

VareseNews

A couple from Sumirago has been stuck in Congo for a month

Pubblicato: Lunedì 9 Dicembre 2013



"We've been stuck here for over a month and the situation keeps getting harder."

Matteo Galbiati and Maria Gorini, who live in Sumirago, where Ms Gorini is also a town councillor, **are now in the Democratic Republic of Congo**; it is four weeks now since they went there to get to know their **adopted daughter**, and to bring her home. For the couple from Sumirago, this has been a very exciting moment which, however, except for the joy of the family, is becoming a nightmare, from a practical and bureaucratic point of view.

Along with another 26 parent couples, who left with the same purpose, **they are now "hostages" of their permits and cannot leave the facility where they are lodging.**

"We came here only after dealing with all of the necessary paperwork," Galbiati explains, "and once we had obtained the authorisations from the International Adoption Committee, we arrived in Congo for the final, exciting part of this journey: getting to know our daughter and going back home with her and our 7- and 10-year-old children." Something went wrong, though. The parent couples have ended up in the middle of inexplicable bureaucratic paralysis, which is not allowing them to leave the country. "The adoption documents have already been authorised; for both the Congolese and the Italian authorities the little girl is, to all intents and purposes, already our daughter. The setback only concerns the signature that will allow us to go back home."

The issue has been under investigation by the two countries for some time, and at the beginning of last November, **even the Minister of Integration, Cécile Kyenge, left for a mission in Africa**, at the end of which she **guaranteed that the situation would come to a solution**. However, the it remains unresolved. “Some families have been here for 5 weeks, we’ve been here for a month,” Galbiati explained. “We’re stuck inside the facility where we’re staying, and only small groups of dads can go out to do the shopping in a market near here, avoiding soldiers and checkpoints. In a fortnight, we’ll run out of money as well, and we don’t know what we have to do to get more. The food and water we find are often unhealthy and cause further health problems.”

The situation in Congo is not calm everywhere, the country has been in a bloody civil war for two decades, and what worries us most is the **lack of institutional news channels**. “We’ve written to Minister Kyenge, to undersecretaries, to the International Adoption Committee, but we haven’t received any information or replies,” Galbiati said. “The only contact we have is with **the Italian ambassador in Kinshasa, Pio Mariani**, and through some channels with Varese Province and Lombardy Region, which we’ve activated, but only thanks to personal acquaintances; we’ve been unable to get an official description of the situation. In a sense, **we feel abandoned**.”

In the middle of such a delicate situation, only the family happiness of this moment remains. “We’ve met our daughter, and seeing our whole family together in these days is wonderful. Our happiness is helping us to overcome our worries, but we need something to happen, to get things moving again.”

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