



Hague Mothers Newsletter April/May 2023

Dear <<First Name>>,

We're a little late with our April Newsletter – but there's an excellent reason for the delay.

We wanted to include a link to the webinar we co-hosted with Brunel University Global Lives Research Centre, with support from UC Berkeley's Goldman School of Public Policy, University College London, Sanctuary for Families New York, SHERA Research Group, and Women's Legal Services Australia.

[And here it is!](#)

HAGUE Mothers From abduction to protection: Ending the injustices of the Hague Convention

Chair

Adrienne Barnett

Panel

Jeffrey Edleson
Nicole Fidler
Miranda Kaye
Ben Keith
Sudha Shetty

Q&A co-ordination

Kim Fawcett
Sonja Ayeb-Karlsson

FiLiA | Brunel University Global Lives Research Centre

From Abduction to Protection. Hague Mothers' international webinar

Our ground-breaking international webinar drew on expertise from Australia, New Zealand, the UK and US, to make the case for change in relation to the 1980 Hague Convention. The Convention was intended to deal with fathers who abduct children across international borders without the mother's permission. It has been weaponised. Now over 75% of cases are brought by fathers against mothers – the majority are fleeing domestic violence. Our experts explain the problems, and the often brutal reality for mothers caught up in a Hague case. They also propose solutions which could help ensure the safety and wellbeing of mothers and children, and lead to a more just outcome.

Almost 350 people registered for the event, from 28 countries. Awareness of, and interest in, the Hague Convention is clearly on the rise. We hope that change will follow.

Our thanks to all involved, particularly our chair, Adrienne Barnett (UK); our panel, Jeffrey Edleson (US), Nicole Fidler (US), Miranda Kaye (Australia), Ben Keith (New Zealand), Sudha Shetty (US); and our Q&A monitors Sonja Ayeb-Karlsson (UK) and Kim Fawcett (UK).

Stop Press! Australian Federal Budget Announcement!

On 9 May 2023 the Australian Treasurer committed \$18.4 million to improve the safety of women and children in Hague Convention cases. This funding includes:

- \$7.4m to introduce a financial assistance scheme to enable eligible taking parents to have equivalent access to legal representation as left-behind parents;
- \$5.7m to improve capability in the Attorney-General's Department to obtain and make evidence about family violence available to the courts in Hague cases;
- \$5.3m for a package of early alternative dispute resolution intervention measures, designed to divert families from contested Hague Convention proceedings and improve safety outcomes.

Hague Mothers warmly welcome this announcement. We have been lobbying the Australian government regarding inequality of legal representation in these cases. We have also informed the Attorney-General of the difficulties mothers face in obtaining evidence of violence, particularly from outside the jurisdiction in which the violence occurred. We will continue to offer our expertise and ideas to help ensure this funding will result in greater safety for mothers and their children.

Our heartfelt thanks to Attorney-General Mark Dreyfus.



 **Brunel University London**

Fleeing Domestic Abuse Across Borders

Thursday 11 May 2023 | 3pm (BST)
Darwin Room, Hamilton Centre,
Brunel University London

 **Brunel Research Festival**

9-31 May 2023
Free to all
brunel.ac.uk/BRF

Fleeing Domestic Abuse Across Borders Thursday 11th May

In addition to co-hosting our international webinar, the wonderful Brunel University Global Lives Research Centre are holding an in-person seminar at Brunel University London, looking at the implications of the

Hague Convention for mothers who want to escape domestic abuse across borders, and exploring options for change.

[Book your place here.](#)

On the Hague Mothers Campaign Blog

[The Hague & Narkis Golan. One mother's fight.](#)

A powerful and insightful podcast from Neeta Misra's 'Matters' platform with Lynn Hecht Schafran, Senior Vice-President of Legal Momentum, the Women's Legal Defense & Education Fund. Lynn and Neeta discuss the case of a Hague mother, Narkis Golan, whose case went all the way to the Supreme Court in 2022, where she won. Tragically Narkis has since died (her death is under investigation) and the courts will now determine whether her son gets to stay with his family in the United States or is released into the custody of social services in Italy for supervised visitation with his father.

Our thanks to Neeta for permission to share this podcast (and for joining the Hague Mothers' team!)

[Teaching the Hague & Inspiring Activists](#)

The Hague Abduction Convention process allows fathers to continue to abuse mothers who are fleeing violence. Changing it is difficult. It will need a whole generation of activist lawyers and policy-makers. Dr Sonja Ayeb-Karlsson (Everyday Disasters & Violences Research Group Lead, UCL) & Kim Fawcett (Teaching Fellow in Criminal Law and Criminal Justice, Durham University Law School) have begun that task with their undergraduates. Find out what they are doing, why it's important, and what the response of their students has been to their innovative and powerful teaching. This could be a model for universities everywhere.

For more info about UCL's BSc in Global Humanitarian Studies, follow this [link](#).

[It's post-separation legal abuse, not high-conflict divorce](#)

Domestic abusers often exert control over their ex-partners through the legal system – a form of post-separation legal abuse that takes a tremendous psychological toll on victim-survivors and children, and which can continue for years, even decades. And yet the legal system often mistakes legal abuse for "high conflict divorce" and assumes that both parties are equally at fault. Find out how the courts could protect victims, rather than enabling their abusers to continue, and even escalate the abuse. Thanks to authors Lisa Aronson Fontes & Christine Cocchiola for permission to republish this blog which originally appeared in Psychology Today.

[‘I didn’t have a chance’: perceptions of the attitudes and roles of legal professionals for women involved in Hague international child abduction cases](#)

And here’s a superb new article about the Hague Convention & women's access to justice (or lack of it) from Gina Masterton and colleagues. Thank you for your advocacy & activism Gina – & for being part of our Australian team.

And we’re still growing!

Our international team now has 70 members; our [Twitter account](#) is followed by 500 people; and last month our website had 1,489 visits from 56 countries. Please do tell others about our campaign to end the injustices of the Hague Abduction Convention. And if you have skills or expertise to offer the Hague Mothers’ project, please get in touch with Ruth: Hague@FiLiA.org.uk.

Thank you for your interest in the Hague Mothers’ project.

Together we can, and will, make change happen.

Ruth, Michelle, and the international Hague Mothers’ project team.

#SolidarityWithHagueMothers #HagueMothers



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