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## Colombia

October 21, 2012

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### Notice: Colombia's revised procedures for determining children's eligibility for intercountry adoption

Colombia's Institute for Family Welfare (ICBF) recently announced revised procedures for determining a child's eligibility for intercountry adoption, which may affect some adoptions involving U.S. families. This process is known in Colombia as the "re-establishment of rights." ICBF implemented these new procedures as a result of a November 2011 Constitutional Court ruling that ICBF was not fully considering the rights of, and opportunities for placement with, biological and extended families before placing a child for domestic or intercountry adoption.

To comply with the Constitutional Court decision, ICBF has been reviewing approximately 1,300 declarations of adoptability to ensure they meet the revised procedures. ICBF has identified a number of cases in which the adoption eligibility determination for a child does not meet the new standards. ICBF has placed an administrative hold on these cases until it is satisfied that the adoptability determination is evaluated as to whether there might be an extended family member who could care for the child.

ICBF will notify prospective adoptive families that have been matched with children whose cases require evaluation. For privacy reasons, ICBF cannot inform the prospective adoptive families of the specific reasons for the review, and ICBF cannot offer any guarantee of the final outcome of the review.

As of September 2012, the U.S. Embassy in Bogota is aware of six instances involving U.S. families whose adoption proceedings required review; one adoption has since been finalized. These reviews represent a small percentage of the total number of intercountry adoptions between Colombia and the United States, and the Embassy continues to work with ICBF to encourage timely resolution. Families who learn that their adoption has been placed on hold should inform the U.S. Embassy in Bogota by contacting [IVBogota@state.gov](mailto:IVBogota@state.gov).

In addition to these formal reviews, both ICBF and the Colombian family court system appear to be scrutinizing proposed adoptions more carefully. Prospective adoptive families may experience delays while ICBF evaluates a family's suitability before finalizing the match with an available child. The issuance of the adoption decree by a family court judge may also take longer than in the past. Families should anticipate spending six to eight weeks in Colombia to obtain the final adoption decree. Given these delays, the Embassy strongly advises all families with less than three months' validity left on USCIS fingerprint results to make arrangements with USCIS ([NBC.Hague@dhs.gov](mailto:NBC.Hague@dhs.gov)) to update these before traveling to Colombia to complete the adoption.

The Department of State will provide updated information on [adoption.state.gov](#) as it becomes available. If you have any questions about this notice, please contact the Office of Children's Issues at 1-888-407-4747 within the United States, or 202-501-4444 from outside the United States. E-mail inquiries may be directed to [AdoptionUSCA@state.gov](mailto:AdoptionUSCA@state.gov).