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Israel

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Notice: Israel, the West Bank, and Gaza

Children Affected by the conflict in the Middle East

We understand that U.S. citizens are deeply touched by the situation of children in Israel, the West Bank, and Gaza in light of ongoing hostilities. While the situation is compelling, we strongly caution that affected children may not qualify for an intercountry adoption under foreign and U.S. law, including U.S. immigration law.

Intercountry adoption involves legal requirements and procedural safeguards designed to protect the children concerned and to ensure that an intercountry adoption is in the child's best interests. Before an adopted child can immigrate to the United States, both the United States and the child's country of origin must first determine that the child is eligible for adoption.

It can be extremely difficult in crisis situations to determine whether children who appear to be orphans truly are eligible for adoption and immigration under U.S. laws. Children may be temporarily separated from their parents or other family members during a conflict or natural disaster, and their parents may be looking for them. It is not uncommon in dangerous situations for parents to send their children out of the area for safety reasons, or for families to become separated during an evacuation. Even when it can be demonstrated that a child's parents have died, children are often taken in to be cared for by other relatives.

During times of crisis, it can also be exceptionally difficult to fulfill the legal requirements for an intercountry adoption between the United States and the child's country of origin. This is especially true when civil authority breaks down. Prospective adoptive parents should take extra caution when considering adopting or caring for a child under these circumstances and should consider consulting with an experienced immigration attorney in light of the challenges of gathering evidence to document the child's status. Please note that adoption is often not possible not a common practice in areas in which Shari'a Law is observed.

Please direct questions related to this notice, or a specific adoption from the region, to the Department of State, Office of Children's Issues at 1-888-407-4747 within the United States, or 202-501-4444 from outside the United States. Email inquiries may be directed to AskCI@state.gov, if related to the West Bank or Gaza, and to AdoptionUSCA@state.gov, if related to Israel.