

Action Report on
International Child Abduction

July 2021

**REPORT TO CONGRESS ON THE SPECIFIC ACTIONS TAKEN AGAINST COUNTRIES
DETERMINED TO HAVE BEEN ENGAGED IN A PATTERN OF NONCOMPLIANCE
IN THE 2021 ANNUAL REPORT ON INTERNATIONAL CHILD ABDUCTION**

July 2021

**SUBMITTED PURSUANT TO
THE SEAN AND DAVID GOLDMAN
INTERNATIONAL CHILD ABDUCTION PREVENTION AND RETURN ACT
22 U.S.C. §9111, ET SEQ.**

INTRODUCTION

The U.S. Department of State's Office of Children's Issues serves as the U.S. Central Authority (USCA) under the 1980 Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction (Convention). In April 2021, the Department submitted its Annual Report on International Child Abduction (Annual Report) pursuant to the Sean and David Goldman International Child Abduction Prevention and Return Act (the Act).

Pursuant to 22 U.S.C. § 9122(c)(4), the Department submits this Action Report on International Child Abduction to Congress on the specific actions taken in response to countries determined to have been engaged in a pattern of noncompliance as defined by the Act.

The 2021 Annual Report provided an overview of the Department's efforts to support the resolution of international parental child abduction (IPCA) cases involving children whose habitual residence is reported to be the United States. We also reported on our engagement with foreign governments and authorities to promote procedures to encourage the prompt resolution of existing IPCA cases with the aim that, in general, international custody disputes should be resolved in the competent court of the country of the child's habitual residence. Further, the 2021 Annual Report discussed the Department's efforts to prevent abductions in coordination with foreign

governments, law enforcement agencies, and airlines.

The Department's work does not end with the publication of the Annual Report. In countries that do not meet their Convention obligations or fail to work with the USCA to resolve IPCA cases, the Department takes appropriate actions as listed in the Act. In addition, the Department takes actions that are consistent with how we advance U.S. foreign interests in other high priority areas. We establish and maintain communications, we identify challenges, we exchange information and technical expertise, and we press countries to meet their Convention obligations and resolve abduction cases. This report outlines these actions and dialogues undertaken to address systematic obstacles to the resolution and deterrence of IPCA.

THE DEPARTMENT'S ACTION REPORT ON INTERNATIONAL PARENTAL CHILD ABDUCTION

Diplomatic engagement remains our most effective tool with all countries to assist in resolving IPCA cases. We take every appropriate opportunity to raise these cases with foreign government officials at the highest appropriate levels, and to ensure that the foreign government understands the U.S. government's concern for the welfare of U.S. citizens overseas, especially children.

INTRODUCTION (continued)

For the second year, the Department released the Annual Report in the midst of the global coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19). Despite unprecedented challenges related to the pandemic, the Office of Children's Issues has continued to improve international response to IPCA and support treaty compliance.

The Department continues to refine strategies for U.S. government engagement with numerous countries on IPCA. These country strategies provide a whole-of-government approach to combat and resolve abductions. We tailor each strategy to that country's evolving political and cultural environment.

Department professionals work with government officials in countries not yet party to the Convention, to encourage them to join the Convention and to resolve existing abduction cases. For Convention partners, we actively promote compliance with the Convention. In many countries, these efforts are producing results in handling IPCA cases.

In this Action Report, we share the specific actions the United States has taken with regard to the countries we cited in the 2021 Annual Report for demonstrating a pattern of noncompliance and report on IPCA issues in these countries.

We also seek to partner, when appropriate, with countries that have already joined the Convention. In July 2020, the United States accepted Pakistan's accession to the Convention, which entered into force between our two countries on October 1, 2020, making Pakistan our eightieth Convention partner. Parents or legal guardians reporting abductions occurring after the Convention entered into force between the United States and Pakistan will now be able to apply for their children's return under the Convention. Parents may also apply for access to children through either the USCA or the Pakistani Central Authority under the Convention, as appropriate.

COUNTRY SUMMARY:

The Convention has been in force between the United States and Argentina since 1991. In 2020, Argentina continued to demonstrate a pattern of noncompliance. Specifically, the Argentine judicial authorities failed to regularly implement and comply with the provisions of the Convention. As a result of this failure, 67 percent of requests for the return of abducted children under the Convention remained unresolved for more than 12 months. On average, these cases were unresolved for six years. Argentina was previously cited for demonstrating a pattern of noncompliance in the 2015-2020 Annual Reports.

REPORT OF ACTIONS TAKEN:

Department officials, both in Washington, D.C. and at the U.S. Embassy in Buenos Aires, continued to raise concerns about Argentina's demonstration of a pattern of noncompliance with Government of Argentina officials.

In September 2020, the Special Advisor for Children's Issues sent a letter to the Director of the Argentine Central Authority regarding Argentina's citation status in the 2020 Annual Report on International Child Abduction.

Also in September 2020, the Special Advisor for Children's Issues met with the Consul General of the Embassy of Argentina in Washington to discuss Argentine efforts to improve Convention compliance in the judiciary.

In November 2020, U.S. Embassy Buenos Aires officials met with Argentina's Hague Network Judge to discuss Argentina's judicial delays and the status of a draft procedural law reportedly intended to expedite Convention cases in Argentina.

Additionally, in November 2020, the Special Advisor for Children's Issues met with the Head of the Family Commission in the Argentine Chamber of Deputies and with Argentina's Hague Network Judge to inquire about the status of a draft procedural law pending in the Chamber of Deputies.

In January 2021, the Chief of the American Citizen Services Unit at the U.S. Embassy in Buenos Aires discussed the status of the draft procedural law and U.S. concerns regarding judicial delays in Argentina with the Director of the Argentine Central Authority.

Argentina (continued)

In February 2021, the Acting Deputy Chief of Mission of the U.S. Embassy in Buenos Aires inquired about the status of the draft procedural law in a meeting with the Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Chief of Staff of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Worship.

Also in February 2021, the Special Advisor for Children's Issues met with the Director of the Argentine Central Authority to discuss U.S. concerns with judicial delays in Argentina.

Additionally, in February 2021, the Special Advisor for Children's Issues met with officials from the Embassy of Argentina in Washington to reiterate U.S. concerns with judicial delays in Convention cases in Argentina.

In June 2021, the U.S. Embassy in Buenos Aires delivered a demarche to the Argentine Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Worship, notifying Argentine officials that the Department cited Argentina in the 2021 Annual Report on International Child Abduction for demonstrating a pattern of noncompliance during 2020. This demarche expressed concern about Argentina's continued failure to comply with Convention obligations. In particular, the demarche noted U.S. concerns with excessive delays within Argentina's legal system, which allows multiple appeals both on the merits of the decision and on the manner in which decisions are enforced.

COUNTRY SUMMARY:

The Convention has been in force between the United States and Brazil since 2003. In 2020, Brazil continued to demonstrate a pattern of noncompliance. Specifically, the Brazilian judicial authorities failed to regularly implement and comply with the provisions of the Convention. Additionally, the competent authorities failed to take appropriate steps to locate children in an abduction case, contributing to Brazil's persistent failure to implement and abide by the provisions of the Convention. As a result of these persistent failures, 75 percent of requests for the return of abducted children under the Convention remained unresolved for more than 12 months. On average, these cases were unresolved for three years and eight months. Brazil was previously cited for demonstrating a pattern of noncompliance in the 2006-2020 Annual Reports.

REPORT OF ACTIONS TAKEN:

Department officials, from the Chief of Mission at the U.S. Embassy in Brasilia to the Special Advisor for Children's Issues, continued regular and robust engagement with Brazilian interlocutors to push for prompt resolution of Convention cases and systemic change to benefit all abducted children. Highlighting the difference between how our two countries handle matters under the Convention, Department officials at senior levels strongly urged Brazil to address systemic delays in the Brazilian judiciary and continued to insist that Brazil meet its international treaty obligations. Senior embassy officials regularly raise Convention compliance with Brazilian officials regardless of the underlying purpose of a particular meeting.

In June 2020, the U.S. Ambassador to Brazil raised concerns with the country's judicial performance in IPCA cases with the then-Chief Justice of the Brazilian Supreme Federal Tribunal (STF).

In July 2020, the Special Advisor for Children's Issues met with the Ambassador of Brazil in Washington, D.C. to urge Brazil to support a Brazilian judicial working group established to address areas of concern in the courts.

In August 2020, the Special Advisor for Children's Issues met with the Coordinator-General of the Brazilian Central Authority to underscore the United States' commitment to the U.S.-Brazil Convention partnership. The Special Advisor raised U.S. concerns with longstanding unresolved cases in Brazil.

Brazil (continued)

Also in August 2020, the Deputy Secretary of State raised IPCA issues in a call with his Brazilian counterpart.

In October 2020, the U.S. Ambassador to Brazil met with the Brazilian Minister of Justice and Public Security to express U.S. concerns with Brazil's demonstration of a pattern of noncompliance with its obligations under the Convention.

In November 2020, the Deputy Chief of Mission and the Minister Counselor for Consular Affairs at U.S. Embassy Brasilia, met with the new Inspector General of Brazil's National Justice Council and sitting justice on Brazil's Superior Tribunal of Justice. The Department officials again raised concerns with lengthy delays affecting Convention cases in the Brazilian judiciary.

In December 2020, the U.S. Ambassador to Brazil met with the newly elected Chief Justice of Brazil's STF to discuss options for expediting judicial processes in Brazil related to Convention cases.

Also in December 2020, the U.S. Mission to Brazil sent a diplomatic note to the Brazilian Ministry of Foreign Affairs highlighting the unresolved U.S. Convention cases in Brazil. At the same time, the Special Advisor for Children's Issues sent a similar letter to the Ambassador of Brazil in Washington.

In January 2021, the U.S. Mission to Brazil sent a diplomatic note to the Brazilian Ministry of Foreign Affairs summarizing the positive results for Brazilian Convention cases in the United States in 2020, in contrast to the lack of resolutions for U.S. cases under the Convention in Brazil.

In February 2021, the U.S. Ambassador to Brazil met with the Brazilian Minister of Justice and Public Security to express concern about Brazil's pattern of noncompliance with its obligations under the Convention. The Ambassador noted continued judicial delays in Brazil could solidify perceptions among the international community that Brazil is a haven for parental child abductors.

Also in February 2021, the U.S. Ambassador to Brazil met with the Brazilian Minister of Foreign Affairs to press for treaty reciprocity and a stronger response from Brazil to uphold its international commitments.

Again, in February 2021, the U.S. Mission to Brazil sent two diplomatic notes to the Brazilian Ministry of Foreign Affairs reiterating the Department's concerns about judicial delays in Convention cases. The diplomatic notes underscored

Brazil (continued)

Brazil's noncompliance with the Convention serves as a source of pain and frustration for parents in the United States.

In March 2021, the U.S. Mission to Brazil sent another diplomatic note to the Brazilian Ministry of Foreign Affairs highlighting the lack of treaty reciprocity as the United States had returned two more children to Brazil under the Convention without observing the resolution of a single U.S. abduction case in Brazil since 2018.

Later in March 2021, the U.S. Ambassador to Brazil met again with the Brazilian Minister of Justice and Public Security following the first court-ordered return of children from Brazil to the United States since 2018.

In April 2021, the Deputy Chief of Mission met with Ministry of Foreign Affairs officials and underscored the United States' deep concern for unresolved cases and Brazil's continued demonstration of a pattern of noncompliance with its obligations under the Convention.

In May 2021, the Department helped facilitate the safe return of a child from Brazil to the United States after the Brazilian court ordered the child returned under the Convention. This was the second court-ordered return of a child to the United States from Brazil under the Convention in 2021.

In June 2021, the Deputy Chief of Mission at U.S. Embassy Brasilia delivered a demarche to the Brazilian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, notifying Brazilian officials that the Department again cited Brazil in the 2021 Annual Report on International Child Abduction for demonstrating a pattern of noncompliance during 2020. This demarche expressed concern about Brazil's continued failure to comply with Convention obligations. In particular, the demarche noted U.S. concerns with excessive delays within Brazil's judiciary and language in more than one judicial decision that was clearly noncompliant with the Convention.

COUNTRY SUMMARY:

The Convention has been in force between the United States and Costa Rica since 2008. In 2020, Costa Rica demonstrated a pattern of noncompliance. Specifically, Costa Rican judicial authorities failed to regularly implement and comply with provisions of the Convention. The Department previously cited Costa Rica for demonstrating a pattern of noncompliance in the 2020 Annual Report.

REPORT OF ACTIONS TAKEN:

Department officials raised continuing concerns with the Government of Costa Rica about the Costa Rican judiciary's persistent failure to regularly implement and comply with the Convention. Specifically, the Department raised concerns with delays in the judicial process and Costa Rica's compliance with the Convention.

The Office of Children's Issues and the U.S. Embassy in San Jose continued to work on all the abduction cases by communicating with the Costa Rican Central Authority, as well as addressing judicial delays at the highest levels of the Costa Rican Government.

In February 2020, the Department delivered a demarche to the Costa Rican Central Authority concerning a Convention case.

In March 2020, the U.S. Ambassador to Costa Rica, in conjunction with the UK Ambassador to Costa Rica, met with Costa Rican officials to discuss a Convention case involving citizens from both the United States and the United Kingdom. Following this meeting, the U.S. Ambassador stayed to discuss another Convention case between the United States and Costa Rica.

In November 2020, the Department, in coordination with the Costa Rican Supreme Court and the Regional Hague Office of Latin America and the Caribbean, hosted Costa Rica's first virtual international seminar on Convention best practices. Three additional seminars were held in early 2021.

Legal experts and judges from North America, South America, and Europe presented on numerous issues involving the Convention. With more than 60 participants, these seminars were well received and successful in creating an international dialogue and expanding networks of communication and resource sharing.

Costa Rica (continued)

The Department is strongly encouraging Costa Rican officials to hold an additional workshop in October 2021.

In February 2021, the Director of the Office of Children's Issues met virtually with the Executive President of the Costa Rican Central Authority concerning active abduction cases and concerns about case processing delays in Costa Rica.

In May 2021, U.S. Embassy San Jose delivered a demarche to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs concerning Costa Rica's citation for demonstrating a pattern of noncompliance in the 2021 Annual Report.

COUNTRY SUMMARY:

The Convention has been in force between the United States and Ecuador since 1992. In 2020, Ecuador continued to demonstrate a pattern of noncompliance. Specifically, the Ecuadorian judicial authorities failed to regularly implement and comply with the provisions of the Convention. As a result of this failure, 17 percent of requests for the return of abducted children under the Convention remained unresolved for more than 12 months. On average, these cases were unresolved for one year and three months. Ecuador was previously cited for demonstrating a pattern of noncompliance in the 2015-2020 Annual Reports.

REPORT OF ACTIONS TAKEN:

Department officials in Washington, D.C. and at the U.S. Embassy in Quito continued to raise U.S. concerns with Government of Ecuador officials about Ecuador's demonstration of a pattern of noncompliance with its obligations under the Convention.

In July 2020, the National Court of Justice (NCJ) hosted a judicial seminar for 100 Ecuadorian judges on best practices in the resolution of Convention cases. The NCJ brought together Ecuadorian Central Authority (ECA) officials, public defenders, and international Convention experts, including one of the U.S. Hague Network Judges. That same day, the U.S. Ambassador to Ecuador met with the NCJ president and thanked her for hosting the judicial seminar on the Convention and for inviting a U.S. Hague Network Judge to participate.

Since August 2020, the U.S. Central Authority held three video conferences with the ECA, Ecuador's specialized law enforcement unit for children, and Ecuador's Public Defender's Office. During these conferences, participants discussed individual abduction cases and strategies for improving Convention compliance in Ecuador. These conferences increased awareness of the Convention among the Ecuadorian offices involved in resolving abduction cases, and they improved cooperation and communication between the U.S. and Ecuadorian Central Authorities.

In September 2020, the Special Advisor for Children's Issues sent a letter to the director of the ECA and the President of the NCJ regarding Ecuador's citation status.

Ecuador (continued)

Also in September 2020, the Special Advisor for Children’s Issues met with consular staff from the Embassy of Ecuador in Washington to discuss Ecuadorian efforts to improve Convention compliance, including a package of proposed procedural reforms to the Ecuadorian Children’s Code released by the NCJ that same month. The Ecuadorian officials reported that the Children’s Code reforms are specifically designed to address the judicial delays that impact Convention cases in Ecuador’s courts.

In December 2020, Ecuadorian authorities invited the Office of Children’s Issues to participate in a two-day virtual conference with Ecuadorian stakeholders. Participants included the Chilean, Colombian, and Uruguayan Central Authorities and the Hague Permanent Bureau Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean who exchanged best practices for handling Convention cases.

Also in December 2020, the Special Advisor for Children’s Issues noted Ecuador’s progress on taking steps toward Convention compliance, including the NCJ’s proposed reforms to the Ecuadorian Children’s Code, during the U.S.–Ecuador Consular-Migration dialogue. The Ecuadorian Under Secretary of Human Rights highlighted proposed policy and administrative changes in Ecuador that will reportedly create clearer timelines and deadlines for resolving Convention cases and expressed interest in continued training and capacity building assistance from the United States.

In February 2021, the Ambassador met with the new President of the NCJ and emphasized our interest in seeing progress on the proposed reforms to the Children’s Code.

In April 2021, the Ambassador and the Consul General met with the President of the NCJ to discuss various NCJ legislative and judicial proposals to expedite Convention decisions in Ecuador’s courts.

Also in April 2021, the Office of Children’s Issues provided input on the proposed reforms to the Children’s Code, as well as related judicial initiatives, that will expedite and prioritize abduction cases in the Ecuadorian courts.

In May 2021, U.S. Embassy Quito delivered a demarche to members of President-elect Guillermo Lasso’s transition team. The Department noted that Ecuador has been cited for demonstrating a pattern of noncompliance in the

Ecuador (continued)

2021 Annual Report on International Child Abduction during 2020, specifically for judicial delays.

COUNTRY SUMMARY:

Egypt does not adhere to any protocols with respect to international parental child abduction. In 2003, the United States and Egypt signed a Memorandum of Understanding to encourage voluntary resolution of abduction cases and facilitate parental access to abducted children. In 2020, Egypt continued to demonstrate a pattern of noncompliance. Specifically, the competent authorities in Egypt persistently failed to work with the Department of State to resolve abduction cases. As a result of this failure, 24 percent of requests for the return of abducted children remained unresolved for more than 12 months. On average, these cases were unresolved for four years and eight months. Egypt was previously cited for demonstrating a pattern of noncompliance in the 2019 and 2020 Annual Reports.

REPORT OF ACTIONS TAKEN:

Officials at the highest levels of the Department engaged with the Government of Egypt on the issue of IPCA. Department officials pressed the Egyptian government to assist with resolving abduction cases and to ratify the Convention.

In October 2020, U.S. Embassy Cairo delivered a diplomatic note to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs requesting Egypt take the steps necessary to move toward ratification of the Convention and informing them of unresolved abduction cases.

In November 2020, the Special Advisor for Children's Issues sent letters about IPCA to key Egyptian stakeholders including the Assistant Foreign Minister for Consular Affairs, the Deputy Assistant Foreign Minister for Consular Affairs, the Assistant Minister for Cultural and International Affairs, the Good Intentions Sub-Committee, and the Consul General of the Egyptian Embassy in Washington, DC.

In December 2020, U.S. Embassy Cairo delivered a diplomatic note to the Assistant Minister for Consular Affairs informing the Government of Egypt of unresolved abduction cases and requesting Egyptian government officials to work with the Department to resolve these cases. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs responded to this Note and confirmed that the resolution of these issues is through the Good Intentions Sub-Committee at the Office of International Cooperation at the Egypt Ministry of Justice.

Egypt (continued)

Upon release of the 2021 Annual Report, U.S. Embassy Cairo delivered a demarche notifying the Egyptian government that the Department had cited Egypt in the 2021 Annual Report for demonstrating a pattern of noncompliance and once again requesting Egypt's assistance with resolving reported cases.

COUNTRY SUMMARY:

India does not adhere to any protocols with respect to international parental child abduction. In 2020, India continued to demonstrate a pattern of noncompliance. Specifically, the competent authorities in India persistently failed to work with the Department of State to resolve abduction cases. In 2018, India formed a Mediation Cell to resolve international child custody disputes. However, the United States is not aware of any abduction cases between the United States and India that were resolved by this cell since its inception. As a result of this failure, 73 percent of requests for the return of abducted children remained unresolved for more than 12 months. On average, these cases were unresolved for two years and eight months. India was previously cited for demonstrating a pattern of noncompliance in the 2015-2020 Annual Reports.

REPORT OF ACTIONS TAKEN:

Officials at the highest levels of the Department engaged with the Government of India on the issue of IPCA. Senior U.S. government officials pressed the Indian government to assist with resolving abduction cases and to accede to the Convention.

In July 2020, the Deputy Secretary of State met with the Indian Ambassador to the United States and delivered a letter addressed to the Indian Foreign Secretary requesting the government's response to a proposal to form a bilateral Joint Committee to address IPCA issues.

In October 2020, the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Overseas Citizen Services and the Special Advisor for Children's Issues met with the Indian Deputy Chief of Mission and raised U.S. government concerns on the continued absence of reliable mechanisms to resolve abduction cases and pressed for cooperation via a Joint Committee.

Also in October 2020, the Under Secretary for Management traveled to India and underscored the importance of making progress on IPCA issues in meetings with senior Indian government officials.

In February 2021, U.S. Embassy New Delhi delivered a demarche to the Indian Ministry of External Affairs revising the previous proposal for a Joint Committee on IPCA and instead proposing a broader Joint Committee on Children's Issues, which would include all IPCA matters.

India (continued)

In March 2021, U.S. Embassy New Delhi delivered a diplomatic note to the Ministry of External Affairs reiterating the request for the Indian government to participate in a Joint Committee.

Upon release of the 2021 Annual Report, U.S. Embassy New Delhi delivered a demarche to the Ministry of External Affairs notifying the Indian government that the Department had cited India in the 2021 Annual Report for demonstrating a pattern of noncompliance. It once again requested India's assistance in resolving existing cases and reiterated the request for a Joint Committee.

COUNTRY SUMMARY:

Jordan does not adhere to any protocols with respect to international parental child abduction. In 2006, the United States and Jordan signed a Memorandum of Understanding to encourage voluntary resolution of abduction cases and facilitate parental access to abducted children. In 2020, Jordan continued to demonstrate a pattern of noncompliance. Specifically, the competent authorities in Jordan persistently failed to work with the Department of State to resolve abduction cases. As a result of this failure, 50 percent of requests for the return of abducted children remained unresolved for more than 12 months. On average, these cases were unresolved for one year and eight months. Jordan was previously cited for demonstrating a pattern of noncompliance in the 2015-2020 Annual Reports.

REPORT OF ACTIONS TAKEN:

Officials at the highest levels of the Department engaged with the Government of Jordan on the issue of IPCA. Department officials pressed the Jordanian government to assist with resolving abduction cases and to accede to the Convention.

In June 2020, U.S. Embassy Amman met with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) to deliver a demarche informing the Jordanians of their citation in the 2020 Annual Report. The embassy also participated in a first-ever interagency meeting with representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Interior, and the Office of the Supreme Judge. The embassy raised unresolved IPCA cases and urged greater whole-of-government efforts by the Jordanian government. The Director of Consular Affairs at the MFA also identified himself as the main point of contact for IPCA cases in Jordan.

In March 2021, U.S. Embassy Amman delivered a diplomatic note to the MFA informing the Government of Jordan of unresolved abduction cases and requesting Jordanian government officials to work with the Department of State to resolve these cases.

In March 2021, U.S. Embassy Amman met with the Director of the MFA's Consular Affairs Department, to discuss unresolved cases in Jordan and encourage cooperation toward resolving IPCA cases through acceding to the Convention.

Jordan (continued)

In May 2021, U.S. Embassy Amman delivered a diplomatic note to the MFA requesting assistance from the Jordanian government in arranging a welfare visit on an IPCA case. The embassy also repropose a digital videoconference between Jordanian judges and a U.S. judge with expertise in IPCA issues.

Upon release of the 2021 Annual Report, U.S. Embassy Amman delivered a demarche to the Jordanian government noting that the Department had cited Jordan in the 2021 Annual Report for demonstrating a pattern of noncompliance and requesting assistance in resolving existing abduction cases.

COUNTRY SUMMARY:

The Convention has been in force between the United States and Peru since 2007. In 2020, Peru continued to demonstrate a pattern of noncompliance for its sixth consecutive year. Specifically, the Peruvian Central Authority regularly failed to fulfill its responsibilities pursuant to the Convention, and judicial authorities failed to regularly implement and comply with the provisions of the Convention. As a result of this failure, 82 percent of requests for the return of abducted children under the Convention remained unresolved for more than 12 months. On average, these cases were unresolved for three years. Peru was previously cited for demonstrating a pattern of noncompliance in the 2015-2020 Annual Reports.

REPORT OF ACTIONS TAKEN:

The Department frequently raised concerns about Peru's persistent failure to regularly implement and comply with the provisions of the Convention.

In September 2020, the Special Advisor for Children's Issues sent letters to Peru's Ministry of Women and Vulnerable Populations, the Director General for Consular Affairs at Peru's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and to the Ambassador of Peru to the United States regarding concerns with Peru's Convention compliance.

In December 2020, the Special Advisor for Children's Issues and Director of the Office of Children's Issues met with the Ambassador of Peru to the United States and officials from the Peruvian Central Authority, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Ministry of Justice to raise concerns regarding Peru's Convention compliance.

In January 2021, U.S. Embassy Lima's Chargé d'Affaires met with the Peru Judiciary President to raise concerns regarding judicial delays of Convention cases in the Peruvian courts.

In January 2021, Office of Children's Issues and U.S. Embassy Lima representatives met with Peruvian Central Authority representatives to discuss Convention case developments in Peru and the United States.

In April 2021, Office of Children's Issues and U.S. Embassy Lima representatives met with the newly appointed Director General of the Peruvian Central Authority and other Peruvian Central Authority representatives to discuss case developments and judicial delays of Convention cases in Peru.

Peru (continued)

In June 2021, U.S. Embassy Lima delivered a diplomatic note to the Peruvian Ministry of Foreign Affairs to press the government to resolve Convention cases that have been pending with Peruvian courts for more than one year.

Also in June 2021, U.S. Embassy Lima delivered a demarche to the Peruvian Ministry of Foreign Affairs stating the Department cited Peru in the 2020 Annual Report for demonstrating a pattern of noncompliance. The demarche expressed the Department's concern regarding Peruvian Central Authority noncompliance and judicial delays and urged the approval and implementation of a Peruvian judicial authority drafted protocol to address judicial delays of Convention cases in Peru.

Romania

COUNTRY SUMMARY:

The Convention has been in force between the United States and Romania since 1993. In 2020, Romania continued to demonstrate a pattern of noncompliance. Specifically, law enforcement failed to enforce a return order issued by the judicial authority in an abduction case. As a result of this failure, 100 percent of requests for the return of abducted children under the Convention remained unresolved for more than 12 months. The case has been unresolved for two years and one month. Romania was previously cited for demonstrating a pattern of noncompliance in the 2020 Annual Report.

REPORT OF ACTIONS TAKEN:

The Department frequently raised concerns in both public and private fora about Romania's persistent failure to regularly implement and comply with the provisions of the Convention.

In December 2020, during a meeting with the previous Romanian Minister of Justice, the former U.S. Ambassador to Romania raised concerns regarding Romania's failure to enforce a Romanian court order to return the U.S. citizen children to the United States under the Convention.

In June 2021, U.S. Embassy Bucharest delivered a demarche to the Romanian government noting that the Department had cited Romania in the 2021 Annual Report for demonstrating a pattern of noncompliance and requesting assistance in resolving existing abduction cases.

COUNTRY SUMMARY:

The Convention has been in force between the United States and Trinidad and Tobago since 2013. In 2020, Trinidad and Tobago demonstrated a pattern of noncompliance. Specifically, the Trinidad and Tobago Central Authority regularly failed to fulfill its responsibilities pursuant to the Convention, and judicial authorities at the appellate level failed to regularly implement and comply with the provisions of the Convention. As a result of this failure, 14 percent of requests for the return of abducted children under the Convention remained unresolved for more than 12 months. One case was unresolved for four years and four months. Trinidad and Tobago was not cited the 2020 Annual Report.

REPORT OF ACTIONS TAKEN:

The Department frequently raised concerns regarding Trinidad and Tobago's persistent failure to regularly implement and comply with the provisions of the Convention.

In April 2020, the Director of the Office of Children's Issues sent a letter to the Trinidad and Tobago Central Authority (TTCA) highlighting serious delays in case processing.

In September 2020, the Office of Children's Issues Western Hemisphere Division Chief sent a letter to the TTCA requesting a meeting to discuss delays in both the Trinidad and Tobago Central Authority and the judiciary.

In October 2020, Office of Children's Issues representatives met virtually with TTCA officials to discuss cases of concern, requested cases move more quickly from administrative processing to the judiciary, and encouraged the resolution of long-standing cases.

Beginning in February 2021, Office of Children's Issues representatives and TTCA officials met monthly to promote expeditious case resolution, gain a deeper understanding of Central Authority and judicial processes, and explore options to avoid delays in future cases.

In April 2021, the Consular Chief at U.S. Embassy Port of Spain spoke with the Trinidad and Tobago Attorney General regarding delays in ongoing abduction cases. The attorney general committed to reviewing their internal process and welcomed the opportunity to collaborate.

Trinidad and Tobago (continued)

In May 2021, U.S. Embassy Port of Spain delivered a demarche to the Trinidad and Tobago Ministry of Foreign Affairs stating the Department cited Trinidad and Tobago in the 2021 Annual Report for demonstrating a pattern of noncompliance.

COUNTRY SUMMARY:

The United Arab Emirates does not adhere to any protocols with respect to international parental child abduction. In 2020, the United Arab Emirates continued to demonstrate a pattern of noncompliance. Specifically, the competent authorities in the United Arab Emirates persistently failed to work with the Department of State to resolve abduction cases. As a result of this failure, 100 percent of requests for the return of abducted children remained unresolved for more than 12 months. On average, these cases were unresolved for four years and seven months. The United Arab Emirates was previously cited for demonstrating a pattern of noncompliance in the 2018-2020 Annual Reports.

REPORT OF ACTIONS TAKEN:

Officials at the highest levels of the Department pressed the Government of the United Arab Emirates to assist with resolving abduction cases and to accede to the Convention.

In December 2020, U.S. Embassy Abu Dhabi delivered a letter from the Special Advisor for Children's Issues to the Emirati Assistant Under Secretary of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation for Human Rights Affairs promoting the benefits of the Hague Convention to the UAE and encouraging dialogue on IPCA issues.

In January 2021, U.S. Embassy Abu Dhabi met with the Emirati Assistant Under Secretary for Consular Affairs where embassy representatives raised pending abduction cases and encouraged the United Arab Emirates to accede to the Convention. At that time, embassy representatives also delivered a diplomatic note informing the Emirati government of unresolved abduction cases in the United Arab Emirates.

In February 2021, U.S. Embassy Abu Dhabi delivered a letter from the Special Advisor for Children's Issues to the new Emirati Assistant Under Secretary for Consular Affairs to encourage further cooperation and dialogue on abduction cases.

In February 2021, in response to the previous diplomatic notes and engagement with the Emirati government, U.S. Embassy Abu Dhabi received a diplomatic note from the Emirati government informing of a mechanism to enforce foreign judicial rulings in the United Arab Emirates.

United Arab Emirates (continued)

In May 2021, U.S. Embassy Abu Dhabi met with the Emirati Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Director of International Law to discuss cooperation on abduction issues and the benefits of the United Arab Emirates acceding to the Convention. The Director agreed to study bilateral mechanisms to resolve abduction cases and future meetings with the Department.

In May 2021, U.S. Embassy Abu Dhabi delivered a demarche to the Emirati government noting that the Department had cited the United Arab Emirates in the 2021 Annual Report for demonstrating a pattern of noncompliance and requesting assistance in resolving existing abduction cases.