



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

### **Speeches**

**Critique of the HCCH's potential role in legitimizing and regulating surrogacy.**

#### **Organizations:**

ICASM - CIAMS International Coalition for the Abolition of Surrogate Motherhood-France

PDF Québec - Canada

CEL Centre Evolutif Lilith - France

CoRP (Collectif pour le Respect de la Personne) - France

Fórum de Política Feminista - Spain

CQFD lesbiennes féministes - France

Filia - UK

FINAARGIT- Italy

Swedisch women's lobby SVENSKA- Sweden

Japan Coalition Against Surrogacy Practices - Japan

#### **Rally against the Hague Conference (HCCH)**

**November 13, 2023**

Coalition Internationale pour l'Abolition de la Maternité de substitution  
Organisation féministe et en faveur des droits humains

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**Organization: ICASM - CIAMS International Coalition for the Abolition of Surrogate Motherhood-France**

**"Danger Unmasked: CIAMS and Allies Oppose HCCH's Global Surrogacy Project".**

Monday November 13, 2023, the CIAMS (International Coalition for the Abolition of Surrogacy) organized a rally in front of the headquarters of the permanent office of the Hague Conference on Private International Law (HCCH).

Coming from Japan, Canada, Sweden, Belgium, the United Kingdom, Italy, France and Spain, organizations participated in this rally to protest the work of the HCCH on "filiation in the context of surrogacy", a draft international convention which will have the effect of legitimizing worldwide the use of surrogacy, that is to say, the exploitation of women for reproductive purposes and the buying and selling of babies. The participants wore the costume of "The Handmaid's Tale", Margaret Atwood's dystopia, published in 1985, symbol of the exploitation of women for their reproductive capacity.

The HCCH is an international organization made up of 91 member states which issues conventions to be applied in the countries which ratify them. Since 2015, she has been working on this project, known as "filiation", with the greatest discretion. Since this date, feminist organizations, subsequently united in 2018 in the CIAMS, have tried to alert the experts mandated to develop this convention as well as the representatives of Member States about the dangerousness of this approach regarding human rights.

Indeed, despite the stated desire to stick to the subject of parentage, the work in progress includes the definition of surrogacy, the roles of the actors: surrogate mothers, commissioning clients and other third parties, the contractualization of the practice, the notion of genetic link... and, finally, filiation as such, the whole amounts to proposing the global organization of cross-border surrogacy. States will see this as a green light to organize it on their territory and the general public will see it as a legitimization of the practice.

According to the Hague Conference Convention of May 29, 1993 on "protection of children and cooperation in matters of international adoption", surrogacy is equivalent to the sale of newborns and amounts to having a human being, since the consent of the surrogate mother is given before the birth of the child and even before its conception (article 4 c) (4)) and this consent is induced by payment or compensation (article 4 c) (3) ).

How can an international organization, so blatantly, subvert its own convention, now ratified by more than a hundred countries, unless you think that it is doing so to please what it describes as - even the globalized surrogacy market?

How can experts, representatives of Member States, shamelessly take the side of the market against that of human rights, serve the interests of sponsors to the detriment of surrogate mothers and the children who will be born from this practice?

With the 8,000 signatories of the petitions launched by the CIAMS, established in 74 countries, including 500 feminist and human rights organizations, we ask 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.



**Organization: PDF Québec - Canada**

We are members of a Quebec organization called PDF Québec or POUR LES DROITS DES FEMMES QUÉBEC. The issue of surrogate mothers is close to our hearts, because PDF Québec's main mission is to defend the dignity and rights of women. PDF is a Canadian feminist organization that celebrated its 10th anniversary a few days ago. We are universalist feminists who defend all women, recognizing that women are often oppressed because they are women.

Until 2023, Quebec was an exception in North America when it came to surrogacy. We use the term "surrogate pregnancy" or GPA. GPA has been authorized by the Canadian federal government for years, and the various provinces had accepted its principles too. But in Quebec, a section of the law prohibits GPA contracts. Article 541 of the Civil Code states:

Any agreement by which a woman undertakes to procreate or bear a child on behalf of another person is absolutely null and void.

The GPA industry, allied with GPA client lobby groups, lobbied the Quebec government hard to remove this article from our laws.

In this they are helped by the powerful voice of the media. The Quebec media only tell stories about popular couples who have chosen GPA rather than adoption. They completely ignore the international trade in GPA, which is worth billions of dollars, and which, in Quebec, pays surrogate mothers who are influencers on social networks. These young women promote the

so-called glamorous lifestyle of surrogate mothers to an audience of impressionable young women.

Very few of the media go to see the reality of Georgian, Ukrainian, Colombian or Kenyan surrogate mothers. They have virtually no right to criticize or denounce the industry's problems. They are silenced by clauses in their contracts.

It is on social networks that some surrogate mothers from Quebec and elsewhere are taking the liberty of documenting their lives as surrogate mothers. They speak out about the ravages of the medical treatments imposed on them, the psychological impact of abandoning their babies and the harassment they experience daily from the clients who commission their unborn babies.

The transnational GPA industry promotes a form of gestation that has nothing to do with motherhood. The links between the fetus and the mother are denied, and the agencies' psychologists help the women to dissociate themselves from the baby, disregarding all consideration for their psychological health and the effect of this dissociation on the unborn child.

Where is the child's interest in being separated from its mother at birth? Research carried out on 200,000 children separated from their single mothers in Australia in the 50s and 80s revealed the suffering experienced by children brutally deprived of their mothers. Children don't understand contracts, but they do feel abandoned.

"Why does the GPA market exist? The answer lies in the desire to have children who have a genetic link with the father. This idea is as old as patriarchy itself: people want children in order to ensure their descendants. It's the same idea as the television series *The Scarlet Handmaidens*, but with the help of technology.

From the desire for children, it's easy to slide into the right to have children, even if everyone denies it. Indeed, people feel genuine compassion for individuals or couples who are suffering because they can't have children.

The GPA lobby is currently campaigning for recognition of the concept of "social infertility", which applies to male couples or single people. In this way, GPA would be the remedy for this infertility.

When the Quebec government wanted to amend the Civil Code to facilitate the filiation of children born by GPA, it claimed to be doing so to protect the rights of surrogate mothers and children. Politicians like to repeat that this is human progress, a remedy for infertility. Women are donating their bodies, the children will be happy, it creates beautiful families. All economic discourse is removed from their language. They never mention industry. Nor about the suffering of women, their exploitation, or the shock of abandonment inflicted on children from birth. PDF Quebec was one of the few to denounce the government's desire to authorize GPA contracts. We told them that:

"Assuming a right to a child is a recipe for the commodification of human beings. We too are affected by infertility and the suffering it can cause. However, one person's desire, however valid, must not result in the child becoming an object rather than a subject.

If we enshrine in law the principle of a notarized contract to obtain a child, we accept that the child is an object of the contract. We must maintain the nullity of any contract that attempts to establish by agreement between adults that a child will be obtained.

PDF Québec proposed to clearly state in Quebec law that the right to a child does not exist, has never existed, and is not subject to any exception.

Unfortunately, the law allowing transnational GPA and Canadian filiation was passed in April 2023, and unanimously at that! This just goes to show the power of the lobby formed by the industry, the media and client pressure groups.

In Quebec, children were separated from their parents in aboriginal communities for years. The Church has separated babies from their mothers and given them up for adoption. These actions were denounced by society as acts of barbarism. And yet, in the space of just a few years, we have come to glorify a woman's ability to "give away" her child.

The Hague Conference seems to be part of the movement to legally organize the production of human beings worldwide. Human beings who, like things, would be exchanged for goods and benefits, however minimal. Like our politicians and journalists in Quebec, the members of the Conference working groups seem to be blind to reality.

So, we've come here to explain to them that we believe there is a consensus, in Quebec and around the world, against the exploitation of women and the commodification of children. This is not a partisan issue, but a human rights issue.



#### **Organization: CEL Centre Evolutif Lilith - France**

The Centre Evolutif Lilith, a lesbian-feminist association based in Marseille, has supported the international coalition against surrogacy since the beginning of its fight against the rental of wombs. CEL shares the conviction that children born through surrogacy are bought children whose "surrogate" mothers are poor women exploited by a commercial system.

Renting out wombs is, in effect, a contractual market that exploits and commercializes women's bodies so that they can survive or support their families, not to mention all the risks incurred during pregnancy, whether physical or psychological. It's unfair and immoral! There is no such thing as the right to a child, and there is no ethical argument to justify women being enslaved

for socio-economic reasons and forced to carry a child for someone else on the pretext that they are unable or unwilling to become pregnant. Mother and child are instrumentalized in this unfair trade. How many children are abandoned, as in Ukraine, because of the war? A child is not a commodity to be bought!

As for so-called "ethical" surrogacy, let's not even talk about it!

We are here today because we refuse to allow the work of the Hague Conference to lead to European regulation of surrogacy. Even defining filiation in a convention is dangerous, as it would be a Trojan horse for further work and exchanges between European members. No opaque decisions and priority to the rights of women and children, not those of the buyers of the capitalist system! Reject any regulation of surrogacy and abolish surrogacy now!



Collectif pour le Respect  
de la Personne

**Organization: CoRP (Collectif pour le Respect de la Personne) - France**

For 20 years, Romanian women have been becoming surrogate mothers, risking their health and their lives in the process. In Romania, surrogacy is not legal. There is no protection for women who do this, and they know it.

From what I've read in the press and from the discussions I've had, it's clear that those who become surrogate mothers do so out of need: material need, need for money. The exploitation of poverty, the exploitation of inequalities of power between women and men, is a source of (enormous) profit for the market in human beings, of which S is a part.

Romanian women are becoming surrogate mothers both in Romania and in other countries, such as Greece. They are among the many migrant women who are exploited both in the country to which they have emigrated (and where they often accept jobs that are as difficult as they are poorly paid), and in their country of origin (to which they send most of their earnings). So, for both Romania and the countries of emigration, Romanian women are a source of exploitation. None of these countries is taking any action to put an end to their exploitation.

Since 1997, Romanian women have been involved in surrogacy for Romanian clients. And since the 2000s, they have been increasingly involved in surrogacy for foreign clients, or in other countries. Romanian women exploited in other countries (even if they apparently move voluntarily) come from marginalized communities, especially Roma women, with a very

precarious level of education, who are unemployed and dependent on their families and communities.

In August 2023, the Greek authorities uncovered a human trafficking network in Crete that was exploiting hundreds of women, including around forty Romanian women (all of whom were checked every day to ensure they did not leave their accommodation). Some of them, 7 or 8 months pregnant, turned to informal help networks to avoid being stopped by the police. Others gave birth in this context. The clients are always people with a stable financial situation.

If the HCCH considers that it is defending the best interests of the child by guaranteeing the filiation of the people who commissioned the child, we may ask ourselves (with astonishment): is it in the best interests of the child to be entrusted to those who requested and paid to exploit a woman, in conditions of virtual slavery, in a European country that hypocritically claims to practice only altruistic surrogacy ?

We are here to ask you to consider the dignity of women and children, and to stop regulating surrogacy.



**Organization:** Fórum de Política Feminista - Spain

From Spain, we are here, in concert with the CIAMS platform, because we consider the moment when it will be decided to legalize yet another exploitation of women's bodies and the fruit of this reproductive exploitation: their babies, to be decisive.

In Spain the legislation is formal: it is ILLEGAL to buy and sell babies born from women's surrogacy, but, de facto, there is a tolerance to this inhuman practice, a loophole that tolerates and allows it: it is the Registry Instruction of 5/10/2010 that disdains the law.

The Convention that is intended to be approved here is a trap, a deception, because the excuse is the recognition of the right to the protection of the supreme interest of the minor and to a cross-border filiation. But who is this minor: a mere marketable object, a product, the commission of a desire.

Under the guise of guaranteeing the filiation of babies, governments will give their approval to a practice that dehumanizes women and babies by depriving them of the natural and legitimate bond that unites them. The Convention resulting from the work of the representations in The

Hague, if it were to unify protocols to allow cross-border filiations, would be a humanitarian fallacy because it would violate the basic and primary rights of a baby to the bond with its mother, and it would violate the integrity of the mothers.

Once again, it is a question of masking the "kidnapping" of women's wombs and their reproductive capacity for the benefit of the wishes of third parties but passing it off as the regulation of filiation as a supreme good, for the benefit of children on demand, so that their recognition and their mobility are not suspended.

From the outset, the conception of these babies marks them out as an object with exchange value. We women are neither machines to be exploited reproductively by dehumanizing one of our main functions, nor are the children born to them the object of desire whose existence can be commodified through a prior contract that strips the pregnant mother of any right to decide about the baby she has conceived. The economic interests of the middlemen of this extractive industry of women's reproductive capacity cannot trample (legally or illegally) on the integrity of women, nor can they command the birth of human beings.

This falsely humanitarian Convention of filiation will lead to the proliferation of the trafficking of girls, young women and women from developing countries (which is already taking place) for reproductive exploitation, it will lead to the kidnapping of their wombs, since only this reproductive function is considered and not the integrity of the persons. The fruit of pregnancy will be a regulated object of transaction. Pregnant women will be an instrument, an inferior category, destined to procreate for other people. An object to be used and forgotten, raw material for a production system which is a very lucrative market.

The operation, falsely humanitarian, will be carried out on a one-way basis between developed and developing countries. The former will provide the "genetic material" (or not) to preserve and the payment of the rent of women to gestate; the latter the women who will provide "the service". We will never see the opposite: people from developing countries acquiring a child gestated by women from rich countries.

Yes, it is racism and classism, but the desire of those who have the wealth matters more. It is a new form of slavery, in which the contracting party has a right of use over the surrogate mother as she loses the right to dispose of her body and must renounce the basic right to enjoy the fruit of her pregnancy BEFORE BIRTH, in contravention of articles 4, 7 and 9 of the Convention on Protection of Children and Co-operation in Respect of Adoption. To those who accuse us of not being on the right side of history, we say that these violations of equality between men and women, of human rights, of the integrity of women are not an advance, but a step towards the dehumanization of women and their children, as they are: A practice contrary to the principle of human dignity and equality between men and women. A form of violence against women and child abuse contrary to the interests and rights of the child.



A classist and abusive practice towards the most vulnerable and disadvantaged women and will encourage the trafficking and abduction of women and girls to exploit their reproductive capacity.

We demand that government representatives and the Hague Conference recognize surrogacy as another type of violence against women, as a transnational crime affecting girls, boys and women. That the best interests of the child be considered by disapproving the protocol on filiation in the context of surrogacy that will be presented in 2024-2025 to the member states of the Hague Conference on Private International Law. To this end, we at CIAMS propose the abolition of Surrogacy

<http://abolition-ms.org/es/actualites/convencion-internacional-para-la-abolicion-de-la-gestacion-por-sustitucion/> and our structured project of the same.

We demand that the Spanish Government does not steal the public debate of this Convention from the public opinion and the plenary of the Congress by washing its hands and adopting it, de facto, as it goes against the Spanish Legislation. Likewise, we demand that you annul the Registry Instruction of October 5, 2010, which is a tolerated sieve for the misnamed surrogacy; the scandalized declarations of its members when any celebrity shows off this practice are not enough for us. We demand a firm and decisive commitment: the annulment of this Instruction. We do not want to be on the "right side of history", we want justice and equity for women and children.

Women and children are not COMMODITY.



Organization: **CQFD Lesbiennes féministes - France**

I'm here to represent CQFD Lesbian Feminists. This organization is dedicated to the fight against lesbophobia and supports legal actions initiated by lesbians. It also supports lesbians and lesbian organizations in countries where lesbianism is repressed.

In France, lesbian feminist organizations fought until 2013 to ensure that the GPA was not endorsed by the LGBT movement in France. Today, the fringe of the gay movement made visible by the media has been won over to the most misogynist causes, so we no longer share their values or their demands.

As an opponent of the rise of gay demand for surrogacy, CQFD Lesbians feminists became involved in the fight for the universal abolition of surrogacy. It co-founded ICASM (International Coalition for the Abolition of Surrogate Motherhood) in 2018.

Not in our name. As lesbian feminists and part of the LGBT movement, we refuse to let surrogacy, the exploitation of women and the sale of children, be organized in our name.

We are here today, in front of the headquarters of the Hague Conference, to demonstrate together against their work to regulate surrogacy.



**Organization: Filia - UK**

Surrogacy is a crime against humanity.

Surrogacy is a crime against women.

Surrogacy is part of the misogyny which is the language of patriarchy.

The language that enables our oppression and ensures the oppression of our daughters.

Surrogacy is a feminist issue, and as such and representing FiLiA I'm here today to shout to this institution, that no woman can be free when her reproductive rights are part of marketing schemes, when she can be hired, sold, exploited.

No woman can be free when she is expected to sacrifice her health and human rights for the wishes of others.

No woman can be free when vulnerability in a humanitarian crisis for us means more vulnerability, more crisis.

No woman can be free when our decisions around our reproduction choices can be distorted and manipulated emotionally to suit a capitalist narrative.

No woman can be free while selling our freedom is presented as a positive possibility.

No woman can or will ever be free while any of our sisters aren't free.

Babies are the future of humankind and our mothers and sisters fought long and hard for us to be able to decide freely if and when and how to have them.

Therefore, babies aren't products that can be created inside vessels sold, trafficked, gifted.

The denial of women and their babies as humans is the denial of our own humanity.

Not seeing surrogacy as the atrocity that enslaves women further to patriarchy, is the compliant blindness required to satisfy its ultimate pursuit of eradicating women as subjects in a free world.

Disguising it as a generous, kind, loving act it's an act of terror.

Stop Surrogacy Now!! And forever!!



**Organization: FINAARGIT** (Feminist International Network Against Artificial Reproduction Gender Ideology Transhumanism) - Italy

I am from Italy, a radical ecologist from Resistance to the Nanoworld, for more than 20 years we have been pursuing critical paths to the development of techno-sciences and transhumanism with a denunciation of their consequences on society, human beings and the whole living being.

We were among the founders of the Coalition Against Harm, which launched a campaign against the entry of GMOs into Europe and later a campaign against nanotechnology. We unite the various processes of the Great Transformation of the present times to resist its desacralizing and dehumanizing advance and to convey another horizon of meaning. We collaborate with national and international networks of women against the uterus for rent and the artificial reproduction of the human, and with those few free and independent journalists.

We place the uterus for rent within the context of this techno-scientific system, which aims to normalize artificial reproduction as the new way of coming into the world. The human being is to become a laboratory product. From the right to a child, which does not exist for anyone, we will move to the right to a selected and genetically modified child. CRISPR children are not so far away.

We try to build a critical debate, we organize conferences, we publish and spread free thought, we were in Milan at the Baby Fair with a protest garrison in front of that great international showcase of the reproductive bio market.

I am one of the founders of FINAARGIT, an international feminist network against all artificial reproduction, gender ideology and transhumanism, which follows in the wake of the continuity of the critique carried out in the 1980s by FINRRAGE, an international feminist network against genetic and reproductive engineering that had well pointed out at the dawn of the development of assisted fertilization technologies where these would go. It is no coincidence that they were called the equivalent of the Manhattan Project in biology.

From Italy I bring the support of the Network for the Inviolability of the Female Body, which was set up in Naples in 2020 by the desire of about a hundred women living in every part of the country: mothers and non-mothers, belonging to every social condition and every age, religious, agnostic, atheist, voting for different political parties. The name of the Network already contains the sense and horizon of its existence and action: the female body is inviolable, and the inviolability of the female body is the first movement for the inviolability of the body of all living

people. Any reduction of the female body to a commodity is violence against women and also against the world. This obviously also applies to the uterus for rent.

In Italy surrogacy is forbidden by law. The bill 'Utero in affitto reato universale' (surrogate motherhood as a universal offence) has passed the Chamber of Deputies, making it punishable to use surrogate motherhood even for Italian citizens who would go abroad. This law was also supported by national and international feminist associations because it is an important step towards universal abolition. We are waiting for final approval in the Senate, it will probably be passed in early 2024, after which it will enter into force.

We are for the universal abolition of so-called surrogacy; no form of regulation is possible. To regulate means to normalize and generalize it. Our discourse is ethical and upstream, it is not possible to regulate the abuse, the violence, the exploitation, the commodification, the buying and selling of children, because that is what we are talking about.

No form of altruistic or supportive motherhood is possible, there is always an exchange of money, called reimbursement and justified to cope with the inconveniences of the mother who must carry the pregnancy.

Surrogacy is violence against the woman and the child. Children must not be torn away from their mothers. The human being cannot become an object of a contract, cannot become a commodity that the commissioning parents can even send back to the sender if it does not meet certain characteristics.

Remember that the mother signs a contract and is also obliged to abort in the case of a double pregnancy. In fertilization clinics, psychologists and other specialists advise women not to touch their bellies or listen to the movements of the fetus when it kicks because they have to dissociate themselves from the child growing in their bodies. A dissociation from oneself and one's child: 'we have to prepare ourselves psychologically not to feel maternal love', confides a woman expecting two children born with another woman's eggs at Biotexcom in Kiev and concludes by saying 'I know that when I see them they will not look like me, they will have the features of two people who are strangers to me and that is why I will not miss them'.

In the majority of cases the egg does not belong to the woman carrying the pregnancy, it is bought by another woman in the large egg procurement and bio market.

The uterus for rent fragments the process of procreation, which becomes a technical operation and is placed within the paradigm of the laboratory that knows no limits, in which everything that is technically possible will become ethically acceptable.

We have gamete selection, in vitro fertilization and embryo selection with pre-implantation diagnosis. Eugenics is not a baleful drift but has always been the direction and driving force behind research in the field of assisted fertilization techniques, developed to select first animals and then humans with certain characteristics.

The best interest of the child and alleged rights are the key to regulating the surrogate mother, but the best interest of the child is to be with the mother, and the mother is the one from whom one is born. The alleged right to a child is at the expense of the child, who is also exposed to the highly significant risk of developing various diseases, including oncological ones, from all assisted reproduction techniques.

As with all techno-scientific developments in the most controversial areas affecting our bodies and our health, the first step in clearing them through customs and creating social acceptance will always be a rare case that opens them up to generalization.

Birth, as well as our sexed bodies, are the ultimate landing place of transhumanism, at stake is a profound ontological transformation of the human being.

Bodies and the living must remain unavailable, no form of bargaining is possible.

Against any artificial reproduction of the human.



### **Organization: SVENSKA (The Sweden's Women's Lobby) - Sweden**

The Sweden's Women's Lobby is an umbrella organization for the Swedish women's movement. Our 53 member organizations bring together around 130,000 women and girls from all over Sweden. We, the Swedish women's movement, oppose all forms of surrogacy for three reasons:

**1. The risks of women and children getting hurt are far too great.** (There are medical risks associated with surrogate pregnancies - globally being pregnant is one of the most dangerous things that a fertile woman can do. There are psychological risks associated with the trauma of carrying a child, giving birth to it and giving it up. And there are legal risks for all parties. What happens if the woman regrets wanting to keep the child after it is born? What happens if the commissioning parents don't want the child once it is born? These risks cannot be regulated away.)

**2. Surrogacy is a global industry that trades in women and children.** (Rich people pay money for a woman in another country to carry a child for them. Surrogacy clearly meets the definition of human trafficking. And there is an entire, global, growing industry that profits on vulnerable women's bodies and people's longing for children. This industry must be stopped!)

**3. Women's right to decide over their own bodies is not up for negotiation.** (Surrogacy is about women giving away the right to move freely, live their lives as they please, and decide over their own bodies. International laws should protect women's autonomy, not negotiate guidelines for how it can be curtailed.)

Surrogacy is not permitted in Sweden. In 2016, a government investigation concluded that Swedish authorities should discourage Swedes from having children through surrogacy abroad. A majority of the parties in Sweden's Riksdag oppose the reproductive trade. Nevertheless, more and more Swedes continue to go abroad to circumvent Swedish legislation and have children through surrogacy abroad. Swedish authorities do nothing to prevent Swedish citizens from exploiting women's bodies in other countries, quite the opposite actually.

The Swedish members of the Hague Conference's expert group on surrogacy should act in accordance with Swedish legislation and oppose all regulation of surrogacy as it inevitably involves steps towards legalization. He and his colleagues from like-minded countries should demand that the ongoing PIL-issue process should be stopped. But he doesn't. Or we don't really get to know what he does because what happens inside the walls of The Hague Conference is kept secret.

How can it be that surrogacy is becoming more and more normalized in Sweden despite the fact that it is prohibited and despite the fact that a majority of the elected parliament oppose surrogacy?

How is it that the HCCH brings together countries to prepare guidelines on regulating surrogacy even though it is illegal in almost all countries around the world?

How can it be that, nationally and internationally, despite everything we now know about how women and children are exploited and harmed in the surrogacy industry, various legal processes and other measures continue to facilitate the reproductive trade?

Shouldn't Sweden, one of the world's least gender unequal countries, the EU, UN and HCCH work to protect the rights of women and children? But instead they seem to be focused on making it easier for those who trade in these rights... Why is that?

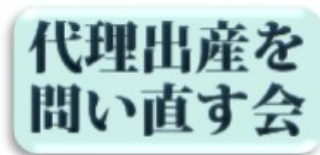
Sweden, the EU and large parts of the so-called progressive international community are riding out in defense of women's right to decide freely on issues relating to childbearing. But it is clear that the right to self-determination does not apply to all women. Poor women in vulnerable countries are not included. Their rights to abortion are instead for sale? What happened to the principle that human rights are universal? That all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights?

The entire work on surrogacy is driven from the outlook of the commissioning parents and on the surrogacy industry's terms. The ongoing work that takes place within HCCH is about how parenthood should be regulated for those who have had children through surrogacy.

But what happened before then? What about the rights and safety of the woman who carried the child for nine months, gave birth to it and gave it up? Surrogacy often involves poor women from vulnerable countries. Who represents them in the HCCH working group? And who represents the children?

Instead of trying to make sure that the children who already exist don't get hurt, would it not be better to try to make sure that no more children end up in this vulnerable situation that the surrogacy industry puts them in? The best way to prevent harm to women and children is to criminalize the purchase and brokering of pregnancies, thus combating the demand for the reproductive industry.

Thanks!



**Organization: Japan Coalition Against Surrogacy Practices - Japan**

I am Yoshie Yanagihara, chair of Japan Coalition Against Surrogacy Practices.

As an East Asian who is a social minority in this globalized society, I shall object to the draft of the Hague Conference on Private International Law that results in legitimating surrogacy.

First, surrogacy is neither new nor a unique method. It was conducted in East Asia until the mid-20th century. It finally died down after western concepts of human rights permeated society. However, there is a hidden big demand in Asian culture to use women's body.

Nevertheless, if the Hague Conference legitimizes surrogacy, it will revive East Asian culture that takes for granted the trafficking of women's reproduction. Then, quickly East Asian women will fall prey to the reproductive market.

Stop sanctifying surrogacy with unilateral Western perspective. The sole method to eliminate

problems from surrogacy is to ban it. Surrogacy is not a fantastic altruistic way as you imagine in the Western culture. It is a coerced self-sacrifice by women based on sex discrimination.

Nobody suffers injuries or death by prohibiting surrogacy. In contrast, if you promote surrogacy, many women will suffer from mental disorders, serious illness and even death. Furthermore, gestational surrogacy using the other's eggs creates children who have potential health risks, as well as latent identity crisis.

It is obvious which is important between banning surrogacy and promoting surrogacy to protect people. Do not expose women and children to danger.

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Second, altruistic surrogacy provokes problems among concerned people. In Japan, surrogacy between sister-and-sister and mother-and-daughter was conducted. These surrogacies were practiced from 2001 to 2014 by a specific medical doctor. However, the medical doctor subsequently revealed the once so-called "successful surrogacy" cases totally destroyed the families or caused serious health issues in the aged surrogate mothers. Thereafter, the medical doctor halted altruistic surrogacy.

Regardless of altruistic or commercial, surrogacy created many irreversible physical, mental and social difficulties in surrogate mothers. Many cases are already reported and even many victims reveal their experience in public. Please listen to the victim and the vulnerable voices, instead of a beautiful myth woven by surrogacy agencies, brokers, and rich clients.

Third, once the Hague Conference legitimates surrogacy, it widens the surrogacy market. The market focuses on women in poverty. Asian women will again be recruited. Asian countries which still do not have laws to ban surrogacy are targeted. In fact, even Japan already has a case that rich foreigners used poor Japanese women as their surrogate mothers.

People of rich countries utilize Asian women in poverty—this is a very revival of Colonization. Women are not a resource for people from rich countries. NEVER make us your COLONY!

Again, do not expose poor women to danger by your westernized unilateral values. We, Asian women, are the same as you - human. We are not a vessel, we are not an oven, and we do not have super transcendent power to extinguish our body experience. Do not forget we too have human rights!



The petitions launched by ICASM against the HCCH's work on "Parentage in the context of surrogacy" collected 8000 unique signatures, including 500 from NGOs.

Country	Individuals	organisations	Total
<b>Africa</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>7</b>
Cameroun	1		1
Ethiopia	1		1
Senegal	2	1	3
South Africa	1	1	2
<b>Amerique du Nord</b>	<b>296</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>318</b>
Canada	181	14	195
USA	115	8	123
<b>Amerique latine</b>	<b>1099</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>1159</b>
Argentina	379	23	402
Bolivia	5	1	6
Brazil	22	3	25
Chile	112		112
Colombia	122	10	132
Costa Rica	8		8
Ecuador	28	3	31
El Salvador	4		4
Guatemala	5		5
Honduras	4		4
Mexico	300	14	314
Panama	8		8
Paraguay	4		4
Peru	33	2	35
Republica Dominicana	5	1	6
Uruguay	56	1	57
Venezuela	4	2	6
<b>Europe</b>	<b>5153</b>	<b>360</b>	<b>5513</b>
Austria	76	5	81
Belgium	52	9	61
Bulgaria	3	2	5
Croatia	5	5	10
Denmark	5	1	6
Estonia	1	1	2
Euromed	1		1
Europe	3	6	9
Finland	7	1	8
France	618	79	697
Germany	79	7	86
Greece	21	4	25
Hungary	2		2
Iceland	2		2
Ireland	26	1	27
Italy	169	19	188
Luxembourg	1		1
Malta	4	1	5
Netherlands	15	3	18
Norway	5		5
Poland	5	1	6
Portugal	10	2	12
Romania	5	2	7
serbia	3		3
Slovenia	3	1	4
Spain	3771	171	3942
Sweden	68	22	90
Switzerland	12	2	14
Turky	2	1	3
UK	179	14	193
<b>Europe Est Asie Pacifique</b>	<b>1180</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>1225</b>
Afghanistan		1	1
Australia	49	12	61
Azerbaïdjan	1		1
Belarus	2		2
China	2		2
India	15	3	18
Japan	55	3	58
Kazakhstan	2		2
Lithuania		1	1
Mauritius	1		1
New Zealand	6	2	8
Russia	48	1	49
Singapore	1		1
South Korea	971	19	990
Ukraine	24	3	27
United Arab Emirates	1		1
Uzbekistan	2		2
<b>International</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>
International	2	2	4
<b>Total général</b>	<b>7735</b>	<b>492</b>	<b>8227</b>