

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Legal and Medical Experts to Testify Before Inter-American Commission on Human Rights in Support of International Adoption

Recent closure of international adoption programs in Central and South American countries violates children's human rights, experts say

Washington, D.C.—The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights will hold a hearing regarding the “Human Rights of Unparented Children and International Adoption Policies” in the Americas on **Friday, November 6, in Washington, D.C.** The hearing, requested by Harvard Law School’s Child Advocacy Program and the Center for Adoption Policy, will begin at **2:30 p.m.** at the **Organization of American States, Ruben Dario Room, GSB Building, 1889 F St. N.W., Washington, D.C.**

International adoption is the subject of a heated debate among those in the human rights field, and the hearing comes in the wake of policies that have virtually shut down international adoption in Guatemala, Honduras, and Peru.

This hearing represents a major development in the human rights debate surrounding these issues, as the Commission will address human rights violations that to date have been largely ignored. Many have claimed the human rights mantle in opposing international adoption. The legal and medical experts testifying on November 6 will argue that restrictions on ethical international adoption violate children’s basic human rights by condemning them to damaging institutions or to the streets. They contend that every child has a right to be placed in a nurturing permanent home, whether that home is in the country of birth or abroad. Adoption abuses should, they say, be addressed through enforcement and strengthening of laws prohibiting such abuses, not through closing down international adoption and thus denying homes to children.

The delegation will urge the Commission to initiate an investigation to examine what effect closing international adoption opportunities in these countries has had on unparented children.

The testifying delegation includes leading pediatric experts on early brain development, and legal experts on human and child rights:

- **Elizabeth Bartholet**, Professor of Law and Faculty Director of Child Advocacy Program, Harvard Law School;
- **Paulo Barrozo**, Asst. Professor of Law and International Human Rights Scholar, Boston College Law School;
- **Karen Bos and Charles Nelson**, Children’s Hospital Boston, Harvard Medical School and Harvard School of Public Health.

A copy of the written testimony to be presented to the Commission is attached, and a tape recording of the testimony will be available after the hearing at the following website:
<http://www.cidh.oas.org/prensa/publichearings/Hearings.aspx?Lang=EN&Session=117>

The Child Advocacy Program (CAP) at Harvard Law School is committed to advancing children's rights and interests, and to training generations of students to contribute to law reform and social change. One of the only legal programs of its kind, CAP unites the study of law and the practice of law. The Center for Adoption Policy is a non-profit organization whose mission is to promote effective legislation and ethical practices governing domestic and intercountry adoption. It is not affiliated with any organization involved in adoptive placement.

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