



U.S. lawmakers called Tuesday for federal action to prevent parents from giving unwanted adopted children to strangers met on the Internet, and the Illinois attorney general urged Facebook and Yahoo to police online groups where children may be advertised.

The demands come as nations whose orphans have been adopted by Americans contend that the U.S. government isn't doing enough to stop the practice, known as "private re-homing."

A Reuters investigation last month revealed an underground market where desperate parents seek new families for children they adopted but no longer want. (Link: reut.rs/15LiaMb). The parents connect through online forums on Yahoo and Facebook, privately arranging custody transfers that can bypass government oversight and sometimes violate the law.

No government agencies track the practice, but the news service identified eight Internet groups in which members discussed, facilitated or engaged in re-homing. In a single Yahoo group that the company has since taken down, a child was offered to strangers on average once a week during a five-year period. At least 70 percent of those children were listed as having been adopted from overseas.

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