

Paris, May 27, 2020 – 11.30 a.m.

A RECORDING REVEALS THAT THE JAPANESE EMBASSY IN PARIS WOULD HAVE ENCOURAGED ITS NATIONALS TO BREAK THE LAW, THUS FACILITATING THE ABDUCTION OF FRANCO-JAPANESE CHILDREN:

THE FACTS: A recording from a parliamentary session in Japan¹ exposes that Japanese authorities held a seminar in Paris where they incited Japanese mothers to abduct their Franco-Japanese children from France to Japan.

On March 24th, 2020, during a question and answer session with the Japanese Diet,² Senator Yukiko Kada challenged the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs about a May 15th, 2018 seminar conducted at the Japanese Cultural Center (*La Maison de la Culture du Japon*) in Paris. The Japanese senator expressed outrage that this seminar advised the mothers in attendance to file, before returning to Japan with their Franco-Japanese child, a domestic violence complaint with French police, to “escape” to a domestic violence shelter, and to present the resultant supporting documentation upon their arrival in Japan. By following this advice, the Japanese mothers would thereby effectively evade a Japanese order to return the child to France.

As revealed by the recording, **Japanese authorities would have thus advocated “legalizing” (in the eyes of the Japanese law) the return of Franco-Japanese children to Japan without the agreement of the French parent, and without French Judicial authorization.**

The Japanese senator said she was “*very surprised that such a seminar was held by the Japanese embassy, giving instructions on how to bypass the obligations³ to carry out an abduction.*”

¹ <https://www.japanchildrenrights.org/post/senator-kada-speaking-at-the-japanese-diet>

² “I have heard the actual recording of this seminar.(...) It seems that about 70 Japanese mothers participated. (...) I noticed that although the Hague Convention has aims to prevent child abduction and to keep the relationship with both parents, completely opposite contents were in this recording. (...) in fact in the seminar, and I read every single word of the translation and heard the recording three times, in my opinion mothers were instructed how to avoid the application of the Hague Convention in order to abduct their child into Japan as they wish. Was very surprised that such a seminar was held by the Japanese Embassy, which gave instructions how to avoid the obligations in order to carry out an abduction (...)In the lecture of the seminar, there were concrete instructions on how to abduct the children. For example making a statement alleging domestic violence to the police, taking your own medical certificates, escaping to domestic violence shelters to make a record, abducting children and taking documents with you back to Japan. These instructions are very similar to those here in Japan made by lawyers to advise child abductions. I ask again to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, is it your opinion that this seminar achieved its aim as PR activities?” (<https://www.japanchildrenrights.org/post/senator-kada-speaking-at-the-japanese-diet>)

³ Arising from the Hague Convention of 25 October 1980 on the international abduction of children.

The representative of the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs questioned before the Diet did not dispute that such seminar took place – simply responding that it advised on the application of the Hague Convention of 25 October 1980 on the international abduction of children.

An attorney representing many French fathers deprived of all contact with their children, Jessica Finelle reasons that: *“These actions, as denounced by a Japanese elected representative, are particularly shocking since the Japanese embassy in France is said to have incited Japanese mothers to circumvent the application of both French law and the Hague Convention of 25 October 1980 on International Child Abduction. The Ambassador of Japan should be summoned to give his explanations.”*

Finelle wrote a letter to Jean-Yves le Drian, the French Minister of European and Foreign Affairs, asking him *“to give these facts the follow-up that their gravity calls for”*.

THE CONTEXT: [There are 150,000 child victims of parental abduction each year in Japan.](#)

According to some NGOs, 150,000 children are abducted by a parent in Japan annually, in the aftermath of a separation. As a result of the abduction, the children are deprived of all access to their other parent for years, sometimes until they reach adulthood, despite all the efforts made by the excluded parent to reconnect. These abductions are at best ignored by authorities, and at worst are strongly encouraged by them. Either way, these authorities perpetuate a system that favors the abducting parent in flagrant violation of international treaties ratified by Japan.

A complaint before the United Nations Human Rights Council was filed by Jessica Finelle last August, to denounce these serious violations. Her complaint is currently under investigation.

More than a hundred Franco-Japanese children are currently denied contact with their French parent. The tragedy of these situations recently led three French fathers to suicide.

On June 26th, 2019, **President Emmanuel Macron witnessed these “unacceptable” situations personally when he received several French fathers in Tokyo**. He remarked, “We cannot let some of our compatriots live in this situation, and I believe that the fundamental rights of children and theirs as parents must be defended.”

On February 6th, 2020, the French Senate unanimously adopted a motion for a resolution inviting the government to take measures to prevent the abduction of Franco-Japanese children in the context of parental disputes.

Press Contact : Jessica Finelle (Partner at the firm Zimeray & Finelle Avocats)
Mobile : +33 (0) 6 63 08 27 56 / E-mail : jf@zimerayfinelle.com