

6 Vietnamese arrested for allegedly trying to sell 2 newborn babies into China

266 words

7 May 2008

11:07

Associated Press Newswires

English

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HANOI, Vietnam (AP) - Authorities in northern Vietnam said Wednesday they have arrested six people suspected of trying to sell two newborn babies in China as part of a baby-trafficking ring.

Police in the Chinese border town of Dongxing on Monday detained the six Vietnamese while they were transporting two 10-day old boys and returned them all back across the border, said Nguyen Thai Binh, deputy police chief of Mong Cai in northern Vietnam.

The Chinese acted on a tip from the Vietnamese authorities monitoring a smuggling ring, he said.

Initial investigation showed that the four men and two women were paid by ring leaders in Ho Chi Minh City in the south to transport the two babies to China for sale, he said.

The suspects were handed over to Quang Ninh provincial police for further investigation while the two babies were taken to a social welfare center, he said.

Binh said police in Quang Ninh province will cooperate with Ho Chi Minh City police in investigating where the ring got the two babies, he added.

Last week, Vietnam announced it would stop processing new adoption applications from U.S. citizens from July following allegations of baby-selling, corruption and fraud.

The announcement came days after The Associated Press published details of a U.S. Embassy report that alleged rampant abuses, including hospitals selling infants whose mothers could not pay their bills, brokers scouring villages for babies and a grandmother who gave away her grandchild without telling the child's mother.

Phap Luat Newspaper**Vietnam Does Not Have The Baby-Trafficking Industry**

The Vietnamese Justice Ministry's International Adoptions Department began working with the U.S. Embassy on the embassy report on Vietnam's adoption system. Earlier, Vietnamese government Vietnam decided to end the adoption agreement with the United States in July. Phap Luat newspaper talked with Mr. Vu Duc Long, the head of the Vietnamese Justice Ministry's International Adoptions Department about the issue.

Excerpts:

Question: The U.S. side made many allegations against Vietnam's agencies including the International adoptions department about mistakes in the adoption process. What do you comment on the report?

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The U.S. allegations are totally groundless. The report did not give information of specific cases but very general information. Seriously, they said several adoption service providers had to fund tours to the United States for International Adoption Agency and other government officials in order to receive their licenses. These tours included shopping sprees, where ASP employees were expected to pay for all of the purchases of the Vietnamese delegation. Others have reported being asked to pay bribes in order to obtain provincial licenses.

This information is totally fabricated and tarnish Vietnam's image. The U.S. needs to provide us with information of specific cases so that both sides can investigate those cases. If we found them break the laws, we will impose punishments.

Question: The U.S. also alleged that, the Embassy has discovered unlicensed, unregulated facilities that provide free room and board to pregnant women in return for their commitment to relinquish their children upon birth.

The Ministry of Public Security has conducted investigations on the five provinces mentioned in the report and we are waiting for a conclusion. We admitted that some adoption cases had not been processed in a way that meets the requirements due to the lack of knowledge, and the differences of provinces and cases. However, building upon on those cases to say that Vietnam has a baby trafficking industry is not accurate. This is an area that Vietnam is strictly managing.

If both sides won't renew the agreement, how can Americans adopt Vietnamese babies?

The Vietnamese government is waiting for the National Assembly's opinion on the Hague convention, of which the U.S. is member. This is an opportunity for both sides to resume the agreement. We are ready to sit down with the U.S. to talk about a new agreement too.

Cong An Nhan Dan Online (May 11)

Baby Traffickers Arrested

At 1:30 am on May 11, the police of Mong Cai Town in Quang Ninh Province and the border army arrested two people who were trying to bring a baby boy across the border. The two arrestees were Hoang Thi Hien, 36, and Truong Thi Loat, both are residing in Guangxi, China. Hien and Loat told the police they planned to hand over the boy to a Chinese woman for money. A Lenh, the Chinese woman, asked someone to buy an infant in Thanh Hoa Province on May 7. Lenh asked Hien to go back to Vietnam to pay for the deal and bring the child to China for "adoption". Hien received VND 14 million from Lenh. She then asked Loat to go with her and paid her one million dong.

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Tuoi Tre Daily, Phap Luat Daily

US Is Ready to Negotiate a New Child Adoption Agreement with Vietnam

"The US is ready to negotiate the child adoption issues with Vietnam anytime today, tomorrow or next week," said Deputy Chief of Mission Jonathan M. Aloisi at the meeting with media in Hanoi on May 2. The US embassy made and posted on its website the report alleging corruption in Vietnam's adoption system including fake paperwork and illegal orphanages involving in the child adoption process.

"We have found this problems in other countries too unless there are effective measures to be taken and implemented. The US had these problems in the past," Mr. Aloisi said.

Mr. Aloisi added that this is a complicated issue as Americans have been found involving in the fraud and fake paperwork and that there are good and bad people on both sides.

Starting late last year, the US required that it must investigate the proposed adoption within 60 days from the date of receiving the adoption applications. According to Mr. Aloisi, investigating the information about the biological parent and the origin of the child is required in the US immigration visa process.

Vietnam Net (May 02)

Adoptive Parents Must Pay Broker US\$10,000 Per Child

U.S. Deputy Chief of Mission Jonathan M Aloisi said the U.S. may stop its Adoption Agreement with Vietnam if there is no legal improvement in adoption practices in Vietnam.

Addressing the press in the afternoon of May 2 in Hanoi, Mr. Jonathan Aloisi expressed his concern over the results of the recent investigation by the U.S. regarding adoption practices in Vietnam. The U.S. official asserted that the U.S. found out wrongdoings where "children were sold as goods".

The investigation was initiated after the U.S. Embassy in Hanoi detected suspicious documents when appraising applications for U.S. visa for Vietnamese adopted children. A reported released by the Embassy said the documents were fake.

Adoption Agreement: Better components needed

Vietnam said it will not accept applications for adoption from American citizens starting from July 1, 2008. At the same time, the U.S.-Vietnam Adoption Agreement will terminate on September 1 this year.

The U.S. and Vietnam once suspended cooperation in adoption in 2003. According to Mr. Jonathan Aloisi, the reason for suspending the agreement this year is similar to the one last time.

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If Vietnam did not unilaterally stop the adoption cooperation with the U.S. as it just announced, would the U.S. be the first to stop it? Mr. Jonathan Aloisi said it would be "likely that the U.S. would stop first". However, the U.S. still wants to discuss with Vietnam on this cooperation activity in the future under the framework of the Hague Inter-country Adoption Convention.

So far, over 1,000 of adoption cases involving Vietnamese children have been accepted. Mr. Jonathan Aloisi said the demand remains large. "Many Americans want to adopt Vietnamese children as well as children from other countries. The U.S. is interested in maintaining cooperation in adoption with Vietnam."

"To ensure that adoption practices are transparent and that the rights of the children, the adoptive parents and the birth parents are protected, there must be better components in the cooperation agreement, which are in line with the Hague Convention," said Mr. Jonathan Aloisi.

The U.S. official spoke highly of Vietnam's preparation to join the Hague Adoption Convention and asserted that the U.S. is willing to share experience with Vietnam in this regard.

Mr. Jonathan Aloisi highly recommended that there should be improvements in the transparency of adoption regulations in Vietnam. He also stressed that the U.S. is willing to help Vietnam in building up its Adoption Law.

The U.S. Embassy in Hanoi said it received reports from adoption offices in Vietnam saying that the offices had to pay local brokers US\$ 10,000 per child recommended for adoption.

The Embassy report also said 75% of birth parents when being interviewed by consular officers said in addition to payments for food, medical and administrative charges, they received money from the orphanages for sending their kids to the orphanages. They received 6 million dong on average.

The U.S. Embassy report is available at: <http://vietnam.usembassy.gov>.

Reference:

<http://vietnamnet.vn/chinhtri/2008/05/781150/>

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