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## **DNA analyses return 13 Haitian children to families: DNA-Prokids Bolivia**

*This release is available in [Spanish](#).*

Natural disasters frequently turn into human tragedies, such as family separations. The Haiti earthquake of January 12, was followed by emotive worldwide solidarity actions. But this can not outshine extremely serious incidents, like the fact that the human trafficking mafias could take advantage of the catastrophe to get children off the island.

Last January, more than seventy people from Haiti arrived at Santa Cruz de la Sierra (Bolivia), via Lima. Visa problems stopped them on their way to Brazil or Argentina. Bolivian Police suspicions opened a deep investigation and proved that the 25 Haitian children in the group were not accompanied by their relatives. On February, their families in Haiti started to look for them.

The Bolivian Attorney General's Office requested the collaboration of the Laboratory of Forensic Genetics of the Bolivia Forensic Research Institute, which applied the **DNA-Prokids action protocol**. The genetic research results were unquestionable: eight parents (seven mothers and a father) looking for their 13 children have recovered them, thanks to the DNA identification (two mothers looked for two children each, a mother looked for three children, four mothers looked for a child each, a father looked for two children).

Up to 12 children are still unidentified, and they will remain in Bolivia until they are identified or handed over the Haitian Government.

Police and judicial investigation to clear up the case is continuing in Bolivia.

### **DNA-Prokids protocol**

To help solving cases like this, on suspicion of human trafficking, the University of Granada created DNA-Prokids program in 2004. In 2010, the program is already working in 15 countries in the world, and 250 positive identifications have contributed to family reunifications, thanks to an extremely efficient instrument against child trafficking: DNA analysis.

At present, the University of Granada and the University of North Texas are closely working in the project, thanks to private donations in USA (Life Technologies) and in Spain (Santander/F.M. Botin, BBVA and CajaGRANADA); and the support from the Spanish Government (Ministry of Foreign Affairs) and from different countries' authorities.

DNA-Prokids has created a rigorous action protocol to identify children found outside their homes and relatives of missing children.

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**More information about DNA-Prokids:** [prokids@ugr.es](mailto:prokids@ugr.es) / [www.dna-prokids.org](http://www.dna-prokids.org) / +34 630064328

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