

PART 94—INTERNATIONAL CHILD ABDUCTION

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AUTHORITY: Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction; the federal "International Child Abduction Remedies Act," Pub. L. 100-300.

SOURCE: 53 FR 23608, June 23, 1988, unless otherwise noted.

§94.1 Definitions.

For purposes of this part—

(a) *Convention* means the Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction, Appendix B to Department of State notice, 51 FR 10498, March 26, 1986.

(b) *Contracting State* means any country which is a party to the Convention.

(c) *Child* and *children* mean persons under the age of sixteen.

§94.2 Designation of Central Authority.

The Office of Children's Issues in the Bureau of Consular Affairs is designated as the U.S. Central Authority to discharge the duties which are imposed by the Convention and the International Child Abduction Remedies Act upon such authorities.

[60 FR 25843, May 15, 1995]

§94.3 Functions of the Central Authority.

The U.S. Central Authority shall cooperate with the Central Authorities of other countries party to the Convention and promote cooperation by appropriate U.S. state authorities to secure the prompt location and return of children wrongfully removed to or retained in any Contracting State, to ensure that rights of custody and access under the laws of one Contracting State are effectively respected in the other Contracting States, and to achieve the other objects of the Con-

vention. In performing its functions, the U.S. Central Authority may receive from, or transmit to, any department, agency, or instrumentality of the federal government, or of any state or foreign government, information necessary to locate a child or for the purpose of otherwise implementing the Convention with respect to a child.

§94.4 Prohibitions.

(a) The U.S. Central Authority is prohibited from acting as an agent or attorney or in any fiduciary capacity in legal proceedings arising under the Convention. The U.S. Central Authority is not responsible for the costs of any legal representation or legal proceedings nor for any transportation expenses of the child or applicant. However, the U.S. Central Authority may not impose any fee in relation to the administrative processing of applications submitted under the Convention.

(b) The U.S. Central Authority shall not be a repository of foreign or U.S. laws.

§94.5 Application.

Any person, institution, or other body may apply to the U.S. Central Authority for assistance in locating a child, securing access to a child, or obtaining the return of a child that has been removed or retained in breach of custody rights. The application shall be made in the form prescribed by the U.S. Central Authority and shall contain such information as the U.S. Central Authority deems necessary for the purposes of locating the child and otherwise implementing the Convention. The application and any accompanying documents should be submitted in duplicate in English or with English translations. If intended for use in a foreign country, two additional copies should be provided in the language of the foreign country.

§94.6 Procedures for children abducted to the United States.

The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children shall act under the direction of the U.S. Central Authority and shall perform the following operational functions with respect to all Hague Convention applications seeking

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the return of children wrongfully removed to or retained in the United States or seeking access to children in the United States:

(a) Receive all applications on behalf of the U.S. Central Authority;

(b) Confirm the child's location or, where necessary, seek to ascertain its location;

(c) Seek to ascertain the child's welfare through inquiry to the appropriate state social service agencies and, when necessary, consult with those agencies about the possible need for provisional arrangements to protect the child or to prevent the child's removal from the jurisdiction of the state;

(d) Seek through appropriate authorities (such as state social service agencies or state attorneys general or prosecuting attorneys), where appropriate, to achieve a voluntary agreement for suitable visitation rights by the applicant or for return of the child;

(e) Assist applicants in securing information useful for choosing or obtaining legal representation, for example, by providing a directory of lawyer referral services, or pro bono listing published by legal professional organizations, or the name and address of the state attorney general or prosecuting attorney who has expressed a willingness to represent parents in this type of case and who is employed under state law to intervene on the applicant's behalf;

(f) Upon request, seek from foreign Central Authorities information relating to the social background of the child;

(g) Upon request, seek from foreign Central Authorities information regarding the laws of the country of the child's habitual residence;

(h) Upon request, seek from foreign Central Authorities a statement as to the wrongfulness of the taking of the child under the laws of the country of the child's habitual residence;

(i) Upon request, seek a report on the status of court action when no decision has been reached by the end of six weeks;

(j) Consult with appropriate agencies (such as state social service departments, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, state attorneys general) about possible arrangements

for temporary foster care and/or return travel for the child from the United States;

(k) Monitor all cases in which assistance has been sought and maintain records on the procedures followed in each case and its disposition;

(l) Perform such additional functions as set out in the "Cooperative Agreement Adjustment Notice" between the Department of State, Department of Justice, and National Center for Missing and Exploited Children.

[53 FR 23608, June 23, 1988, as amended at 60 FR 66074, Dec. 21, 1995]

§ 94.7 Procedures for children abducted from the United States.

Upon receipt of an application requesting access to a child or return of a child abducted from the United States and taken to another country party to the Convention, the U.S. Central Authority shall—

(a) Review and forward the application to the Central Authority of the country where the child is believed located or provide the applicant with the necessary form, instructions, and the name and address of the appropriate Central Authority for transmittal of the application directly by the applicant;

(b) Upon request, transmit to the foreign Central Authority requests for a report on the status of any court action when no decision has been reached by the end of six weeks;

(c) Upon request, facilitate efforts to obtain from appropriate U.S. state authorities and transmit to the foreign Central Authority information regarding the laws of the child's state of habitual residence;

(d) Upon request, facilitate efforts to obtain from appropriate U.S. state authorities and transmit to the foreign Central Authority a statement as to the wrongfulness of the taking of the child under the laws of the child's state of habitual residence;

(e) Upon request, facilitate efforts to obtain from appropriate U.S. state authorities and transmit to the foreign Central Authority information relating to the social background of the child;

(f) Upon request, be available to facilitate possible arrangements for temporary foster care and/or travel for the