



DEFENSA DE NIÑAS Y NIÑOS INTERNACIONAL DNI
DEFENSE DES ENFANTS INTERNATIONALE DEI
DEFENCE FOR CHILDREN INTERNATIONAL DCI

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Press Release: February 2010

A call for a halt to permanent and temporary evacuations of Haitian children.

Offers to adopt Haitian children continue to pour in from countries around the world, and there is little doubt that most of them come with good intentions. It is imperative, however, that individuals and States use their good judgement and follow international legal standards for interstate adoptions—not their own emotions—in these trying weeks and months following the 12 January earthquake.

It is a fact that many children in Haitian orphanages at the time of the quake were not in fact orphans. Prior to the disaster, parents were known to leave their children at orphanages—often temporarily—as a way to provide for them in times of extreme financial stress. This practice has increased in the wake of 12 January, as impoverished families become increasingly desperate to provide for their youngest members.

Moreover, as was the case in the aftermath of the 2004 Tsunami, there is an acute danger that children found alone in the streets will be assumed to be orphans and rounded up to be sent overseas for adoption or, even worse, trafficked into slavery.

It is in the long-term interests of a child that he or she is permitted to grow up among family members, friends and culture. Defence for Children International therefore calls on individuals, States and international actors to respect the international Convention on the Rights of the Child and its relative protocol concerning child trafficking, as well as the Hague Convention concerning international adoptions.

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