

previously reported an abduction to the Central Authority of the United States before August 8, 2014, the notification required under subsection (a) shall be provided as soon as is practicable.

(Pub. L. 113–150, title I, §104, Aug. 8, 2014, 128 Stat. 1816.)

SUBCHAPTER II—ACTIONS BY THE
SECRETARY OF STATE

§ 9121. Response to international child abductions

(a) United States policy

It is the policy of the United States—

(1) to promote the best interest of children wrongfully abducted from the United States by—

(A) establishing legal rights and procedures for their prompt return; and

(B) ensuring the enforcement of reciprocal international obligations under the Hague Abduction Convention or arrangements under bilateral procedures;

(2) to promote the timely resolution of abduction cases through 1 or more of the actions described in section 9122 of this title; and

(3) to ensure appropriate coordination within the Federal Government and between Federal, State, and local agencies involved in abduction prevention, investigation, and resolution.

(b) Actions by the Secretary of State in response to unresolved cases

(1) Determination of action by the Secretary of State

For each abduction or access case relating to a child whose habitual residence is in the United States that remains pending or is otherwise unresolved on the date that is 12 months after the date on which the Central Authority of the United States submits such case to a foreign country, the Secretary of State shall determine whether the government of such foreign country has failed to take appropriate steps to resolve the case. If the Secretary of State determines that such failure occurred, the Secretary should, as expeditiously as practicable—

(A) take 1 or more of the actions described in subsections (d) and (e) of section 9122 of this title; and

(B) direct the Chief of Mission in that foreign country to directly address the resolution of the case with senior officials in the foreign government.

(2) Authority for delay of action by the Secretary of State

The Secretary of State may delay any action described in paragraph (1) if the Secretary determines that an additional period of time, not to exceed 1 year, will substantially assist in resolving the case.

(3) Report

If the Secretary of State delays any action pursuant to paragraph (2) or decides not to take an action described in subsection (d) or (e) of section 9122 of this title after making

the determination described in paragraph (1), the Secretary, not later than 15 days after such delay or decision, shall provide a report to the appropriate congressional committees that details the reasons for delaying action or not taking action, as appropriate.

(4) Congressional briefings

At the request of the appropriate congressional committees, the Secretary of State shall provide a detailed briefing, including a written report, if requested, on actions taken to resolve a case or the cause for delay.

(c) Implementation

(1) In general

In carrying out subsection (b), the Secretary of State should—

(A) take 1 or more actions that most appropriately respond to the nature and severity of the governmental failure to resolve the unresolved abduction case; and

(B) seek, to the fullest extent possible—

(i) to initially respond by communicating with the Central Authority of the country; and

(ii) if clause (i) is unsuccessful, to target subsequent actions—

(I) as narrowly as practicable, with respect to the agencies or instrumentalities of the foreign government that are responsible for such failures; and

(II) in ways that respect the separation of powers and independence of the judiciary of the country, as applicable.

(2) Guidelines for actions by the Secretary of State

In addition to the guidelines under paragraph (1), the Secretary of State, in determining whether to take 1 or more actions under paragraphs (5) through (7) of section 9122(d) of this title or section 9122(e) of this title, shall seek to minimize any adverse impact on—

(A) the population of the country whose government is targeted by the action or actions;

(B) the humanitarian activities of United States and nongovernmental organizations in the country; and

(C) the national security interests of the United States.

(Pub. L. 113–150, title II, §201, Aug. 8, 2014, 128 Stat. 1817.)

§ 9122. Actions by the Secretary of State in response to patterns of noncompliance in cases of international child abductions

(a) Response to a pattern of noncompliance

It is the policy of the United States—

(1) to oppose institutional or other systemic failures of foreign governments to fulfill their obligations pursuant to the Hague Abduction Convention or bilateral procedures, as applicable, to resolve abduction and access cases;

(2) to promote reciprocity pursuant to, and in compliance with, the Hague Abduction Convention or bilateral procedures, as appropriate; and

(3) to directly engage with senior foreign government officials to most effectively address patterns of noncompliance.