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## Democratic Republic of the Congo

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### Democratic Republic of the Congo Announces Stricter Scrutiny of U.S. Adoptive Families' Applications for Visas

The Embassy of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) in Washington informed the Department of State on April 24 that applications for visas to travel to the DRC from U.S. adoptive families may be refused "in some cases." Congolese officials state that adoptive families should be prepared for increased scrutiny of their visa applications as well as possible refusal of the visa citing the following:

**Reports of children adopted by U.S. families being taken without proper documentation out of the DRC:** The DRC Embassy informed the Department of State that the DRC government is aware of five U.S. families who removed their adoptive children from the DRC without exit permits issued by the Congolese General Direction of Migration (DGM). The DRC Embassy stated that those cases are raising doubts about U.S. families' intentions when requesting visas to visit the DRC.

**Intercountry adoptions purportedly do not conform with Congolese laws:** The DRC Embassy stated that many U.S. families have adopted or attempted to adopt from the DRC even though they already have more than two children in the home and have adopted or sought to adopt more than three Congolese children, contrary to Congolese law. Additionally, Congolese authorities claim that some adoptive parents were attempting to go to the DRC to retrieve their adopted children without first having attended all of the *Tribunal pour Enfants* (Children's Court) hearings as required by Congolese law.

Congolese officials have said that the discovery of such irregularities, among others, is part of the reason the suspension must stay in place while they review the adoption process. The Department of State notes that adoption cases are not always required by Congolese authorities, and in particular, the Congolese courts, to meet all Congolese legal standards. As far as the Department of State understands, the requirement to attend all *Tribunal pour Enfants* hearings is new. The Department of State's page on adopting from the DRC presents the steps regarding Congolese legal and procedural requirements. Requirements can and do change, so we recommend prospective parents check regularly for updates concerning the legal and procedural requirements for adoption.

The Department of State regrets that U.S. families and their Congolese children are in this predicament. We remain committed to seeking a resolution as quickly as possible so that adopted children can join their families in the United States. However, as noted in the Department of State's [April 16 Adoption Notice](#), intercountry adoption is a very sensitive subject for the Congolese people and government, and Congolese authorities have reacted negatively when pressured on the subject. We strongly encourage U.S. adoption service providers and adoptive families to adhere to best practices and all aspects of Congolese law.

Please direct questions related to this notice, or a specific adoption from the DRC, to the Department of State, Office of Children's Issues at 1-888-407-4747 within the United States, or 202-501-4444 from outside the United States. Email inquiries may be directed to [AskCI@state.gov](mailto:AskCI@state.gov).

