



**International Coalition for the Abolition of Surrogate Motherhood**

**Press Release – 15 11 2023**

**Exploitation Unveiled: CIAMS and Allies challenge HCCH's Global Surrogacy Project**

On Monday 13 November 2023, the CIAMS (International Coalition for the Abolition of Surrogacy) organised a rally in front of the headquarters of the Permanent Bureau of the Hague Conference on Private International Law (HCCH).

Organisations from Japan, Canada, Sweden, Belgium, the United Kingdom, Italy, France and Spain took part in the rally to protest against the work of the HCCH on "parentage in the context of surrogacy", a draft international convention that will have the effect of legitimising the use of surrogacy worldwide, that is to say the exploitation of women for reproductive purposes and the buying and selling of babies. Participants wore costumes from "The Handmaid's Tale", Margaret Atwood's 1985 dystopia, a symbol of the exploitation of women for their reproductive capacity.

The HCCH is an international organisation with 91 member states, which issues conventions that are applied in the countries that ratify them. Since 2015, it has been working on this project, known as "filiation", with the utmost discretion. Since then, feminist organisations, which then joined forces in 2018 to form CIAMS, have tried to draw the attention of the experts in charge of drafting this convention, as well as the representatives of the member states, to the dangers of this approach in terms of human rights.

In fact, despite the declared desire to remain on the subject of parentage, the work in progress includes the definition of surrogacy, the roles of the actors: surrogates, intended parents and other third parties, the contractualisation of the practice, the notion of genetic link... and, finally, parentage as such, all of which amounts to proposing the global organisation of cross-border surrogacy. States will see this as a green light to organise it on their territory, and the general public will see it as legitimising the practice.

According to the Hague Conference Convention of 29 May 1993 on "Protection of Children and Co-operation in Matters of International Adoption", surrogacy is tantamount to the sale of new-born children and is the equivalent of possessing a human being, since the consent of the surrogate mother is given before the birth of the child and even before its conception (Article 4c) (4)) and this consent is induced by payment or compensation (Article 4c) (3)).

How can an international organisation so blatantly undermine its own convention, which has now been ratified by more than a hundred countries, unless one believes that it is doing so to please what it calls - the globalised surrogacy market?

How can experts, representatives of Member States, shamelessly side with the market against human rights, serving the interests of commissioning people to the detriment of surrogate mothers and the children born of this practice?

Together with the 8,000 signatories (from 74 countries) of the petitions launched by CIAMS, including 500 feminist and human rights organisations, we call on the member states of the HCCH not to sacrifice human dignity and to have the courage to abolish the reproductive exploitation of women and the sale of children falsely called surrogacy.

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