

# HAGUE Mothers

**They need to escape their abuser.**

**You need to know about the law that might drag them back.**



**Under the Hague Convention, mothers seeking to escape domestic violence and safeguard their children by fleeing across international borders are at extreme risk of being charged with abduction, obliged to return to the abuser, and potentially losing custody of their children.**

## **What are the problems with the Convention?**

The Convention was intended to deal with fathers who abduct their children across international borders without the mother's permission. Its focus is on returning the child as quickly as possible since they are assumed to be in serious danger.

However, over 75% of Hague petitions are now brought against mothers by fathers who use the Convention to compel children, and therefore mothers, to return to the country they have fled.

## **How does it endanger mothers and children?**

Hague Convention cases are not numerous **but:**

- Mothers and their children are at extraordinary risk in these circumstances - above and beyond the dangers and difficulties faced by most DV victims in the UK;
- Most mothers are unaware of the Convention until they find themselves facing a court hearing, usually with no time to prepare a defence or to find a lawyer with Hague expertise;
- Urgent specialist intervention is needed in these cases. Time is of the essence. Courts pride themselves on ensuring the rapid return of the child to the 'left-behind' parent, rather than on an in-depth consideration of the circumstances.

## **How can you help?**

**If a mother has taken her child or children across an international border without explicit permission from the father she is at risk of having a Hague case brought against her.**

**Signpost her urgently to GlobalARRK for advice and support. See [globalarrk.org](http://globalarrk.org)**

**Hague Mothers** is a FiLiA Legacy Project. This international campaign aims to end the injustices caused by the Hague Abduction Convention, specifically in relation to mothers fleeing domestic violence and coercive control.

[hague-mothers.org](http://hague-mothers.org)

