



INTERNATIONAL CHILD ABDUCTION & RECOVERY

International child abduction can be one of the most devastating acts a parent can engage in after the breakdown of a marriage or de facto relationship. Unfortunately, the children are the innocent victims in being separated from their parent.

When a child is taken overseas by one parent without the other parent's consent, or is not returned to Australia, the parent left behind is placed in an extremely difficult situation in attempting to secure the return of the child.

If a child is taken to a country that is a signatory to an international treaty known as the *Hague Convention* then our government can assist in seeking the return of the child. However, if the child is taken to a country that is not a signatory to the *Hague Convention*, for example Lebanon, then the only recourse for the parent remaining Australia is to institute proceedings in the foreign country and submit to the laws of that country to seek recovery of the child, which can be an almost impossible and extraordinarily expensive task.

Where a parent holds a genuine fear that their child may be abducted by the other parent, measures need to be taken at the earliest

possible time to avoid the child being removed from Australia.

A request can be made to the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade for a *Child Alert* to be issued to the parent if the other parent applies for a passport for the child. Upon notification of the alert the parent can confirm their lack of consent for a passport to be issued for the child or take action through the Family Law Courts to stop the passport being issued or stop any impending travel.

Alternatively, if the child has a passport, the child's name may be placed on the *Airport Watch List* maintained by the Australian Federal Police so that the child will be prohibited from leaving the country at any point of departure, eg airport or port.

Legal advice should be sought urgently if your child's parent is proposing an overseas holiday with the child or if there is any possibility they may take the child overseas without your consent.