

U.S. and Lebanon Organizations Partner to Help Internationally Abducted Children; Advocate Global Awareness, Prevention

U.S.-Lebanon organizations form partnership to raise awareness of and prevent International Parental Child Abduction (IPCA).

WASHINGTON, DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, UNITED STATES, October 19, 2021 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Two civil society organizations in the United States and Lebanon are forming a partnership to reunite children and parents who suffer from trauma and lasting impact of family separation caused by [International Parental Child Abduction](#) (IPCA).

U.S.-based [iStand Parent Network Inc.](#) and Lebanon-based [iHOPE](#) (International Help. Offer. Protect. Empower.) recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding to help prevent and resolve child abductions through regional and global education, innovative legal strategies, and public policy reform.

"We are immensely grateful for our new partners at iHOPE, and together we will help children come home and heal from abduction," said Dr. Noelle Hunter, iStand co-founder.

"We will also engage nations in solution-driven dialogue, diplomacy and collaborative action to remedy this painful problem for families," she said.

iStand Parent Network Inc. is a national resource and support network for parents and families of the 800-1,000 children who are annually abducted from the U.S. to a foreign nation. Since 2014, the organization has helped reunite parents and 54 children abducted to 13 nations. iStand is also a trusted resource for federal agencies and members of Congress in addressing IPCA and its leadership has offered testimony at numerous congressional hearings on the issue.



Dr. Noelle Hunter, iStand Parent Network Inc. and Attorney Mohamad Ayouby, iHOPE, signed an MOU in Washington DC in September.

Hunter said the new partnership with iHOPE evolved naturally through the resolution of a high-profile abduction case. In 2018, U.S. mother and iStand parent Michelle Littleton engaged iHOPE co-founder Mohamad Ayouby's Tripoli-based law firm to help her recover her three children who were abducted to Lebanon by their father. The Littleton children's return set precedent in Lebanese courts, and positioned Ayouby's firm to successfully resolve other cases of international parental child abduction to Lebanon.

Now, the two organizations have formed a partnership to challenge conventional norms and institutional barriers to resolving child abductions, promote regional and global understanding of the rights of children to have parents present in their lives, and to enhance public and private sector capabilities, roles and responsibilities to facilitate family reunifications.

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Our collaboration with iStand opens new pathways in the U.S. and in Arab nations for strong legal, judicial and public education strategies to help internationally abducted children, Ayouby said.”

*Mohamad Ayouby, Attorney
and iHOPE Co-founder*

“We are convinced that our collaboration with iStand, and the additional partnerships that will come from this alliance, will open new pathways in the U.S. and in Arab nations for strong legal, judicial and public education strategies to solve this problem,” Ayouby said.

Recently recognized by the Tripoli Bar Association, the iStand-iHOPE partnership officially began in September, when Ayouby traveled to Washington DC to meet with members of Congress and diplomats at the Lebanese Embassy, and to deliver keynote remarks at the iStand Parent Network International Parents Conference.

In addition, iHOPE recently published a study through its research arm, AIM, entitled, *Forcible Absence of American Children Outside the Borders: A legal mechanism to reduce the cases of American Children Abduction in Lebanon*, which delineates the challenges of cultural differences and judicial discretion, and advances a legal framework for IPCA prevention and resolution in



Lebanon and that may be modeled in other Arab nations.

Among the stated goals of the partnership, iStand and iHOPE seek to:

- * Establish a joint research initiative in U.S. and Lebanon academic institutions to advance legal and public policy solutions to address the problem of international parental child abduction.

- * Identify resources to support an international exchange program in which representatives of iHOPE and iStand will travel to the U.S. and Lebanon, respectively, to strengthen the partnership and implement its mutual short and mid-term goals.

- * Seek project-based and sustained funding to support their mutual work for families and international cooperation on this issue.

Preparing specialized studies and research of high scientific value on child protection issues such as international abduction and comparative studies and jurisdiction conflicts;

Establish working partnerships with U.S.- and Lebanese-based governmental, NGO and civil society organizations to advance solutions for IPCA.

- * Launch a YouTube channel that will explain in English all Arab laws related to abduction and methods of legal action to successfully resolve abductions results.

- * Conducting training sessions for American lawyers and NGOs working in the abduction field, and perhaps for universities and students, the topics could contain the diversity of Arab laws with multiple sects.

For more information and to support this critically-important new partnership, please contact Dr. Noelle Hunter at noelle@istandparentnetwork.com or Mr. Mohamad Al Ayouby at mayouby@ihope.world.

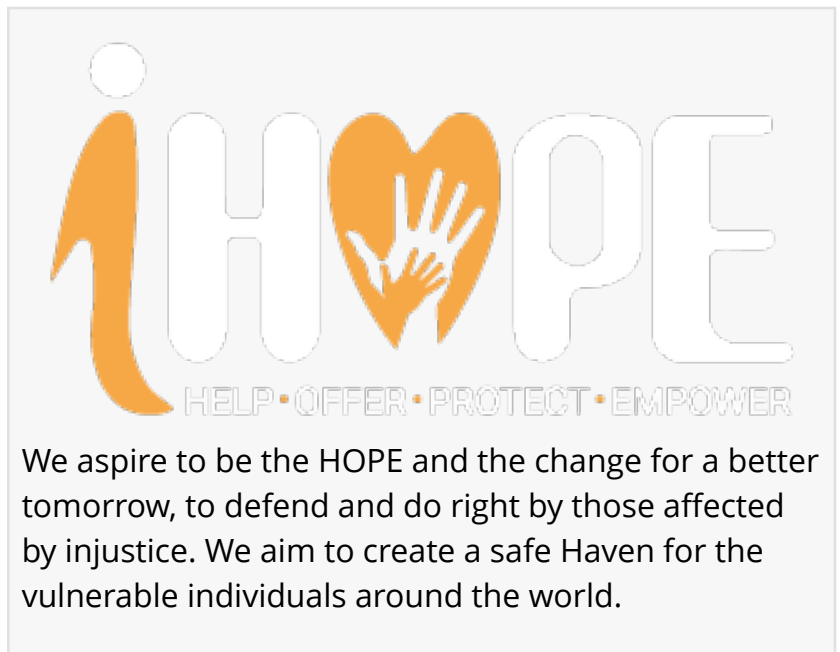
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