



Hague Mothers Newsletter September 2023

Dear <<First Name>>,

Welcome to our September Newsletter in the lead-up to both the FiLiA Conference (October 13–15 in Glasgow) and the all-important Hague Special Commission Meeting at The Hague from October 10th to 13th.

To say we've been busy would be an understatement! Please help us raise awareness during these final two weeks...



1. [Our Open Letter to the Hague Permanent Bureau](#)

Over 90 international experts & organisations signed our [Open Letter](#). It's a hugely impressive list!

We asked for:

- A recognition that improvement is needed in the implementation of the Hague Abduction Convention for survivors of domestic abuse who flee for safety with their children.

- A commitment by the Permanent Bureau and State Parties to improve matters in this regard.
- An agreement to assemble a new working group with the specific purpose of advancing improvements to the application of the Hague Abduction Convention for this population.

Secretary-General Bernasconi has agreed to circulate our letter to all delegates and has offered to meet with us to discuss our concerns. Thanks to him & to all the signatories.

[2. Open Letter to HCCH from UN Special Rapporteur on VAWG Reem Alsalem and colleagues](#)

Along with colleagues Mama Fatima Singhatheh, UN SR on the sale, sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children, and Dr Alice Edwards, UN SR on torture, Reem Alsalem has sent a letter to the The Hague Conference on Private International Law in advance of the October meeting.

‘Courts must recognise that a child’s return order frequently compels an abuse survivor to return to life-threatening violence and harm or to be separated from her child. Neither option is acceptable. It is essential that the injustices wrought – albeit unintentionally – by the current implementation of the Hague Abduction Convention are recognised and acted upon.’

Heartfelt thanks to Reem Alsalem from FiLiA Hague Mothers for her continued support.

[3. Protect Hague Victims petition now at over 37,000 signatures!](#)

This international petition was set up by GlobalARRK in collaboration with:



New Zealand Hague Collective; Ark of Hope, Australia; Hague Collective, US; New York Sanctuary for Families; Hague Mothers Japan; Maes de Haia, Brazil; Revibra, Europe & Brazil; Far From Home, India; and FiLiA Hague Mothers.

It's been translated into eight languages and, at the time of writing, has gathered over 37,000 signatures.

[Please help to #ProtectHagueVictims and sign, share, and share again!](#)

4. [Breaking Silence documentary](#)

An extraordinarily powerful documentary about two extraordinary mothers. *Breaking Silence* helps lift the lid on the reality of the Hague Abduction Convention. It's based in New Zealand but the problems are global.

Please watch and share and help us get the word out about the injustices caused by the Convention. It's long past time for change.



5. Hague mothers' voices

At the printers right now!

Testimonies from Hague mothers from across the world. We aim to give a copy to every delegate attending the Hague Special Commission.

Full update soon.

And more...

Safeguarding and Empowering Children project

We've been invited by WAVE (Women Against Violence Europe) to take part in this important project, working alongside Autonomous Women's House Zagreb from Croatia, NANE Women's Rights Association from Hungary, ZIF – Central Information Office of Autonomous Women's Shelters from Germany, and the Women's Rights Foundation from Malta.

The project has already resulted in a comprehensive child safeguarding framework for women's specialist services – [The Guidelines for safeguarding and empowering children](#) – which can be adapted to different national contexts.

Hague Mothers will be represented by Dr Adrienne Barnett and Kim Fawcett of Brunel University. We hope to post a blog about the project on our website very soon.

European Network of Migrant Women's new project – FULFIL

The European Network of Migrant Women (ENoMW) have launched FULFIL, a project focused on building the capacity of legal practitioners for strategic litigation in cases of violations of fundamental rights of migrant and refugee women. This includes the creation of an EU-wide network of lawyers & legal experts. Hague Mothers, in the form of Dr Adrienne Barnett (Brunel University) and Dr Sonja Ayeb-Karlsson (University College London), were invited to present at a recent meeting which looked at cases of violation of migrant mothers and criminalising of mothers leading to their losing of child custody, alongside nonstate torture, asylum and the EU Charter of fundamental rights.

Thanks to them both, and thanks to ENoMW for the invitation.

[Hague Explained CIC](#)

Hague Explained is a new non-profit working to benefit international families by helping ensure employers meet their duty of care when posting staff abroad and by raising awareness of the Hague Convention on the Abduction of Children.

Sara Kinnaird and Anita Gera, themselves mothers with experience of Hague Convention cases will offer informative, interactive and bespoke workshops to alert attendees to the risks of moving families abroad. Primarily aimed at organisations with expat staff, the workshops are also relevant for parents who need to better understand the risks to families when moving to another country and for others who may be impacted by the Convention such as domestic violence charities, social workers and the police.

And a shout-out to Dee of Women are People Too who has offered to donate £5.00 from every sale of these [beautiful silver earrings](#) to our campaign.

That's Christmas and birthdays sorted for the foreseeable!

Thank you so much Dee.



***Thank you for your support.
In solidarity with Hague mothers across the world.***

Ruth, Michelle & FiLiA

#SolidarityWithHagueMothers #HagueMothers



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