

Countries around the world honor International Missing Children's Day on May 25

To commemorate International Missing Children's Day, law enforcement and non-governmental organizations across four continents are holding events to raise awareness about the need for collaboration and a coordinated response to help protect children from abduction and going missing. They are part of the Global Missing Children's Network - a program of the International Centre for Missing & Exploited Children (ICMEC) - which helps bring attention to the vulnerability of children who are missing and abducted.

It's a problem facing every country and it needs the attention of law enforcement and government officials around the world. It is estimated that at least 8 million children worldwide go missing each year or 22,000 a day. Unfortunately, many countries do not view it as a priority and thus don't have appropriate mechanisms in place to recover missing children who are at high risk of being exploited into trafficking and prostitution. Every country should implement policies and legislation to tackle the issue and protect children's right to grow up in a safe environment. This will require coordinated efforts between all sectors from law enforcement agencies, government, and non-governmental agencies to private industry.

It is also important to teach children how to stay safe and inform them of risks they may encounter. To achieve this, adults should take the time to provide children with the tools they need to recognize danger and to talk with them about specific ways to stay safe. ICMEC, through the Global Network, has developed prevention tips to help parents, guardians and other adults discuss safety with children. These tips are available in 10 different languages.

Each year, since 1983, May 25 has been commemorated to remember children who are still missing, children who have been reunited with their families, and to help bring this global issue to the attention of government and society. Please join this effort by going to www.helpbringthemhome.org.au and releasing a balloon. **Together we can help bring them home.**

