



Hague Mothers Newsletter January 2024

STOP PRESS

Wonderful news. Narkis Golan's son Bradley will be allowed to remain in the US with his loving aunt. For those of you unaware of this inspirational mother and her battle to safeguard her vulnerable young son, here's Grant Wyeth's [powerful account](#) written for Movement of Mothers.

'Despite its initial intent to safeguard the best interests of children, the Hague Convention has now become a jurisdictional law that pays little attention to child welfare. In doing so the convention provides an international framework to facilitate the embedded legal culture that men have entitlements that are divorced from their actions, and women and children simply do not have the right to leave abusive domestic environments.'

Dear <<First Name>> ,

2024 & a shiny new structure!

FiLiA Hague Mothers came into being almost two years ago, inspired by a chance meeting between our coordinator Ruth and a formidable Hague mum, and the realisation that the well-intentioned Hague Abduction Convention is being used to further control domestic abuse victims. That understanding led to a conversation with FiLiA's CEO Lisa-Marie which resulted in our campaign to end the injustices of the Convention, specifically for mothers and children who are victims of domestic abuse.

We are now increasingly influential, across the world. All participants contribute their knowledge, time and passion on a voluntary basis and, other than support from FiLiA to set up and maintain our website, we remain unfunded.

Our [new structure](#) is intended to enable all participants to contribute fully, and ensure that we remain true to FiLiA's mission: to build sisterhood and solidarity; amplify the voices of women: and defend women's human rights. Sooo...

1. We have expanded our International Strategy Group to include Hague mothers from three continents and a wider range of international expertise. The group includes Adrienne Barnett (UK), Stephanie Brandt (US), Yvette Cehtel (Aus), Nicole Fidler (US), Miranda Kaye (Aus), Ruth Lamont (UK), Sudha Shetty (US), Merle Weiner (US) and Sally Jackson, chair of FiLiA trustees, who will oversee the campaign. See our updated [team page](#) for the full, glorious, list!

2. We have created a ten-strong Mothers Expert Group who will advise on strategic decisions and initiate actions in their own right.

3. Our three 'country-based' members groups have expanded to reflect our growing international membership.

4. We are expanding and strengthening connections with grassroots groups and NGOs. Our fabulous partners include: Backbone Collective (NZ), Brunel

University London, Global Lives Research Centre; Gambe; GlobalARRK; Hague Collective (US); Hague Explained CIC; Her Hague Story; Hague Mothers Japan; New Zealand Hague Collective; Revibra Europe; SHERA Research Group; Survivor Family Network; University College London, Institute for Risk & Disaster Reduction; Women Against Violence Europe (WAVE Network); Women's Legal Services Australia.

What's the plan?

We've also revisited [our strategy](#):

Phase 1 (2022) Our initial focus was on building the team, raising awareness, and both creating and collating resources.

Phase 2 (2023) We began to strengthen and expand our wider network, and raise our profile. We published a series of position papers, held an international webinar, published a booklet of extracts from mothers' stories, and hosted a series of podcasts. Significantly, we began to lobby governments, and to advocate directly with the Hague Special Commission. That activity helped to create momentum for change resulting in a proposed forum on Domestic Abuse and The Hague Convention which is due to take place in Pretoria in June 2024. We have been invited onto the Steering Group by Secretary-General Bernasconi who is leading on the initiative.

Phase 3 (2024) Our main focus will be on the Pretoria forum, and on doing everything we can to ensure that it leads to real change for protective mothers and their children. We hope to get funding for much-needed research in this field, and to raise awareness of the impact of domestic abuse on children and the reality of the legal abuse enabled by the courts. We will also be supporting our three project groups to undertake whatever actions they feel are necessary to safeguard and support mothers in their part of the world. And we'll continue to expand our team, strengthen our partnerships, and build a powerful, reciprocal network of change-makers.

Watch this space!

What else?

We are still in the process of updating our resource library. There will be a plethora of additional items added in the next couple of weeks (including from our members) which we'll highlight in the next newsletter. We're also

planning podcasts with WAVE, Revibra and Hague Explained among others. Plus we're writing a set of Expert Papers outlining our key concerns in relation to domestic abuse and the Hague.

If you'd like to help us, please do get in touch with Ruth at Hague@FiLiA.org.uk. The company is entirely awesome!

Ruth, Sally & FiLiA

#SolidarityWithHagueMothers #HagueMothers



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