



WEBINAR 1

21

May 2026

WEBINAR 2

28

May 2026

8.00-9.30 - NYC | 13.00-14.30 - UK
14.00-15.30 - CET

WEBINAR 1

ONLINE REGISTRATION

<http://bit.ly/4b9Lq2x>

WEBINAR 2

ONLINE REGISTRATION

<https://bit.ly/4ua8PJW>

Preventing & responding to Illicit Intercountry Adoptions

HUMAN RIGHTS BASED FRAMEWORKS FOR ACCESS TO JUSTICE AND EFFECTIVE REMEDIES

There is now broad recognition of the systemic illicit nature of past practices in both national and intercountry adoptions.



Today, many but not all of these illicit practices have been prevented thanks to the introduction of international safeguards such as the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), Convention of 29 May 1993 on Protection of Children and Co-operation in Respect of Intercountry Adoption (1993 Adoption Convention) and Convention on Enforced Disappearances (CED).

Enabling environments for such practices have been comprehensively outlined by the UN SR on sale and sexual exploitation in her landmark 2016 report.

The impact of these illicit adoptions has wide ramifications for the adoptee, birth family and adoptive family, in terms of

rights violations including preservation of identity, protection against sale, trafficking and enforced disappearances. International standards create obligations on States to provide Access to Justice and Effective Remedies (AJER) in response to such violations. Human rights, including transitional justice, require the establishment of truth; procedural justice and substantive outcomes such as restitution; compensation; recovery; reintegration and non-recurrence.

WEBINAR OBJECTIVES

The first webinar is dedicated to State obligations and responses in past contexts, notably in terms of overcoming obstacles such as statutes of limitations and jurisdiction limitations. The second webinar targets State responsibilities and initiatives preventing and addressing current illicit practices, including how to ensure a child-centred approach.

WEBINAR 1

State prevention and responses to past illicit ICAs

Over the past few years, a number of States have started to tackle patterns of illicit ICAs with a growing number establishing “truth finding initiatives.” While there have been ad hoc efforts to respond to the violations uncovered, opportunities exist to improve alignment with international standards and implementation of the substantive outcomes they provide for.

MODERATOR

Nigel Cantwell

International child protection consultant

SPEAKERS

Ann Skelton

Immediate former Chairperson of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child

Olivier de Frouville

Vice-chairperson of the UN Committee on Enforced Disappearances

Lynelle Long

Executive Director ICAV

Boonyoung Han and Peter Moller

Danish Korean Adoptees

Joelle Schickel-Kung

Head of Private International Law Swiss Federal Ministry of Justice

State of Origin, Central Adoption Authority (tbc)

WEBINAR 2

State prevention and responses to current illicit ICAs

To prevent illicit ICAs, multiple States have ratified international standards, notably the 1993 Adoption Convention and collectively worked with the HCCH through Special Commissions and dedicated working groups to identify minimum standards. In response to current illicit ICA practices, States have introduced different moratoriums, laws and policies to sanction rights violations. National jurisprudence has also been developing.

MODERATOR

Maud de Boer-Buquicchio

former UN SR on sale and sexual exploitation of children and President, Child Identity Protection

SPEAKERS

Benoit Van Keirsbilck

Member of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child

Laura Martinez-Mora

First Secretary, Hague Conference on Private International Law

UNICEF (speaker tbc)

Linda Reynolds

International Parliamentary Union

Ariane van den Berghe

Belgium Flemish Central Adoption Authority

State of Origin, Central Adoption Authority (tbc)

BACKGROUND AND LATEST INITIATIVES:

The webinar series draws on a range of recent international initiatives calling for reforms such as:

- The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child is developing [General Comment 27 on Access to Justice and Effective Remedies](#) (due September 2026). It will provide authoritative guidance on how to ensure procedural and substantive justice in both judicial and non-judicial settings.
- Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) 2025 resolution on [Intercountry Adoptions](#) strongly condemns “illegal intercountry adoptions as violations of children’s rights and urges all States and parliaments to classify such acts as forms of human trafficking.” It calls on all States to formally recognize the persons affected by illegal ICAs as victims, to issue an apology and commit to providing them with appropriate support, protection, access to justice, remedies and, where possible, reunification; making it clear that legal adoptions remain a valid form of protection and should not be stigmatized.
- The [Global Declaration on Advancing Child-Centred Justice](#) (2025) places children’s rights and well-being at the heart of justice systems, ensuring age-appropriate, inclusive, and accessible processes. It underpins the [Global Working Group on SDG 16+ Justice for Children 2026-2030 Strategy](#). The Declaration calls for a broad approach to overcome barriers to justice children experience, such as violence, conflict, discrimination, lack of identity, and deprivation of liberty.
- The Hague Conference on Private International Law (2023) has established a number of initiatives to prevent and address illicit ICA practices notably the [Working Group on the Financial Aspects of Intercountry Adoption \(2023 onwards\)](#) and development of a [Toolkit for Preventing and Addressing Illicit Practices in Intercountry Adoption](#). These initiatives build on the many other efforts of the HCCH in this field.
- [Joint statement on illegal intercountry adoptions](#) (2022) by all relevant UN treaty bodies and mechanisms highlighted the obligation to remedy illegal ICA including concrete measures such as facilitating search for origins, identification of victims, apologies, compensation, counselling and right to reparation. Measures should also include guarantees of non-recurrence through legal, institutional and practical reforms.
- The UN CRC Committee and the UN CED Committee have systematically made concluding observations and recommendations dealing with illegal adoptions, including ICAs, in particular since the 2022 Joint statement.
- [UNICEF’s Reimagine Justice Technical Briefs Series](#) (2021 onwards) provides guidance based on global evidence and lessons learned, applied to a range of justice issues and most recently children in civil proceedings.