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## Democratic Republic of the Congo

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### Notice: Reports of the Removal of Children from Orphanages in the DRC

The U.S. Department of State recently received several reports that children adopted in the Democratic Republic of the Congo have reportedly been taken from orphanages by a birth parent or relative after the adoption decree and certificate of non-appeal was issued by Congolese courts. This information reportedly has been presented to adoptive families by their agencies either following the Form I-600 petition approval, or immediately prior to filing the Form I-600 petition.

While there is a specific legal procedure through the Congolese courts for a biological parent or relative to reclaim an abandoned or relinquished child prior to any adoption judgments, once a certificate of non-appeal is issued, the adoption judgment can generally no longer be the subject of appeal or objection. Congolese courts are able to dissolve an adoption at the request of the adoptee or the adoptive parent in exceptional circumstances, but only through appropriate legal processes. Adoptive parents who have already received adoption decrees and certificates of non-appeal, but learn that their child was removed from an orphanage by a birth parent or relative, may wish to seek independent legal counsel in the Democratic Republic of the Congo to learn their legal rights as the adoptive parents under Congolese law.

The U.S. Embassy in Kinshasa maintains a list of attorneys who have identified themselves as willing to assist U.S. citizen clients. Placement on this list does not constitute endorsement or assessment of an individual attorney's qualifications by the U.S. Embassy in Kinshasa or the U.S. Department of State.

If you have concerns, questions, or information regarding this issue, please contact the U.S. Department of State, Office of Children's Issues at [AskCI@state.gov](mailto:AskCI@state.gov).