CHILD ABDUCTION HANDOUT

Please note that this Information Paper only provides basic information and is not intended to serve as a substitute for personal consultations with a Legal Assistance Attorney.

INTRODUCTION

Parental child abduction is a tragedy. When a child is abducted across international borders, the difficulties are compounded for everyone involved. This handout is designed to assist the adult most directly affected by international child abduction: the left-behind parent.

The Department of State's Office of Children's Issues (CA/OCS/CI) is designated to provide assistance to the left-behind parents of international parental child abduction. Since the late 1970's, they have been contacted in the cases of approximately 16,000 children who were either abducted from the United States or prevented from returning to the United States by one of their parents. This handout discusses what the Department of State can and cannot do to help you.

The Office of Children's Issues is prepared to assist you as you pursue recovery of your abducted child. If you have any questions, please call them at 202-736-9090. You may also fax them at 202-736-9133, or write to them at:

Department of State
Office of Children's Issues
SA-29
2201 C Street, NW
U.S. Department of State
Washington, DC 20520

You may also visit their website at http://travel.state.gov/family/abduction/abduction_580.html

PART I: PREVENTION

HOW TO GUARD AGAINST INTERNATIONAL CHILD ABDUCTION

How Vulnerable is Your Child?

You and your child are most vulnerable when your relationship with the other parent is troubled or broken, the other parent has close ties to another country, and/or the other country has traditions or laws that may be prejudicial against a parent of your gender or to non-citizens in general. However, anyone can be vulnerable.

Cross-cultural Marriages: Should You or Your Child Visit the Country of the Other Parent?

Many cases of international parental child abduction are actually cases in which the child traveled to a foreign country with the approval of both parents, but was later prevented from returning to the United States. Sometimes the marriage is neither broken nor troubled, but the foreign parent, upon returning to his or her country of origin, decides not to return to the U.S. or to allow the child to do so. A person who has assimilated a second culture may find a return to his or her roots disturbing and may feel pulled to shift loyalties back to the original culture. Furthermore, a person's behavior may change when he or she returns to the culture where he or she grew up.

In some societies, children must have their father's permission and a woman must have her husband's permission to travel. If you are a woman, to prevent your own or your child's detention abroad, find out about the laws and traditions of the country you plan to visit or plan to allow your child to visit, and consider carefully the effect that a return to his traditional culture might have on your child's father; in other societies, children need the permission of both parents to travel and the refusal of one parent to give that permission may prevent the departure of a child from that country. For detailed advice in your specific case, you may wish to contact an attorney in your spouse's country of origin. Many U.S. Embassies/Consulates list attorneys on their web-sites, accessible via http://travel.state.gov.

Precautions That Any Parent Should Take

In international parental child abduction, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. Be alert to the possibility and be prepared:

- Keep a list of the addresses and telephone numbers of the other parent's relatives, friends, and business associates both here and abroad;
- Keep a record of important information about the other parent, including: physical description, passport, social security, bank account, and driver's license numbers, and vehicle description and plate number;
- Keep a written description of your child, including hair and eye color, height, weight, fingerprints, and any special physical characteristics; and
- Take full-face color photographs and/or videos of your child every six months - a recent photo of the other parent may also be useful.

If your child should be abducted, this information could be vital in locating your child.

In addition, the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC), www.missingkids.org, at telephone 1-800-843-5678, suggests that you teach your child to use the telephone, memorize your home phone number, practice making collect calls, and instruct him or her to call home immediately if anything unusual happens. Discuss possible plans of action with your child in the case of abduction. Most important, however, if you feel your child is vulnerable to abduction, seek legal advice. Do not merely tell a friend or relative about your fears.

The Importance of a Custody Decree

Under the laws of the United States and many foreign countries, **if there is no decree of custody prior to abduction, both parents may be considered to have equal legal custody of their child**. (IMPORTANT: Even though both parents may have custody of a child, it still may be a crime for one parent to remove the child from the United States against the other parent's wishes.) If you are contemplating divorce or separation, or are divorced or separated, or even if you were never legally married to the other parent, ask your attorney, as soon as possible, if you should obtain a decree of sole custody or a decree that prohibits the travel of your child without your permission or that of the court. If

you have or would prefer to have a joint custody decree, you may want to make certain that it prohibits your child from traveling abroad without your permission or that of the court.

How to Draft or Modify a Custody Decree

A well-written custody decree is an important line of defense against international parental child abduction. NCMEC, in its publication *Family Abduction: How to Prevent an Abduction and What to Do If Your Child is Abducted,* makes several recommendations to help prevent the abduction of your child if your spouse is a legal permanent resident alien or a U.S. citizen with ties to a foreign country. For instance, it may be advisable to include court-ordered supervised visitation and a statement prohibiting your child from traveling without your permission or that of the court. If the country to which your child might be taken is a member of the Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction (Hague Convention), your custody decree should state that the terms of the Hague Convention apply if there is an abduction or wrongful retention. The American Bar Association (ABA) also suggests having the court require the non-citizen parent or the parent with ties to a foreign country to post a bond. This may be useful both as a deterrent to abduction and, if forfeited because of an abduction, as a source of revenue for you in your efforts to locate and recover your child. For further prevention information, you should contact the NCMEC.

> **Reminder***: Obtain several* **certified** *copies of your custody decree from the court that issued it. Give a copy to your child's school and advise school personnel to whom your child may be released.*

U.S. Passports

The Department of State's Passport Lookout Program can help you determine if your child has been issued a U.S. passport. You may also ask that your child's name be entered into the State Department's Children's Passport Issuance Alert Program. This will enable the Department to notify you or your attorney if an application for a U.S. passport for the child is received anywhere in the United States or at any U.S. embassy or consulate abroad. If you have a court order that either grants you sole custody, joint legal custody, or prohibits your child from traveling without your permission or the permission of the court, the Department may also refuse to issue a U.S. passport for your child. **The Department may not, however, revoke a passport that has already been issued to the child.** There is also no way to track the use of a passport once it has been issued, since there are no exit controls of people leaving the U.S.

Change in Passport Regulations

A new law, which took effect in July 2001, requires the signature of both parents prior to issuance of a U.S. passport to children under the age of 14.

Requirements:

Both parents, or the child's legal guardians, must execute the child's passport application and provide documentary evidence demonstrating that they are the parents or guardians; or the person executing the application must provide documentary evidence that such person has sole custody of the child; has the consent of the other parent to the issuance of the passport; or is acting in place of the parents and has the consent of both parents, of a parent with sole custody over the child, or of the child's legal guardian, to the issuance of the passport.

Exceptions:

The law does provide two exceptions to this requirement: (1) for exigent circumstances, such as those involving the health or welfare of he child, or (2) when the Secretary of State determines that issuance of

a passport is warranted by special family circumstances. For additional information, see the Bureau of Consular Affairs home page on the Internet at http://travel.state.gov.

Foreign Passports - the Problem of Dual Nationality

Many United States citizen children who fall victim to international parental abduction possess, or may have a claim to dual nationality. While the Department of State will make every effort to avoid issuing a United States passport if the custodial parent has provided a custody decree, the Department cannot prevent embassies and consulates of other countries in the United States from issuing their passports to children who are also their nationals. You can, however, ask a foreign embassy or consulate not to issue a passport to your child. Send the embassy or consulate a written request, along with certified complete copies of any court orders you have which address custody or the overseas travel of your child. In your letter, inform them that you are sending a copy of this request to the United States Department of State. If your child is *only* a United States citizen, you can request that no visa for that country be issued in his or her United States passport. No international law requires compliance with such requests, but some countries may comply voluntarily.

The United States government does not have exit controls at the border. There is no way to stop someone with valid travel documents at the United States border. The U.S. government does not check the names or the documents of travelers leaving the United States. Many foreign countries do not require a passport for entry. A birth certificate is sufficient to enter some foreign countries. If your child has a valid passport from any country, he or she may be able to travel outside the United States without your consent.

PART II

WHAT THE STATE DEPARTMENT CAN AND CANNOT DO WHEN A CHILD IS ABDUCTED ABROAD

When a United States citizen child is abducted abroad, the State Department's Office of Children's Issues (CA/OCS/CI) works with United States embassies and consulates abroad to assist the child and left-behind parent in a number of ways. *Despite the fact that children are taken across international borders, child custody disputes remain fundamentally civil legal matters between the parents involved, over which the* ***Department of State has no jurisdiction***. If a child custody dispute cannot be settled amicably between the parties, it often must be resolved by judicial proceedings in the country where the child is located.

WHAT THE STATE DEPARTMENT CAN DO:

- Act as the primary point of contact for left-behind parents;
- Act as a liaison with federal and state agencies, including law enforcement officials;
- In cases where the Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction applies (see Part IV), assist parents in filing an application with foreign authorities for return of or access to the child;
- Attempt to locate, visit and report on the child's general welfare;
- Provide the left-behind parent with information on the country to which the child was abducted, including its legal system, custody laws, and a list of local attorneys willing to accept American clients;
- Inquire as to the status of judicial or administrative proceedings overseas;

- Assist parents in contacting local officials in foreign countries or contact them on the parent's behalf;
- Provide information concerning how federal warrants against an abducting parent, passport revocation, and extradition from a foreign country may affect return of a child to the United States;
- Alert foreign authorities to any evidence of child abuse or neglect; and
- If the child is in the Children's Passport Issuance Alert Program, contact the left-behind parent when application is made for a new U.S. passport for the child.

WHAT THE STATE DEPARTMENT CANNOT DO:

- Intervene in civil legal matters between the parents;
- Enforce an American custody agreement overseas (United States custody decrees are not automatically enforceable outside of United States boundaries);
- Force another country to decide a custody case or enforce its laws in a particular way;
- Assist the left-behind parent in violating foreign laws or reabducting the child to the United States;
- Pay legal or other expenses;
- Act as a lawyer, give legal advice or represent parents in court;
- Take custody of the child; and
- Revoke the child's passport.

PART III

HOW TO SEARCH FOR A CHILD ABDUCTED ABROAD

Where to Report Your Missing Child

1. If your child is missing or has been abducted, file a missing person report with your local police department and request that your child's name and description be entered into the "missing person" section of the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) computer. This is provided for under the National Child Search Act of 1990. The abductor does not have to be charged with a crime when you file a missing person report. It is not always a good idea to file criminal charges against the abducting parent at the same time you file a missing person report, although local law enforcement authorities may urge you to do so. In addition, through INTERPOL, the international police organization, your local police can request that a search for your child be conducted by the police in the country where you believe your child may have been taken. If your local law enforcement is unaware of the legal requirements for immediate entry into NCIC please contact the Office of Children's Issues at 1-888-407-4747.

2. Contact the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) at 1-800-THE LOST/1-800-843-5678. With the searching parent's permission, the child's photograph and description may be circulated to the media in the country to which you believe the child may have been taken.

3. Request information about a possible United States passport and have your child's name entered into the United States Children's Passport Issuance Alert Program. A United States passport for a child under

16 years expires after 5 years. If you do not know where your child is, but information about the child is in the name check system, it may be possible to locate him or her through the passport application process. All United States passport agencies and United States embassies and consulates are on-line with the name check system (See the information in Part I on U.S. Passports.)

After Your Child Is Located

A consular officer overseas, working with this information, will try to confirm the location of your child. If the consular officer is unable to find the child based on the information provided, he or she may also request information from local officials on your child's entry or residence in the country. Please note, however, that most countries do not maintain such records in a retrievable form, and some countries will not release such information.

We may also ask you for photographs of both your child and the abducting parent because these are often helpful to foreign authorities trying to find a missing child.

The Department of State, when requested to do so, may conduct visits to determine the welfare and whereabouts of American citizens abroad. The Office of Children's Issues communicates such requests to the United States embassy or consulate responsible for the area to which you believe your child has been abducted. A welfare and whereabouts visit cannot be conducted if the abducting parent refuses access. Your signed letter requesting such a visit and containing the following information can be faxed to us at 202-736-9133:

- Child's full name (and any aliases);
- Child's date and place of birth;
- Full name (and any aliases) of the abductor; and
- Information which may assist the embassy or consulate in locating the abductor, such as the names, addresses, and telephone numbers of friends, relatives, place of employment, or business connections there.

Further Steps to Take in Your Search

It is possible that none of the institutions mentioned (the police, the NCMEC, or the Department of State) will succeed in locating your child right away and you will need to carry on the search on your own. As you search, you should, however, keep these institutions informed of your actions and progress.

- One of the best ways to find your child overseas is through establishing friendly contact with relatives and friends of the other parent, either here or abroad. You may have more influence with such persons than you suspect, and their interest in your child's welfare may lead them to cooperate with you.
- The United States Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Child Support Enforcement maintains the Federal Parent Locator Service (FPLS). The primary purpose of this service is to locate parents who are delinquent in child support payments, but the service will also search for parental abductors when requested to do so by an authorized person. Generally speaking, an authorized person is a state court judge, police officer, prosecutor, or other state official seeking to enforce a child custody order. Please ask your local law enforcement to request a search.

  To learn how to access the services of the FPLS, contact your local or state Child Support Enforcement office. These offices are listed under government listings in your telephone directory.

- You can contact the principal of the school to obtain information on requests that may have been made by the abductor to your child's school for the transfer of your child's records.
- You can find out from the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children how to prepare a poster on your child. A poster may assist foreign authorities in attempting to locate your child.
- You can ask your district attorney to contact the United States Postal Inspection Service to see if a "mail cover" can be put on any address that you know of in the United States to which the abductor might write.
- It may be possible for local law enforcement authorities to obtain, by subpoena or search warrant, credit card records that may show where the abductor is making purchases. Check with state and local authorities if anything can be done. In the same manner, you can try to obtain copies of telephone bills of the abductor's friends or relatives who may have received collect calls from the abductor. Law enforcement may also be able to track usage of a cell phone or emails the abductor may be sending.

PART IV

THE BEST SOLUTION: SETTLING OUT OF COURT

Promoting Communication Between Parents and Children

Legal procedures can be long and expensive. You may have greater success negotiating with the abducting parent. In some cases, friends or relatives of the abductor may be able to help you reach a compromise with the abductor. A decrease in tension might bring about the return of your child, but, even if it does not, it can increase your chances of being able to visit the child and participate in some way in the child's upbringing. In some cases compromise and some kind of reconciliation are the only realistic option.

Obtaining Information on Your Child's Welfare

If you know your child's location and your child is a United States citizen you can request that a United States consular officer attempt to visit your child. If the consul obtains the other parent's permission to visit the child, he or she will do so and report back to you about your child. Sometimes consular officers are also able to send you letters or photos from your child. Contact the Office of Children's Issues (CA/OCS/CI) at 1-888-407-4747 to request such a visit.

The Question of Desperate Measures/Reabduction

Consular officers cannot take possession of a child abducted by a parent or aid parents attempting to act in violation of the laws of a foreign country. Consular officers must act in accordance with the laws of the country to which they are accredited. The Department of State strongly discourages taking desperate and possibly illegal measures to return your child to the United States. Attempts to use self-help measures to bring an abducted child to the United States from a foreign country may endanger your child and others, prejudice any future judicial efforts you might wish to make in that country to stabilize the situation, and could result in your arrest and imprisonment in that country. In imposing a sentence, the foreign court will not necessarily give weight to the fact that the would-be abductor was the custodial parent in the United States or otherwise had a valid claim under a United States court order (e.g., failure of the foreign parent to honor the terms of a joint custody order). *Should you be arrested, the United States Embassy will not be able to secure your release.*

If you do succeed in leaving the foreign country with your child, you and anyone who assisted you may be the target of arrest warrants and extradition requests in the United States or any other country where you are found. Even if you are not ultimately extradited and prosecuted, an arrest followed by extradition proceedings can be very disruptive and disturbing for both you and your child.

Finally, there is no guarantee that the chain of abductions would end with the one committed by you. A parent who has reabducted a child may have to go to extraordinary lengths to conceal his or her whereabouts, living in permanent fear that the child may be reabducted again. Please consider how this might affect the child.

PART V

ONE POSSIBLE SOLUTION: THE HAGUE CONVENTION

One of the most difficult and frustrating elements for a parent of a child abducted abroad is that United States laws and court orders are not automatically recognized abroad and therefore are not directly enforceable abroad. Each country has jurisdiction within its own territory and over people present within its borders. No country can tell another country how to decide cases or enforce laws. Just as foreign court orders are not automatically enforceable in the United States, United States court orders are not automatically enforceable abroad.

At the Hague Conference on Private International Law in 1976, 23 nations agreed to draft a treaty to deter international child abduction. Between 1976 and 1980, the United States was a major force in preparing and negotiating the Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction (Hague Convention or the Convention). The Convention was incorporated into U.S. law and came into force for the United States on July 1, 1988. As of July 2001, the Convention is in force between the United States and 50 other countries. The Convention applies to wrongful removals or retentions that occurred on or after the date the treaty came into force between those two countries. The dates vary for each country and more countries are considering signing on to the Convention all the time. Check the most recent list prepared by the Office of Children's Issues to learn whether the Convention was in force in a particular county at the time of the wrongful removal or retention.

What Is Covered by the Convention

The Hague Convention is a civil legal mechanism available to parents seeking the return of, or access to, their child. As a civil law mechanism, the parents, not the governments, are parties to the legal action.

There is a treaty obligation to return an abducted child below the age of 16 if application is made **within one year** from the date of the wrongful removal or retention, unless one of the exceptions to return apply. If the application for return is made after one year, the court may use its discretion to decide that the child has become resettled in his or her new country and refuse return of the child. In any case, a court may refuse to order a child returned if there is:

1. A grave risk that the child would be exposed to physical or psychological harm or otherwise placed in an intolerable situation in his or her country of habitual residence;

2. If the child objects to being returned and has reached an age and degree of maturity at which the court can take account of the child's views (the treaty does not establish at what age children reach this level of maturity: that age and the degree of weight given to children's views varies from country to country); or, if the return would violate the fundamental principles of human rights and freedoms of the country where the child is being held.

How to Use the Hague Convention

The Convention provides a legal mechanism for you to seek return of your child or exercise your visitation rights. **You do *not* need to have a custody decree to use the Convention**. However, to apply for the return of your child, you must have had and been actually exercising a "right of custody" at the time of the abduction, and you must not have given permission for the child to be removed or, in the case of a retention, to be retained beyond a specified, agreed-upon period of time. The Convention defines "rights of custody" as including "rights relating to the care of the person of the child and, in particular, the right to determine the child's place of residence." This right need not be sole custody. If there was no court order in effect at the date of the abduction, these "rights of custody" may be established by the law in the state in which your child was living before his or her removal. In some cases it may be advisable to get a determination (as per Article 15 of the Convention) in your local court that 1) you have a right of custody to your child, and 2) the removal or retention was wrongful. Use of the Convention is not restricted to U.S. citizens.

An application should be submitted as soon as possible after abduction or wrongful retention has taken place. As stated above, there is a time factor of one year involved. Do not wait until you get a custody order. That order would be irrelevant anyway.

Each country that is party to the Convention has designated a Central Authority to carry out specialized duties under the Convention. The Central Authority for the United States is the Department of State's Office of Children's Issues (CA/OCS/CI). You may submit your application directly to the Central Authority or foreign court of the country where the child is believed to be held, but, in order to ensure that you receive all available assistance it is best to submit your application to the U.S. Central Authority.

The Role of the United States Central Authority

The responsibilities of the Central Authority for the Hague Abduction Convention are set forth in Articles 7-12 and 21 of the Convention[1]. The United States Central Authority is prohibited from acting as an agent or attorney in legal proceedings arising under the Convention[2]. The United States Central Authority was not intended to be and has never been a party to such proceedings.

> 1 Although article 7(f) of the Convention and 22 C.F.R. 94.6(d) and (h) refer to legal proceedings under the Convention, they do not assign the U.S. Central Authority a direct role in such proceedings.
>
> 2. 22 C.F.R. 94.4

The United States Central Authority's role in proceedings in the United States under the Convention is that of an active facilitator. We seek to promote cooperation among the relevant parties and institutions and act as a source of information about proper procedures under the Convention and the contents and status of applications for assistance. The Central Authority in the country where your child is located, however, has the primary responsibility for processing your application.

The Office of Children's Issues will review your application to ensure that it is complete and that your request complies with the requirements of the Convention. If it does, we will forward it to the foreign Central Authority and work with that authority until your case is resolved. If the abducting parent does not voluntarily agree to the return of your child, you may be required to retain an attorney abroad to present your case under the Hague Convention to the foreign court.

The Office of Children's Issues works with the applicant and the other Central Authority to facilitate communication between the parties involved and work toward resolving the case as quickly as possible.

While specific operations and procedures under the Convention differ in each country party to the treaty, we stand ready to help applicants understand the process and monitor all cases in which assistance is sought.

Immigration and the Hague Convention

The Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction focuses on issues of residency, not citizenship. It is important to note that the Convention does not confer any immigration benefit. Anyone seeking to enter the United States who is not a United States citizen must fulfill the appropriate entry requirements, even if that person was ordered by a court to return to the United States. This applies to children and parents involved in any child abduction case including a Hague Convention case.

When a taking parent in a Hague Abduction Convention case is ineligible to enter the United States under United States immigration laws, the parent **may** be paroled for a limited time into the United States through the use of a Significant Public Benefit Parole in order to participate in custody or other related proceedings in a United States court.

PART VI

LEGAL SOLUTIONS WHEN THE HAGUE CONVENTION DOES NOT APPLY

If your child has been abducted to a country that is *not* a party to the Hague Convention, or if the Convention does not apply in your case, you can seek other legal remedies against the abductor, in the United States and abroad, from both the civil and criminal justice systems. The family court system from which you get a custody decree is part of the civil justice system. At the same time you are using that system, you can also use the criminal justice system consisting of the police, prosecutors, and the FBI.

Using the Civil Justice System: How To Proceed

In addition to obtaining a custody decree in the United States, you may have to use the civil justice system in the country to which your child has been abducted. The Office of Children's Issues (CA/OCS/CI) can provide general information on the customs and legal practices for many countries around the world. We can also give you general information on legal service of process abroad or obtaining evidence, and on how to have documents authenticated for use in a foreign country. You may write or telephone CA/OCS/CI for information sheets, such as *Retaining a Foreign Attorney*, and *Authentication (or Legalization) of Documents in the United States for Use Abroad*.

To obtain authoritative advice on the laws of a foreign country or to take legal action in that country, you should retain an attorney there. United States consular and diplomatic officers are prohibited by law from performing legal services. (22 C.F.R. 92.81) We can, however, provide you with a list of attorneys in a foreign country. United States embassies and consulates abroad prepare these lists. The United States Department of State can neither guarantee attorney services nor pay attorney fees.

Although officers at United States embassies and consulates cannot take legal action on behalf of United States citizens, consular officers may be able to assist in communication problems with a foreign attorney. Consular officers can sometimes inquire about the status of proceedings in the foreign court, and they may be able to coordinate with your attorney to ensure that your rights as provided for by the laws of that foreign country are respected.

Your foreign attorney may ask for a certified copy of your custody decree and/or state and federal warrants regarding the abducting parent which have been authenticated for use abroad. It is also advisable to send copies of your state's laws on custody and parental kidnapping or custodial interference, the Federal Parental Kidnapping Prevention Act, and copies of reported cases of your state's enforcement of foreign custody decrees under Section 23 of the Uniform Child Custody Jurisdiction Act. Your U.S. attorney can help you gather this information.

What Are Your Chances of Enforcing Your United States Custody Order Abroad?

Just as a foreign court order has no direct effect in the United States, a custody decree issued by a court in the United States has no binding legal force abroad, although it may have persuasive force in some countries. Courts decide child custody cases on the basis of their own domestic relations law and the decision whether to recognize a foreign order is at the court's discretion. This may give a "home court" advantage to a person who has abducted a child to the country of his or her origin. You could also be disadvantaged if the country has a cultural bias in favor of a mother or a father. A United States custody decree may, however, be considered by foreign courts and authorities as evidence and, in some cases, it may be recognized and enforced by them on the basis of comity (the voluntary recognition by courts of one jurisdiction of the laws and judicial decisions of another). Your chances of having your United States court order enforced depend, to a large degree, upon the tradition of comity that the legal system of the country in question has with the United States legal system. While CA/OCS/CI can give you some information on these traditions, you should consult with your attorney in that country on how to proceed.

For an appointment to discuss child abduction issues, contact your legal assistance office at DSN: 421-4152 or CIV: 0711-729-4152.

REVIEWED BY: CPT Michael Watts, Chief, Client Services
DATE: 18 October 2006

References:

Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction –
http://hcch.e-vision.nl/index_en.php?act=conventions.text&cid=24

Hague Convention Website on Child Abduction –
http://hcch.e-vision.nl/index_en.php?act=text.display&tid=21

State Dept. Websites:

General Child Abduction Information - http://travel.state.gov/family/abduction/abduction_580.html

Germany Specific Information - http://travel.state.gov/family/abduction/country/country_491.html

General References - http://www.travel.state.gov/family/abduction/resources/resources_553.html

International Parental Kidnapping – 18 USC § 1204