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NCFA’s Response to the Guatemalan Adoption Controversy

August 17, 2011 – Alexandria, Va. – According to various reports, a Guatemalan court has annulled the Guatemalan passport of a child adopted by U.S. citizens in 2007, and also ordered Guatemalan authorities to work with the U.S. Embassy to locate and retrieve the child. This court decision cites fraud, believing that the child was kidnapped. The child entered the U.S. through a valid immigration process, and presumably became a U.S. citizen at the time she entered the U.S. with her adoptive parents.

Ordering the return of an adopted child by a country of origin is unprecedented in intercountry adoption. This case has been the subject of disputed facts and allegations, and the complete evidence that led to the court’s decision of the Guatemalan court is not known. Accordingly, the outcome of this situation is unpredictable and what official steps may be taken are unknown.

NCFA recognizes the heartache that a situation like this causes for all involved. This case may naturally lead to some public doubt regarding the intercountry adoption process. However, NCFA also recognizes that this is one tragedy amongst hundreds of thousands of ethical and successful intercountry adoptions.

“Every adoption system has its challenges, and we must continue to advocate to strengthen ethical intercountry adoption practices to better serve the needs of orphaned and abandoned children,” says Chuck Johnson, president and CEO of NCFA. “Although the final outcome of this case remains unknown, it appears that there are two families who love this child, and hopefully they can find a way to work together in her best interests. NCFA will continue to advocate for ethical and transparent adoption practices that protect children, birthparents, and adoptive families, so that every child may be provided with a permanent, loving home and the care and support of a nurturing family.”

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Founded in 1980, the National Council For Adoption (NCFA) is an adoption advocacy nonprofit that promotes a positive culture of adoption through education, research, and legislative action. Through its core areas of focus—infant adoption, adoption out of foster care, and intercountry adoption—NCFA serves children, birthparents, adoptive families, adoption agencies, U.S. and foreign governments, policymakers, media, and the general public as the authoritative voice for adoption.

More information is available on our website, www.adoptioncouncil.org.