



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

AUSKRG responds to TRC findings on human rights violations in intercountry adoption

28 March 2025

SEOUL - The Australia – United States Korean Rights Group (AUSKRG) welcomes the interim findings from South Korea’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) as a first step towards addressing the systemic human rights violations perpetrated against South Korean intercountry adoptees and their families.

The TRC has confirmed that Korea’s overseas adoption program involved systemic and “serious violations of the rights of adoptees”—fundamental human rights that the Korean government is responsible for protecting.

After an extensive 2-year and 7-month truth-finding investigation that included all four adoption agencies authorized for international adoptions from Korea, the TRC has concluded that the Korean government granted excessive authority to private adoption agencies and their directors. It prioritised intercountry adoption over strengthening domestic social welfare and sanctioned adoption procedures that systematically erased or fabricated adoptees’ identities and background information. As a result, adoptees were deprived of their legal rights under the Korean Constitution and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

The AUSKRG acknowledges the TRC’s initial recommendations, including a formal government apology, urgent measures for victims of identity falsification, and addressing citizenship status issues for affected adoptees.

For many adoptees and advocacy groups—including AUSKRG, DKRG (Danish Korean Rights Group), and SKAN (Swedish Korean Adoptees Network)—the findings confirm long-standing concerns. The TRC has now validated reports of widespread egregious practices, including the fabrication of adoptees’ records, lack of proper parental consent, identity substitutions, inadequate screening of adoptive parents, negligent duty of care by guardians, and coercive and excessive donations fueling the commercial supply of children for intercountry adoption.

Due to lack of government oversight, private agencies facilitated mass adoptions to meet demands set by receiving countries, prioritizing profit over child welfare. The TRC's confirmation of these violations is both validating and deeply unsettling.

While the AUSKRG welcomes the TRC's interim findings, we are concerned that only 56 cases have been resolved to date. We urge the TRC to complete their investigations of the 300+ individual cases that have yet to be resolved. Today marks a truly historic moment, but it is a start—there is more to be done. We sincerely hope that the TRC provides an outcome to the hundreds of adoptee applicants awaiting their results.

Finally, we echo the TRC's call for support from receiving countries to uncover the full extent of these violations. A broader international investigation is urgently needed.

This is the first step toward truth-telling. The AUSKRG supports the independent investigative process of the TRC and looks forward to the release of the final report in the coming weeks. We remain committed to seeking justice for victims and accountability for those responsible.

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For media enquiries and interview requests, contact:
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Background:

On December 9, 2022, the AUSKRG (Australia – United States Korean Rights Group) submitted a joint application to South Korea's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), accompanied by multiple individual cases related to South Korea's overseas adoption system. The AUSKRG joins the Danish Korean Rights Group's (DKRG) efforts along with adoptees from eleven countries to have suspected irregularities and alleged human rights violations investigated by the Commission.

On June 8, 2023, AUSKRG cases were added to the TRC investigation, which now includes all four Korean adoption agencies (Holt, Korea Social Service, Eastern Social Welfare Society, & Social Welfare Society). The AUSKRG has strong reasons to suspect that Eastern Social Welfare Society, a private agency authorised by the Korean government to facilitate adoptions, has engaged in inhumane practices which have significantly impacted members of our group and their families. These suspicions have now been formally acknowledged and validated by the TRC in their preliminary findings, as presented in their press release on 26 March 2025.

For more information, visit: <https://auskrg.com>