



Russia

January 23, 2013

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Alert: Russian Supreme Court Letter on Implementation of Federal Law No. 272-FZ

On December 28, 2012, President Vladimir Putin signed into law Federal Law No. 272-FZ. This law went into effect on January 1, 2013. It bans the adoption of Russian children by U.S. citizens, bars adoption service providers from assisting U.S. citizens in adopting Russian children, and requires termination of the U.S.-Russia Adoption Agreement.

On January 22, the Deputy Chairman of the Russian Supreme Court issued a letter to city and regional courts explaining the implementation of Federal Law No. 272-FZ. The letter states that for adoption cases in which court decisions involving U.S. citizen parents were made before January 1, 2013, (including those that entered into force after January 1, 2013 following the 30-day waiting period), the children should be transferred to the custody of their adoptive parents. [Note: the original letter in Russian can be found at http://www.supcourt.ru/Show_pdf.php?Id=8403.

We understand that several U.S. families have already obtained final adoption decrees in accordance with this guidance. The Department of State continues to strongly encourage U.S. families, in cooperation with their adoption service providers, to seek confirmation from Russian authorities that their adoptions will be processed to conclusion, prior to traveling to Russia.

The United States continues to urge the Russian government to allow all U.S. families who were in the process of adopting a child from Russia prior to January 1 to complete their adoptions so that these children may join permanent, loving families. U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services and the Consular Section at the U.S. Embassy in Moscow continue to process Forms I-600, Petition to Classify Orphan as an Immediate Relative, and immigrant visa applications for children whose families have obtained all required documents as part of the adoption process.

U.S. families in the process of adopting a child from Russia may continue to contact the Office of Children's Issues at RussiaAdoption@state.gov. The Office of Children's Issues will reach out directly to families as additional information becomes available. Further information regarding intercountry adoption from Russia will also be posted on www.adoption.state.gov.