



National Council For Adoption

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Response to the FY 2017 Annual Report on Intercountry Adoption

March 23, 2018 – Alexandria, VA – The U.S. Department of State has released its FY 2017 Annual Report on Intercountry Adoptions,¹ revealing that American families adopted 4,714 children through intercountry adoption from October 1, 2016 through September 30, 2017. This marks more than 12% decline from the 5,372 foreign-born children adopted the previous year and a 79% decline since intercountry adoptions reached a peak in 2004, when 22,991 foreign-born children were adopted. The recent report indicates this is the lowest number of intercountry adoptions to the United States since 1973.

“While the continued decline in intercountry adoption is heartbreaking for U.S. families wanting to adopt, the real tragedy is for the many orphaned and abandoned children in need of the love, protection, and care of a family,” says NCFCA president and CEO Chuck Johnson. “The unfortunate reality is that, while millions of children in need of parents continue to wait, the options for those children to find families are shrinking.”

“Though we were expecting to see such a decline, given the current landscape of intercountry adoption, it’s still disappointing to see this report,” says Johnson. “The Department of State’s report indicates they have focused on improving communication with stakeholders, despite the purposeful limitation of stakeholder engagement, and the clear deterioration of their relationship with the adoption community. Relations between the Office of Children’s Issues and the adoption community are at an all-time low.”

The Department of State’s report did not mention the recent news report that an anonymous Department of State whistleblower has stated the Office of Children’s Issues has an anti-adoption bias,² nor the controversy that began after announcing significant fee increases on adoption service providers by the Department’s new accrediting entity.

The report shows a 15% decline in adoptions from China, which was the country of origin with the most adoptions in FY 2017 and FY 2016, comprising 40% of all intercountry adoptions by U.S. families in FY 2017. The report also notes that the Democratic Republic of the Congo, with the second-most adoptions in FY 2016, stopped issuing exit visas for adopted Congolese children. Only 26 children’s adoptions from the DRC were finalized last year, a 93% drop. Ugandan adoptions, which were seventh-highest in FY 2016, dropped by 71%.

¹ <https://travel.state.gov/content/dam/NEWadoptionassets/pdfs/Annual%20Report%20on%20Intercountry%20Adoptions%20FY2017.pdf>

² <http://thefederalist.com/2018/03/19/bucking-trump-deregulation-agenda-state-department-chokes-international-adoption/>

National Council For Adoption continues to call on Congress to provide more mission-specific direction to the Department of State and more clearly define their responsibilities as the United States' Central Adoption Authority. NCFA believes that passage of the Vulnerable Children and Families Act of 2017³ would be a positive step in that direct. The VCF Act would strategically strengthen international child welfare efforts through international diplomacy and U.S. foreign policy within the State Department.

Outgoing (Emigrating) Adoptions

The recent Department of State report indicates only 83 children found families through outgoing intercountry adoptions, a slight decline from the previous year, though a recent U.S. Department of Health and Human Services report⁴ shows that almost 118,000 children in our country are waiting to be adopted. Outgoing adoptions can give waiting children in the U.S. foster care system an opportunity to find a permanent, loving family.

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ABOUT NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR ADOPTION

Founded in 1980, National Council For Adoption (NCFA) is a global adoption advocacy nonprofit that promotes a culture of adoption through education, research, legislative action, and collaboration. As the authoritative voice for adoption, NCFA's areas of focus include domestic infant adoption, adoption and permanency outcomes for youth in foster care, and intercountry adoption. Passionately committed to the belief that every child deserves to thrive in a nurturing, permanent family, NCFA serves children, birth parents, adopted individuals, adoptive families, and adoption professionals. In addition, we work tirelessly to educate U.S. and foreign government officials and policymakers, members of the media, and all those in the general public with an interest in adoption. For more information, visit www.AdoptionCouncil.org.

³ <http://www.adoptioncouncil.org/files/large/aca2f07556c5b73>

⁴ <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/cb/afcarsreport24.pdf>