

8 July 2012

The Honorable Hillary Rodham Clinton
Secretary of State
US Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Madam Secretary,

We, the undersigned, as advocates for left-behind parents of thousands of children who have been abducted and remain retained in Japan appeal to you for help. Our children have little or no contact with their left-behind parent and are at the mercy of a legal system that will do nothing to ensure they have ongoing, meaningful contact with both of their parents.

The continued retention of our children violates international law, ethical norms, and human decency. Our children have been stolen from us, and contrary to claims of Japanese cultural norms, under Japanese law when Japan acceded to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, it is the fundamental human right of children to share their lives with both parents, their extended families, and heritage. We have limited or no contact with our children, many of whom have been turned against us as a result of parental alienation, a documented form of child abuse. Our children lost half their identities when they were torn from their homes, families, and friends. It is impossible to over-emphasize that the current system of sole custody and termination of parental rights for non-custodial parents in Japan condones and in fact encourages child abductions. Furthermore, visitation rights are not enforceable. The dysfunctional family law and court system remain the root cause of the problem.

We and our families are devastated – emotionally and financially – by the loss of our children and seek your assistance in ensuring that the U.S. Government is exercising all available means at its disposal to assist us in highlighting the human rights abuses they are suffering every day that they remain abducted.

Madam Secretary, we strongly urge you to press Japan to accede to The Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction during this current Diet session and implement the required measures to ensure compliance in word and in spirit of this treaty. We implore you to bring Japan to resolve all current outstanding cases of child abduction. We support U.S. Representative Smith's efforts on promoting H.R. 1940, legislation which includes Presidential Actions up to and including economic sanctions against countries that condone child abduction, and ask for your support as well.

Madam Secretary, we would welcome the opportunity to meet with you directly to discuss how progress can be made. The child-parent bond should never be broken. Please help our children whose human rights are being violated, and help us reunite with our children.

Sincerely,

John Gomez, Director, Kizuna Child-Parent Reunion
Akihisa Hirata, Director, Kizuna CPR
Steve Christie, Director, Kizuna CPR
Bruce Gherbetti, Director Kizuna CPR