

Save the Children from Save the Children:
Press Release on Madonna's Second Adoption & Related International Adoption Issues
April 2009

An appeals court in Malawi will now make a life-changing decision about Mercy James. Will Mercy be allowed to grow up in a permanent family with Madonna as her adoptive mother?

Spokesman for Save the Children, UK, Dominic Nutt, says that Mercy and other children in her position should remain in a Malawi orphanage. For no better reason than that these children may have living relatives, he believes that they should always remain in their original communities. Unfortunately, Nutt ignores the fact that these children's presence in an orphanage is the surest indication that their relatives are deceased or, if alive, unable to care for them.

The usual justification for Save the Children's approach is that children who remain in their country of origin can enjoy their racial, ethnic and national heritage. But children doomed to grow up in orphanages or on the streets cannot expect to enjoy their cultural heritage in any meaningful way. And the real choice today for most existing homeless children in most of the countries of the world is between life - and often death - in orphanages or on the streets in their home country and, for a lucky few, life in an adoptive home abroad. Research on children who started their early life in orphanages demonstrates vividly the damage such institutions do.

International Adoption has come under fire recently from UNICEF and others who share Save the Children's views. But International Adoption provides children the possibility of finding the permanent nurturing homes they need to thrive, homes that are typically simply not available in their countries of origin. And International Adoption is completely consistent with other positive social responses to the problems of unparented children, bringing new resources into poor countries to support such efforts, and developing new awareness of and concern for the plight of poor children and poor communities worldwide.

We are not in possession of all the facts relevant to appropriate resolution of Mercy's particular case. But we urge policy-makers, including judges making decisions in such cases, to review and consider the [International Adoption Policy Statement and Supporting Report](#), endorsed by the American Academy of Adoption Attorneys, the Center for Adoption Policy, the Harvard Law School Child Advocacy Program, and the National Council For Adoption - click [here](#).

Signatories as of April 1, 2009

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