



THE TRAFFICKERS

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HOW INTERNATIONAL ADOPTION CREATES A MARKET FOR CHILD TRAFFICKING

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ADOPTION- ADOPTION-

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International adoption is often presented in the U.S. as a morally justified way of helping poor children around the world. But there's a criminal side of this business that makes victims of everyone, from families in America who pay tens of thousands of dollars in adoption fees, to those in developing countries who are conned into giving up their children.

In Episode 1 of Fusion's new investigative series *The Traffickers*, correspondent Nelufar Hedayat travels to the Democratic Republic of Congo, where she finds herself at the intersection of international adoption and child trafficking. Here, seeming acts of kindness can be easily derailed by fraud and corruption.

1. Americans adopt more children from overseas than all other countries in the world combined.

Between 2000 and 2014, families in major adopting countries like the U.S., Spain, France, Italy, and Canada adopted roughly 480,000 children internationally, according to Newcastle University Professor Peter Selman, an expert in global adoption. More than half of those adoptions were by Americans.

2. One of the world's most economically vulnerable nations is a leading country for international adoptions.

Between 2010 and 2013, U.S. adoptions from the Democratic Republic of Congo rose 645%, according to the U.S. Department of (<http://uk.mobile.reuters.com/article/idUKKCN0SM1XH20151028?irpc=932>)State (<http://uk.mobile.reuters.com/article/idUKKCN0SM1XH20151028?irpc=932>), before the DRC government clamped down on exit visas. China, Ethiopia, and Ukraine are also leading countries for American adoption.

3. The DRC is home to more than 4 million orphans, according to UNICEF

(http://www.unicef.org/wcaro/Countries_1749.html).

After the DRC civil war ended, Western adoption agencies helped establish the country as a key destination for international adoption. A decade later, the country banned overseas adoptions—fueling the smuggling (<http://www.reuters.com/article/uk-congodemocratic-adoptions-smuggling-idUKKCNOS-M1XH20151028>) of children and tensions in U.S.-Congolese relations.

4. American evangelical Christians make up one of the most vocal and influential lobbying groups (<https://www.thenation.com/article/evangelical-adoption-crusade/>) when it comes to international adoption.

Beginning in the early 2000s, American evangelical Christians dominated the international adoption market (<http://www.nytimes.com/2013/06/01/us/moved-to-adopt-evangelicals-find-children-and-pit-falls-abroad.html>). High-level delegations have pressured the Congolese government to allow children for adoptions since the ban started, including one led by Ed Royce (<https://foreignaffairs.house.gov/press-release/in-kinshasa-chairman-royce-presses-drc-to-free-adopted-children/>)(R-Calif (<https://foreignaffairs.house.gov/press-release/in-kinshasa-chairman-royce-presses-drc-to-free-adopted-children/>)) (<https://foreignaffairs.house.gov/press-release/in-kinshasa-chairman-royce-presses-drc-to-free-adopted-children/>)) (<https://foreignaffairs.house.gov/press-release/in-kinshasa-chairman-royce-presses-drc-to-free-adopted-children/>), the chairman of the U.S. House Committee on Foreign Affairs.

To learn more about the underworld of international adoption, watch the premiere of our first two episodes of The Traffickers Sunday, November 13, at 10 PM ET on Fusion.

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