the Department cited Peru in the 2020 Annual Report for demonstrating a pattern of noncompliance.



Country Summary:

The Convention has been in force between the United States and Romania since 1993. In 2019, Romania demonstrated a pattern of noncompliance. Specifically, the judicial authorities persistently failed to implement and comply with the provisions of the Convention. Additionally, law enforcement authorities regularly failed to enforce return orders. As a result of this failure, 100 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 three months.

Report of Actions Taken:

The Department has frequently raised concerns in both public and private fora about Romania's persistent failure to regularly implement and comply with the provisions of the Convention.

In an October 2019 meeting in Washington, D.C., the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of Consular Affairs raised concerns with the Chief of the Consular Department of the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs about Romania's failure to enforce Convention return orders.

In November 2019, a Children's Issues officer traveled to Romania to meet with the Romanian Central Authority. The official raised concerns over judicial delays and the lack of enforcement of Convention decisions.

Upon the release of the 2020 Annual Report in May 2020, The Consul General at U.S. Embassy Bucharest delivered a demarche to the Director of the International Law and Treaties Department at the Ministry of Justice, noting the Department had cited Romania in the 2020 Annual Report for demonstrating a pattern of noncompliance and requesting assistance in resolving existing abduction cases.



Country Summary:

The United Arab Emirates does not adhere to any protocols with respect to international parental child abduction. In 2019, 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, 67 percent of requests for the return of abducted children remained unresolved for more than 12 months. On average, these cases were unresolved for four years and four months. The United Arab Emirates was previously cited for demonstrating a pattern of noncompliance in the 2018 and 2019 Annual Reports.

Report of Actions Taken:

Officials at the highest levels of the Department pressed the Government of the United Arab Emirates to assist with resolving abduction cases and to accede to the Convention.

In July 2019, the Bureau of Consular Affairs hosted the U.S.-UAE Bilateral Consular Commission Meeting in Washington, D.C., during which the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Consular Affairs pressed the Government of the United Arab Emirates to accede to the Convention and to work to resolve existing IPCA cases..

In September 2019, U.S. Embassy Abu Dhabi delivered a Diplomatic Note to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs urging them to continue the conversation on IPCA issues and the Convention, and to request a meeting with the Assistant Minister for Human Rights and International Law for further discussion.

In October 2019, U.S. Embassy Abu Dhabi met with the Assistant Minister for Human Rights and International Law to discuss IPCA issues in the United Arab Emirates, the possibility of the United Arab Emirates joining the Convention, and to expand bilateral cooperation as a follow up to the Consular Commission Meeting.

In January 2020, the Special Advisor for Children's Issues traveled to the United Arab Emirates where she met with the Assistant Minister for Human Rights and International Law to discuss the resolution of existing abduction cases and to encourage the United Arab Emirates to accede to the Convention. The Assistant Minister stated that he would be willing to arrange a meeting to further discuss the outstanding cases. He also expressed an interest in learning more about the Convention and its compatibility with Emirati and Sharia law.

Upon release of the 2020 Annual Report, U.S. Embassy Abu Dhabi delivered a demarche to the Emirati government noting that the Department had cited the United Arab Emirates in the 2020 Annual Report for demonstrating a pattern of noncompliance and requesting assistance in resolving existing abduction cases.

