

For Immediate Release: Parent Led Group Seeks Diplomatic Intervention to Secure Return of Abducted American Children to India

On July 24, 2015, a group of left behind parents from Bring Our Kids Home met with Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asia, Ms. Nisha Biswal in Washington D.C. to request U.S. Government intervention in returning abducted American children from India and presented her with a policy and call to action document on international parental child abductions to India. A/S Biswal was supportive of the 3 policy actions (page 5-6) we are seeking and informed us that the DoS is actively working with India on Hague accession.

While India signing the Hague abduction convention would be a step in the right direction, we reminded her that based on our experience with Japan, where 18 months since it signed the Hague treaty in January 2014, none of the pre-Hague cases (~100) have been resolved. Thus neither American children were returned home nor left behind American parents were granted access to their children, most of whom have not seen their children for years. Thus, a MOU/Bilateral agreement (item #2 on our list of actions) between the U.S. and India is critical, and it must be in place prior to India acceding to the Hague, to ensure that pre-Hague cases don't fall by the wayside.

We also shared our concerns about the accuracy of reported abduction cases to India reported in the 2015 International Parental Child Abduction Report¹ published by the Department of State on May 15, 2015. We highlighted the need for transparency in reporting, which is used by family courts across the United States to determine child custody and access applications where there is high risk of parental child abductions. This is especially important, given India's well documented and decades old track record of not returning abducted children from the United States and other countries.

Given the new revelations of Department of State inflating assessment of 14 countries with questionable human trafficking records for its 2015 report², we believe greater transparency and accountability is necessary in the reporting of American children, victims of international parental child abductions to India and other countries.

Since 2014, a group of parents from across the United States, whose children have been abducted to India, have come together to form "Bring Our Kids Home". We have been advocating for our children's return from India and seeking a long term mechanism between the U.S. and India to prevent this terrible crime.

International Parental Child Abductions ("IPCA") impacts thousands of American children and families. Each year over 1,000 American children are abducted from the U.S. to other countries. India is a Top 5 destination for abducted American children. IPCA is a crime in the United States and most countries that have signed the Hague Abduction Convention (~90 countries). India has not signed the Hague Convention and as a result very few if any children are returned back to the United States.

U.S. Congress has taken note of the difficult ground realities and systemic problems that victims have to overcome and conducted several hearings in 2015 to ensure the Goldman Act (2014) is fully implemented by Obama Administration and result in return of American children.

On June 11, 2015, Ravi Parmar (left behind father and Co-founder, Bring Our Kids Home) testified³ in a House Foreign Affairs Committee hearing about challenges left behind parents face both in the United States and India in returning abducted children.

On July 16, 2015, Dr. Samina Rahman (left behind mother and Member, Bring Our Kids Home) testified⁴ in a House Foreign Affairs Committee hearing about concerns about the 2015 IPCA report published by the U.S. DoS and the plight of victim families and children of this crime.

¹ [http://travel.state.gov/content/dam/childabduction/complianceReports/\(S_238726\)%20FINALNCC%20-%202015%20ICAPRA%20Annual%20Report%20\(5-5-15\).pdf](http://travel.state.gov/content/dam/childabduction/complianceReports/(S_238726)%20FINALNCC%20-%202015%20ICAPRA%20Annual%20Report%20(5-5-15).pdf)

² <http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/08/04/us-usa-humantrafficking-disputes-special-idUSKCN0Q821Y20150804>

³ Links to Mr. Parmar's oral and written testimony: <http://www.c-span.org/video/?326519-1/hearing-international-parental-child-abduction>; <http://docs.house.gov/meetings/FA/FA16/20150611/103589/HHRG-114-FA16-Wstate-ParmarR-20150611.pdf>

⁴ Links to Dr. Rahman's oral and written testimony: <http://foreignaffairs.house.gov/hearing/subcommittee-hearing-goldman-act-return-abducted-american-children-ensuring-accurate-numbers>