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Democratic Republic of the Congo

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Status of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) exit permit suspension for adopted children

On September 26, 2014 Director General of the Directorate of General Migration, Francois Beya, announced the DRC's official policy that the exit permit suspension for adopted children will remain in place until further notice. The Congolese government initially issued the exit permit suspension for adopted children on September 25, 2013, indicating that the suspension would be in effect for up to 12 months.

Although the Department of State and the U.S. Embassy in Kinshasa have pressed the Congolese government repeatedly to lift the exit permit suspension, the September 26 announcement is the only definitive response the Congolese authorities have provided to us since they originally stated that no exit permits would be issued until promulgation of new adoption laws in the DRC in July.

Bringing relief to the children and adoptive families impacted by the exit permit suspension remains a high priority for the Department of State. We understand the hardship children and families are facing and we remain vigorously engaged on this issue at all levels. Secretary of State John Kerry met multiple times with DRC President Joseph Kabila since May to advocate on behalf of the affected families.

President Kabila and the Congolese government continue to state that the reason for the suspension is that the DRC adoption process needs to be reformed because it does not adequately protect Congolese children. We are committed to working with the DRC government to address their concerns and continue to advocate for opportunities to engage on long-term adoption reforms in the DRC. We will also continue to press the DRC government on lifting the suspension so that Congolese adopted children waiting for an exit permit can join their adoptive families as soon as possible.

The U.S. government still receives immigration applications for adopted and prospective adoptive children in the DRC. We also understand that Congolese courts continue to issue adoption decrees under existing Congolese law, despite the exit permit suspension. Given these circumstances, we strongly urge all adoption agencies to inform prospective adoptive families of the suspension on exit permits and caution prospective adoptive parents who are interested in adopting from the DRC to weigh the risks and uncertainty of the process at this time. Prospective adoptive parents should be aware that children may not be able to leave the DRC even with a finalized adoption.

Please direct questions related to this alert 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 ExitPermitSuspensionDRC@state.gov.