

# Reference Guide

Resources for American Citizens Facing  
Humanitarian or Legal Crises Abroad



## WHEN WE COULD NOT SEE THE MOON

### Our Daughter Locked Away in a Foreign Jail

As told by the family (Jan and Tammy de Weerd) to Savannah Spidaleri

[www.whenwecouldnotseethemoon.com](http://www.whenwecouldnotseethemoon.com)

#### GOVERNMENT RESOURCES

##### 1. U.S. Department of State – Bureau of Consular Affairs

**Role:**

- The primary resource for assisting U.S. citizens detained, in distress, or facing emergencies abroad.

**Services:**

- Contacting family or friends on your behalf.
- Providing a list of local attorneys.
- Ensuring you are treated humanely and fairly according to local laws.
- Monitoring your case and advocating for due process.
- Repatriation in extreme cases.

**How to Contact:**

- Overseas: Locate the nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate. Use the website <https://www.usembassy.gov>.
- From the U.S.: Call the Office of Overseas Citizens Services at +1-888-407-4747 (domestic) or +1-202-501-4444 (international).

##### 2. STEP (Smart Traveler Enrollment Program)

**What It Does:**

- Allows U.S. citizens to register their travel with the nearest embassy.
- Helps the government locate and assist citizens in emergencies (natural disasters, political unrest).

**How to Enroll:**

- Visit <https://step.state.gov>.

## NON-PROFIT AND HUMANITARIAN ORGANIZATIONS

### 1. International Legal Assistance Consortium (ILAC)

**Purpose:**

- Provides legal support and advocacy for individuals detained abroad.

**Services:**

- Connecting individuals with experienced international attorneys.

**Website:**

- <https://ilacnet.org>

### 2. Amnesty International

**Purpose:**

- Advocates for individuals experiencing human rights violations.

**Services:**

- Mobilizes public campaigns and legal teams for unjust detentions or mistreatment.

**Website:**

- <https://www.amnesty.org>

### 3. Reprieve

**Purpose:**

- Offers free legal assistance to people on death row, unlawfully detained, or victims of extreme injustice.

**Website:**

- <https://reprieve.org>

### 4. Hostage US

**Purpose:**

- Supports families of individuals kidnapped or detained abroad.

**Services:**

- Emotional support, guidance through legal processes, and reintegration assistance for those released.

**Website:**

- <https://hostageus.org>

## PREPARING FOR EMERGENCIES

### 1. Documents to Keep Handy

- A copy of your passport and visa (digital and physical).
- Emergency contacts (family, attorney, and embassy).
- Travel insurance details.
- A basic understanding of local laws and customs in the destination country.

### 2. Tips for Travelers

- **Know Your Rights Abroad:** Familiarize yourself with the legal system of the country you're visiting.
- **Emergency Numbers:** Save the contact details of the nearest U.S. Embassy/Consulate.
- **Cultural Awareness:** Research local customs, practices, and sensitivities to avoid unintentional offenses.
- **Communication Plan:** Establish a check-in schedule with family or friends.

## KEY TAKEAWAYS FOR FAMILY & FRIENDS

- **Stay Calm:** If a loved one is detained, gather verified information before reacting.
- **Contact the Embassy:** Encourage the detained individual or their family to notify the nearest U.S. Embassy immediately.
- **Support Without Overstepping:** Offer help but respect privacy and boundaries during the legal process.

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### NOTES

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