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Demonstrators Demand Leaders Enforce Treaty on Child Abduction

Two demonstrators demanded visiting speakers of the “Mexico Moving Forward” conference honor the Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abductions. The treaty ensures prompt return of children abducted from their home country.

Written by Regina Ip
16 February 2011

The Feb. 10 symposium — which included scientists, artists and philanthropists who discussed Mexico’s future in panels — was held at the Robinson Auditorium in the School of International Relations and Pacific Studies.

Trevor Richardson’s son, Andrew, was taken by his mother to Queretaro, Mexico in 2007. The couple divorced in 2006 and Richardson had court-ordered visitation rights, but he was no longer allowed to visit Andrew after his wife violated custody orders by taking him across the border. Since then, Richardson has been taking legal action to visit his son.

“To this day, I’ve seen him for a total of five hours during court-granted visitations that take place in the gated playground of the courthouse in Queretaro under supervision of armed guards,” Richardson said.

San Diego residents Richardson and Marcy Beildeck held signs saying “Mexico moving backwards” and “Mexico return my son” to bring awareness to the lack of enforcement on the treaty.

Richardson met with businessman and philanthropist Manuel Arango — who is considered one of Mexico’s wealthiest men.

“He took my information and recommended I speak with a civil rights [and] liberties group started in Mexico, who he knew, and said he was going to send me information,” Richardson said.

Richardson said most of the people who passed by between seminars did not want to engage.

“This wasn’t an aggressive protest,” Richardson said. “We stood out there, we held signs, we talked and we spread information.”

Richardson said that, although Mexico signed the treaty, the government does not enforce it or apply custody orders from other countries.

“This is not about custody,” Richardson said. “It’s about the Hague treaty. In Mexico, the governments are not abiding by this treaty.”

Mexico is the worst violator of the treaty, according to a 2010 U.S. Department of State compliance report.



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“The Mexican elites are aware of their country’s deficiency in their country’s inability to follow this treaty,” Richardson said. “It’s also important to mention that our government is failing ... by not holding Mexico accountable.”

Now, Richardson is waiting on a Mexican court ruling, which comes next month.

“What’s next is that I will continue the legal battle,” he said. “The court case is still open in Mexico and I’ll have the opportunity to continue with the proceedings from there, so Andrew is eventually returned or they make a final decision that he won’t be returned.”

Richardson said he wants to help other families.

“While I do want to bring my son home, it’s bigger than that. It’s also about the other parents. It’s a big problem,” Richardson said.

Readers can contact Regina Ip at rwip@ucsd.edu.

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