

Personal Note

Hans van Loon

Secretary General

The Permanent Bureau of the Hague Conference on Private International Law was informed in late August by the Norwegian Ministry of Justice and the Police that the Ministry had been severely damaged during the terrorist attack in Oslo, Norway on July 2011. The Department of Civil Affairs (Central Authority under the 1980 Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction) was deeply saddened by the loss of two colleagues, Ms Ida Marie Hill and Ms Kjersti Berg Sand, both of whom dealt with child abduction cases and the Service and Evidence Conventions. The Department of Civil Affairs was also deeply saddened by the loss of Ms Ingrid Midtgaard, who was killed on 26 August 2011 during a bomb attack at the United Nations Headquarters in Nigeria. Ms Midtgaard was temporarily working for the United Nations and had planned to return to the Ministry of Justice in October

2011 where she was to continue her previous work on child abduction cases and the Service and Evidence Conventions. Ms Midtgaard was one of the organizers of the Nordic Baltic Seminar on International Child Abduction in Tallinn last year. She and a colleague wrote a report of the seminar in The Judges' Newsletter Volume XVII Spring 2011.

My colleagues and I were devastated to receive such terrible news. On behalf of the Hague Conference on Private International Law, I wish to express our deepest sympathy to the Norwegian Ministry of Justice, having lost three wonderful colleagues. We feel and share the sorrow of their families, friends and co-workers. It will require extraordinary efforts by the Central Authority, which also lost its offices, to continue the highly appreciated work of the victims with regard to the 1980 Hague Child Abduction Convention. We wish these colleagues in particular, all possible strength and courage. We know that they will be supported by other colleagues, including the Norwegian Liaison Judges, Anne Marie Selvaag and Torunn Kvisberg.