



INTRODUCTION

CHILD ABDUCTIONS are difficult and complex when they occur within Canada. When they involve other countries, they are even more so. Provincial/territorial and federal governments co-operate closely in assisting parents affected by such abductions. These cases involve Canadian children who have been wrongfully removed from Canada, or who have been prevented from returning home by one of their parents. There are hundreds of active cases.

Each international child abduction is unique. It is important, therefore, that you, the affected parent, work closely with officials to improve the chances that you can be reunited with your child. You must be directly involved in the search and the anticipated return. This is a bewildering and often prolonged experience. The objective of this manual, therefore, is to help you understand the process and to direct you to appropriate sources of help.

The Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction—known as the Hague Convention—is the main international treaty that can assist parents whose children have been abducted to another country. As of June 2001, approximately 70 countries have adopted the Convention, including Canada. It offers considerable assistance in the case of children abducted to signatory countries, and over 375 Canadian children have been returned under its arrangements.