



Report to Congress on Intercountry Adoptions 42 USC 14914: Annual Report on Intercountry Adoptions

The Department of State (the Department) serves as the U.S. Central Authority under the 1993 Hague Convention on the Protection of Children and Cooperation in Respect of Intercountry Adoption (Convention). The Department's Office of Children's Issues (CI) submits this annual report to Congress as required by Section 104 of the Intercountry Adoption Act of 2000 (IAA), to provide data on intercountry adoption to and from the United States. This annual report covers the fiscal year from October 1, 2023, to September 30, 2024 (FY 2024).

On July 12, 2024, the Department published a final rule revising the federal regulations at [22 CFR Part 96](#) for accreditation and approval of U.S. adoption service providers. The final rule went into effect January 8, 2025, and introduced additional transparency to assist U.S. citizens adopting children from other countries. It streamlined processes for the adoption of relatives, improved legal protection for U.S. adoptive parents, and introduced safeguards to protect U.S. adoptive parents from financial exploitation.

Engagement and Outreach

International Travel and Engagements

To pursue the Department's Central Authority functions, in FY 2024, CI traveled to Botswana, Eswatini, India, Ireland, Liberia, Mexico, South Africa, South Korea, Sweden, Taiwan, Thailand, and Vietnam. CI engaged with other receiving countries through multilateral forums to represent the

United States and advance U.S. policy interests in meetings with central authorities for other English-speaking receiving countries, and similar meetings with central authorities from European countries.

Country Specific Engagement

Establishing and Maintaining Intercountry Adoption

During the year, CI engaged extensively with countries that have never done adoptions with the United States or have had no recent adoptions, including Portugal, Guyana, and Eswatini, in response to their interest in beginning or expanding intercountry adoptions under the Convention. CI provided central authorities in these countries with technical assistance in the form of training on Convention obligations and case processing. Although these countries will likely continue to benefit from training, it will ultimately be the decision of their central authorities to fully implement intercountry adoption.

In other cases, CI engaged with countries that already have established intercountry adoptions with the United States to strengthen our existing relationships and continue the viability of intercountry adoption. This work included answering processing questions, addressing concerns about areas like post-adoption reporting, and providing training to improve efficiency. This engagement focused on countries such as Colombia, India, Nigeria, South Korea, Taiwan, and Vietnam.

CI, in collaboration with U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), conducted two training workshops for personnel from U.S. embassies and consulates in countries of origin in FY 2024. In March, CI held a workshop in Bangkok, Thailand, for staff at U.S. embassies and consulates in the East Asia Pacific region, and in September CI held a workshop in Washington, D.C., for staff in Latin America and Europe. During both workshops, participants learned about different elements of the intercountry adoption process, including Convention and orphan processing, tactics for combatting fraud, and best practices for handling public and Congressional adoption inquiries.

These workshops increased the accessibility of intercountry adoptions by improving the Department's subject matter expertise, reinforcing the integrity of intercountry adoptions, and protecting families and children from harm.

Efforts in Countries where Adoptions have Been Slowed or Blocked

Additionally, CI directed effort towards countries where adoptions to the United States have slowed or been blocked. There are a variety of reasons why adoptions might cease or slow down in a country, including improved social services and family unification efforts, changing domestic attitudes about adoption, political events, and natural disasters.

On August 28, 2024, **China** announced it was ending intercountry adoptions with limited exceptions for some blood relatives, leaving hundreds of U.S. families matched with a child in a state of uncertainty. The Department engaged the Chinese Embassy in Washington D.C., and the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Beijing at high levels, including meetings between the former Deputy Secretary for Management and Resources and the Chinese Ambassador. The Department also repeatedly informed ASPs, families, and Congressional staff members. The Department's engagement and advocacy with Chinese authorities and commitment to U.S. families continues.

In FY 2024, crises in **Haiti** significantly degraded security and stability in the country, leading to significant case processing delays, intermittent Haitian government office and airport closures, and security risks to adoptive children and Department staff. The Department engaged with the Haitian government to ensure adoption processing remained a priority in their work and to troubleshoot significant delays. As a result, the intercountry adoption process remained viable throughout 2024 with over 50 children united with their families. As Haiti's instability continues, the Department continues to engage with Haitian authorities to expedite adoptions in accordance with U.S. and Haitian law and the provisions of the Convention.

The Russia-Ukraine war continues to significantly impact intercountry adoptions from **Ukraine**. The Ukrainian government has maintained a firm position that intercountry adoptions are not possible during martial law. In June 2023, Ukraine announced an exception permitting intercountry adoption during martial law for relative adoptions, stepparent adoptions, and adoptions of biological siblings of already adopted children. The Department engaged with the Ukrainian government on intercountry adoptions multiple times in FY 2024, and shared relevant updates with adoption stakeholders.

IAIA reporting requirements

As required by the Intercountry Adoption Information Act of 2019 (IAIA), CI is providing the following information on countries that established or maintained a significant law or regulation that prevented or prohibited adoptions involving immigration to the United States. Note that Ethiopia and Kenya were previously included in this list, but have altered their laws or practices to allow some adoptions.

- In 2016 the National Assembly of the **DRC** enacted law No. 87-010 of the Family Code, which effectively suspended all intercountry adoptions. The country also maintains a 2013 ban on exit permits for adopted children. There was no significant engagement between the Department and the Government of the DRC on adoptions in FY 2024.
- In 2021, the parliament of **Latvia** signed new amendments into the law on the Protection of Children's Rights, which suspended adoptions to all countries which have not ratified the U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). Since the United States has signed but not ratified the CRC, these amendments effectively suspended intercountry adoptions to the United States. There was no significant engagement between the Department and the Latvian government on adoptions during FY 2024.
- In 2013, **Russia** enacted federal law 272-FZ , effectively banning intercountry adoption of Russian children by U.S. citizens. There was no significant engagement between the Department and the Russian government on adoptions during FY 2024.

In 2018, the Parliament of **Ethiopia** enacted law 1070/2018, which effectively suspended intercountry adoptions by foreigners. In 2020, however, the Ethiopian Federal Supreme Court Cassation Branch ruled that adoptions to foreign citizens “of Ethiopian origin” would be allowed. In FY 2024, CI and the U.S. Embassy in Addis Ababa worked with the government of Ethiopia to confirm that these adoptions can be processed. Adoptions to foreign citizens who are not of Ethiopian origin remain suspended.

CI has also previously reported on a moratorium on intercountry and foreign resident adoptions in **Kenya** enacted in 2014. In 2022, the Government of Kenya enacted a revised Children’s Act, which designated the Kenyan National Council on Children’s Services as the central authority for intercountry adoption. This law limits intercountry adoption to blood relatives, and Kenyan citizens/former citizens and – when applicable – their non-Kenyan spouses. The Government of Kenya has indicated U.S.-based ASPs who are interested in serving these specific adoptive parents should contact the central authority for more information.

In addition to these suspensions by countries of origin, in 2010, the Department determined that conditions in **Nepal** make it impossible to properly adjudicate immigrant petitions and visas for abandoned children. This suspension remained in place in FY 2024. Also, in March 2023, **Botswana** joined the Convention. However, after clarification from the Government of Botswana, CI determined that, since the country has not passed laws designating a central authority as required by the Convention, the Department cannot complete intercountry adoptions from Botswana to the United States. CI is working with the Government of Botswana to fully implement the Convention to begin processing intercountry adoptions.

Attachment

Tab A – Elements and Data Tables