

BACHOME

BRING ABDUCTED CHILDREN HOME

September 15, 2011

The President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue N.W.
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

For the past 50 years, Japan has denied loving American parents custodial rights or any access to their abducted children. Yet Japanese Prime Ministers have no reservation about publicly demanding the return of Japanese citizens abducted to North Korea. This week Prime Minister Noda stated they would spare no effort towards achieving the return of all abductees. We ask that you immediately follow his example and publicly address the abduction of U.S. children to and within Japan during next week's meeting in New York with Prime Minister Noda and that public efforts continue until:

- all American children abducted from the U.S. are immediately returned home in compliance with U.S. law.
- all American children abducted within Japan have immediate and unfettered access to their American parent.

Abduction is a heartbreaking loss for left-behind parents, depriving children of a loving relationship with both parents. There are 268 known cases involving 374 children American children who have been abducted to Japan since 1994. According to the U.S. Department of State, zero cases have been successfully resolved through either the Japanese judicial system or through diplomatic means. This crisis has persisted for decades.

In May 2011, Japan announced its intention to sign the Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction. The Hague Convention is not retroactive and effectively does nothing to resolve existing cases. There has been no indication that the Government of Japan is considering any kind of bi-lateral solution to resolve existing abduction cases and wishes for our children to remain kidnapped in Japan, permanently separated from their U.S. families.

The State Department's closed-door negotiations with Japan have not yielded any of the results that left-behind parents are seeking. For the past 50 years, *quiet diplomacy has not yielded the return of a single abducted American child* from Japan. This dire situation with Japan is similar to the problems experienced with Germany in the 1990s. When President Bill Clinton finally made strong, public statements about child abduction to Germany, Germany took actions to resolve child abduction cases. We need similar action from you, Mr. President. The future of our U.S. children is in your hands.

America has helped Japan without reservation during the tragic earthquake, tsunami, and radiation crisis that has created an ongoing, substantial public health danger to our abducted children. Now, it is time for Japan to show gratitude beyond mere words by cooperating on the abduction issue to provide solutions that will return our abducted children without delay. Bringing our children home should be of paramount importance in the bilateral US-Japan relationship. By pressing the Japanese government both publicly and privately, we will be in a better position to recover our beloved children.

Most respectfully,

Paul Toland, National Coordinating Director
Douglass Berg, Eastern Regional Director
Randy Collins, Southwest Regional Director

Jeffery Morehouse, Pacific Northwest Regional Co-Director
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