

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

March 11, 2016

The Honorable Barack Obama
President
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington DC, 20500-0004

Dear Mr. President:

We write regarding continued issues surrounding adoptions and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).

As you are aware, approximately 400 children adopted by U.S. families have been waiting in the DRC for more than two years to be issued exit permits enabling them to return to the U.S. with their adoptive families. We appreciate diplomatic efforts to engage the government of the DRC in processing and granting these exit permits. The recent announcement that 80 exit permits were approved for these adopted children was welcome news. These were in addition to the more than 150 exit permits issued at the end of February and 14 issued in November. Despite this good news, more American families remain in the balance and await news that their children have been issued exit permits.

As you are aware, many of these children have suffered great hardship, neglect, illness, and even death during the suspension of the issuance of exit permits. The situation has the potential to worsen if the upcoming presidential election in the DRC leads to increased regional instability and violence. During a hearing before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on February 19, 2016, the State Department's Special Envoy for the Great Lakes of Africa, Tom Perriello, testified that "a political crisis is building as the DRC prepares, or rather fails to prepare, for upcoming historic elections scheduled for this November...[i]f the DRC chooses the path of Burundi, the scale of human suffering could dwarf what we have seen next door."

We urge your Administration to continue to utilize all diplomatic avenues to resolve these remaining cases as expeditiously as possible.

Sincerely,



Jeff Flake
United States Senator



John McCain
United States Senator



Paul A. Gosar, D.D.S.
Member of Congress



Trent Franks
Member of Congress



Matt Salmon
Member of Congress



Ann Kirkpatrick
Member of Congress