



1942 Broadway, Suite 314  
Boulder, CO 80302

T «Phone»  
F 480-772-4219  
langley@familylawint.com

[family-law-international.com](http://family-law-international.com)

## *Letter to NY Times: November 2010*

### Re: I.R.S. Sits on Data Pointing to Missing Children (Saturday November 13, 2010).

Nelson Mandela once famously said: “There can be no keener revelation of a society's soul than the way in which it treats its children”. Parental child abduction is both a federal crime and a civil offence. Current statistics for child abduction are inaccurate in that they are both over a decade old (NISMART–2) and do not reflect overseas actions which are not processed through the Central Authority (the Department of State Office of Children’s Issues (DOS/OCI)). However, we do know that the numbers are increasing at an alarming rate, reflected in a doubling of the number of caseworkers at DOS/OCI.

The purpose of both the international treaty (the Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction) and the uniform act (UCCJEA) is to return a child to its status quo; namely, to its lawful residence so that any custody matters can be resolved by the Court in that jurisdiction. It is a misconception that children are always taken during or after a bitter custody dispute. We often see a parent who has returned home to find that the family has vanished, with no prior indication of marital discord. Apart from the complete devastation of the left behind parent, friends and family, availability of legal aid remains a myth (unlike in the United Kingdom) and the legal costs involved in abduction cases are high.

Any assistance in locating a missing child quickly is of paramount importance. An abducted child begins within a matter of weeks to identify with the abductor (Stockholm Syndrome) and is usually told that the left behind parent “doesn’t love them, has deserted them

or, is dead". Not surprisingly, when a child is returned to the left behind parent they are confused and traumatized, the effects of which last well into adulthood. There are cases where fleeing with a child to protect the life of the child may be necessary, and there are defenses available to the abductor in these circumstances.

Time is of the essence in locating missing children. The Department of State operates the International Parent-Child Abduction System (IPCA) in accordance with information security requirements and procedures required by federal law and policy to ensure that information is appropriately secured. Only DOS / OCI operate IPCA and the information is shared with the FBI, Interpol, other federal agencies, and foreign governments as required.

We are not suggesting that the IRS opens the floodgates to allow abuses of confidential taxpayer information. What is being asked however, is that the IRS shares information in an environment that is closely controlled, like IPCA, where the Department of State performs monitoring, testing, and evaluation of security controls on a regular basis.

Prior to taking his current office, our Vice President, Joe Biden, was a strong voice on the issue of parental child abduction. This might be an appropriate moment for Vice President Biden to share his wealth of knowledge in this matter and offer his viewpoint.

Caroline Langley