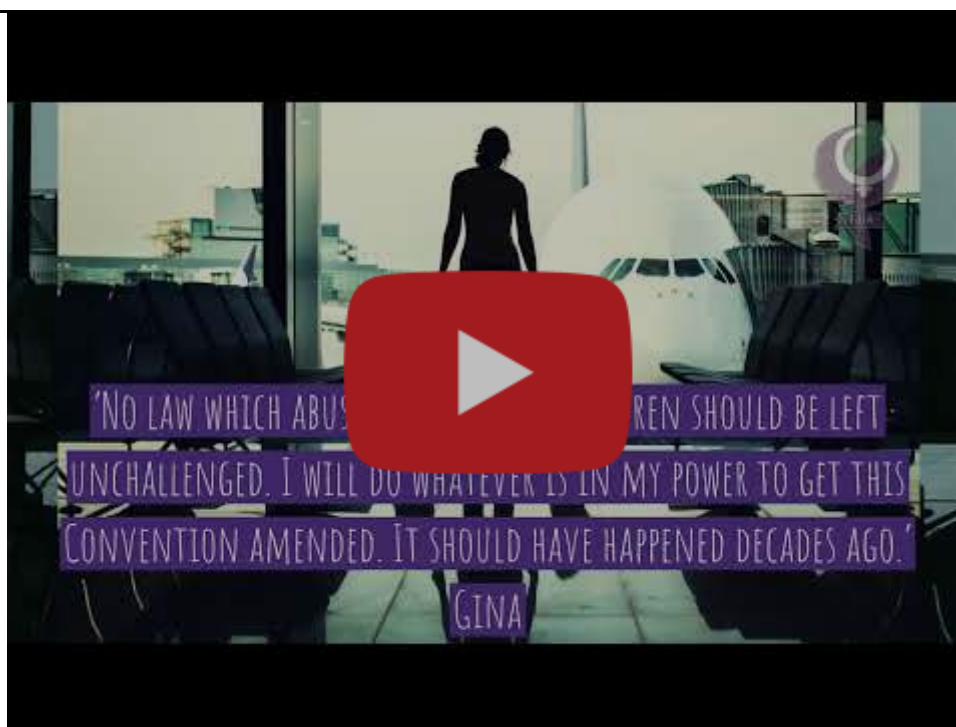




Hague Mothers

PART OF THE FILIA LEGACY PROJECT

Hague Mothers Newsletter August 2022



FiLiA2022 Session Announcement: Hague Mothers: Injustice to Activism

Over 1000 tickets sold, another 200 for speakers, stall-holders and volunteers... [get yours now!](#)

The main Hague Mothers' session will be on Sunday 23 October, with US lawyer & activist **Sudha Shetty**, academic & activist **Gina Hope Masterton** (Australia), Hague Mother turned Hague academic **Kim Fawcett** (UK) and the voices of Hague Mothers from across the world.

Dear <<First Name>> ,

Spotlight on the HM project team...

While the rest of the world has been taking a well-earned break, the Australia/New Zealand group has been bursting out all over – helped in no small part by the formidable and extraordinarily well-connected Angela Lynch (thank you, Angela). The team include:

Yvette Cehtel, CEO of Women's Legal Service Tasmania and the Women's Legal Service Australia representative on the National Women's Safety Alliance. She has a Masters of Law in human rights and is committed to addressing structural inequalities.

Michelle Dörendahl is a mother, musician, law and criminology student, and domestic violence survivor, an experience which motivated her aspiration to support women & children living with or escaping violence.

Lily Fetter is a health professional and family violence & social justice campaigner and advocate. She draws on her own experience as a survivor to improve support for women and children who are leaving, or who have left, violent or abusive relationships.

Janet Fraser is a mother, poet, historian, National Convenor of the Australian homebirth network, Joyous Birth, the convenor of the Feminist Legal Clinic, and cofounder of the NSW Women's Guild. She is currently working on a law degree.

Anna Kerr is the founder and Principal Solicitor of Feminist Legal Clinic, a community legal service which focuses on advancing the human rights of women and children. She also coordinates a Women's Court Support Service in the Sydney Family Court.

Jessica Raffal is a senior lawyer with International Social Service Australia. She leads a research and advocacy project which aims to better protect victims/survivors of domestic violence in Australia's implementation of the 1980 Hague Convention.

And a FiLiA volunteer has kindly stepped forward to help with the admin. Longer bios are on our [website](#). Thanks to all for their commitment to the Hague Mothers' project.

Antipodean Action Plan

The UK project team co-designed their Awareness-Raising Action Plan last month (and very fine it is too). This month saw the inaugural meeting of the Australian/New Zealand project team – particularly timely since the

Australian Attorney-General has committed to a review of the Convention in relation of domestic violence. The group identified key aims...

- Project team members are part of the Attorney-General's review and are able to influence the outcomes.
- Hague mothers and children facing a Hague case are appropriately supported.
- Politicians, policy-makers and influencers are aware of the issues, supportive of the campaign, and undertaking advocacy & action.
- Hague mothers & potential Hague mothers are aware of the Convention, of its possible impact on them and their children, and are signposted to support.

... and we agreed a set of actions to go with them. These are already underway.

We very much hope to be able to report back on one particular inspiring action in the next Newsletter. Watch this space!

What needs to change to make the Convention fit for purpose?

We've been reading research papers and Hague Committee submissions, and having conversations and group discussions about how (and if) the Convention can be made fit for purpose. This is a long-term initiative but it has been given extra urgency by the Australian Attorney-General's proposed review. And our project team are not short of ideas.

They include: a requirement that Article 13b explicitly applies to circumstances where there is domestic violence – and not only when this is directed specifically at the child; provisions to ensure that children's views are routinely taken into account, and that the counter-charge of parental alienation is not permitted; preventing the court from accepting undertakings as a means of defeating the grave risk defence in domestic violence cases; and compulsory training for the judiciary re: sex-based structural inequality, bias and privilege; domestic violence and coercive control; CEDAW and the UN Rights of the Child.

By a happy piece of serendipity, GlobalARRK has just published its six 'Principles for Change' which cover many of the same essentials. They are:

1. **Access to relocation:** Relocation / Leave to Remove cases should be fair, accessible to all and completed within a reasonable time period.
2. **Equality of legal aid:** Legal Aid should be equally available to both applicant and respondent in Hague Abduction Convention proceedings.
3. **Hearing children & young people:** Children and young people going through Hague Abduction proceedings should have their concerns

comprehensively 'heard' and assessed by the court.

4. **Protecting children & young people:** Children and young people should be safeguarded by clear and effective cross-border communication and cooperation.

After the Conference, we'll organise a number of international seminars to refine our collective Hague Mothers' 'what needs to change' list. Then we'll write it up and start to make it happen!

Two mothers, Two Stories

Finally, a distressing reminder of why this project is necessary. Two stories, one from a Hague mother whose fight to be reunited with her son [is just beginning](#).

And one from [a mother facing kidnapping charges](#) three years after she fled from the US to Canada in an attempt to escape domestic violence and coercive control.

Our hearts go out to both of them, and to Hague mothers and children across the world who are victims of the Convention.

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

Please do share this newsletter and information about the project with others.

Together we can, and will, make change happen.

#SolidarityWithHagueMothers

#justiceForHagueMothers



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