



Neutral Citation Number: [2026] EWHC 1033 (Fam)

Case No: FD24P00632

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE
FAMILY DIVISION

Royal Courts of Justice
Strand, London, WC2A 2LL

Date: 01/05/2026

Before :

THE HONOURABLE MR JUSTICE HAYDEN

Between :

Claire Mireille N'Djosse

Applicant

- and -

Ifedayo Adedapo Kolawole Adeyeye

Respondent

Mr Chris Bryden (instructed by Dawson Cornwell LLP) for the Applicant

Hearing date: 1st May 2026

Approved Judgment

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Mr Justice Hayden :

1. This urgent ex-parte application concerns Laurys, a four-year-old boy born in France in April 2021. His mother lives in Grenoble, where she met the father, Ifedayo Adeyeye. His father is a dual British–Nigerian national. The parents’ relationship lasted approximately eight months, they never lived together, and they separated before Laurys’s birth.
2. Following an application by Adeyeye, DNA testing carried out in June 2021 confirmed that Adeyeye is Laurys’s biological father, and he was subsequently granted parental responsibility. In October 2023, the French court awarded the mother sole custody of Laurys and ordered that Adeyeye should have progressively increasing contact, beginning with supervised contact.
3. Contact commenced in January 2024 and was supervised at a French contact centre. Records from the centre documented ongoing difficulties with Adeyeye’s cooperation and behaviour. Despite these difficulties, contact continued. The father was arrogant, dismissive and rude to the contact staff. Throughout, and I have no doubt contrary to her best instincts, the mother cooperated fastidiously with the orders of the French Court.
4. On 27th July 2024, Laurys spent his first overnight stay with Adeyeye. He was due to be returned the following day, but Adeyeye failed to do so. It was quickly discovered that the address Adeyeye had provided to the French Court was fictitious.
5. Further investigation established that Adeyeye had taken Laurys from France to England and then onward to Nigeria. French authorities issued an international arrest warrant, and Adeyeye was later arrested in the United Kingdom in December 2024. It also emerged that Adeyeye had obtained both a British passport and a Nigerian passport for Laurys without the mother’s knowledge. It requires to be stated clearly, this was a planned, carefully executed and brutal abduction of a young boy from his mother.
6. This is child who had never spent a night away from her before and whom she has not seen since. Her pain is visceral and unbearable to watch. Laurys must have been

terrified, missing his home, his mother, his friends, his entire world. It was snatched away from him by his own father, whom he ought to have been able to look to for protection, but who became, instead, a dangerous threat to his son's physical and emotional welfare. This abduction falls at the very top end of the index of gravity. In the Criminal Courts of England and Wales, it would attract a lengthy prison sentence. There is an extradition warrant from the French authorities.

7. Laurys remained in Nigeria, where Guardianship Orders were made by a Nigerian Court in favour of a Nigerian family said to be Adeyeye's relatives, I have no idea if they in fact are. As will be evident from the chronology, I can place very little reliance on anything that Adeyeye says. He has been entirely dishonest throughout. The Orders were based on false and probably fraudulent information indicating that both parents had consented. The mother had no notice of, and no involvement in, those proceedings. Nigeria is not a signatory to the 1980 Hague Convention on International Child Abduction, and there is no treaty-based mechanism for securing Laurys' return to France.
8. Following Adeyeye's arrest in the United Kingdom in December 2024, pursuant to an international arrest warrant issued by the French judicial authorities, the mother applied to the High Court of England and Wales. On 17th December 2024 she sought a Location Order and Orders for the return of Laurys, initially believing he might be in England. It subsequently became clear that the child remained in Nigeria. In January 2025, further applications were made raising the question whether the English Court had jurisdiction to act where the child was physically present in neither England nor France and where Nigeria is not a contracting state to the 1980 Hague Convention.
9. By order of 19th February 2025, the Court directed that the issues to be determined included whether Laurys should be made a ward of the court, whether the High Court had jurisdiction under its inherent (*parens patriae*) jurisdiction to make a summary return order, and, if so, whether such an order should be made. Expert evidence on French law was obtained, which concluded that French legal proceedings alone were unlikely to secure Laurys's rapid and effective return from Nigeria.

10. The matter came before me on 1st May 2025. I found that as Laurys had British nationality via his father, and that this Court had jurisdiction under its inherent powers to put in place measures to secure Laurys' return either to London or Paris. This is an 'exceptional' jurisdiction, and in this context, there had been no previous case in which it had been invoked. For reasons which I will explain below, I can now indicate that the case ND v K [2025] EWHC 1548 (Fam) concerns this family who will now be named.
11. Adeyeye, who is adroit in securing legal representation when he needs it, appealed to the Court of Appeal. Despite the fact that the jurisdiction had never been successfully invoked before, the circumstances of the case were such that the Court of Appeal considered that the Order was correct, and, again, notwithstanding that it had not been previously invoked, refused permission to appeal.
12. Laurys was made a ward of court, and a Return Order was made, not to England, but directly to France, as Laurys' country of habitual residence and the home of his mother, his primary carer until the abduction.
13. At the time of the hearing before me, Laurys was not in the care of either parent. Adeyeye was unable to return to Nigeria due to ongoing criminal and extradition proceedings, leaving Laurys living in Nigeria under the guardianship arrangements.
14. The mother made an application for committal proceedings filed on 3rd September 2025. On 5th November 2025, Adeyeye was found to be in contempt of court. Mrs Justice Judd made the following findings:

“ (i) Failed to take necessary steps to enable him to exercise his parental responsibility in Nigeria and if necessary in the Nigerian Courts in breach of paragraph 13(iv) of the Order of 16th July 2025;

(ii) Failed to take necessary steps to enable him to exercise his parental responsibility in Nigeria and if necessary in the Nigerian Courts in breach of paragraph 13(iv) of the Order of 27th August 2025; and

(iii) Failed to swear such affidavits or equivalent as may be necessary to facilitate the Nigerian courts to facilitate the above and in so doing, taking such steps including the obtaining of copies of his passport from the Tipstaff by request

from his solicitor; in breach of paragraph 13(v) of the Order of 27th August 2025.”

15. Sentence was adjourned to 18th November 2025 to give F time to provide a witness statement setting out his financial position and any mitigation. It was made clear within the Judgment that:

“The most significant feature of the guardianship order was that it was made with the Mother’s consent – that it was made on a totally false basis with a signed affidavit. Those affidavits have never been provided. That must have been false. On any hue, that undermines the original guardianship order, and undermines their current claim. He could have produced those affidavits. This is not something that he has done. I reject the assertion made on his behalf that his application to register the English orders, including making applications for urgent hearings encompasses that. The fraud provides a very strong defence to the Order of 19th March 2025. Yet, this is not a claim that the father has made.”

16. On 21st January 2026, Adeyeye was sentenced to six months imprisonment for breach of the Return Order. During his period in custody, Adeyeye did absolutely nothing to comply with the Order. On 17th March 2026, whilst he was still in custody, I made a further Return Order telling Adeyeye that if he did not comply, there would likely be a further and longer sentence. On 20th April 2026, i.e. just last week, Mr Nicholas Stoner KC, sitting as a Deputy High Court Judge, found further breach of the Order and sentenced him to a further period of 12 months imprisonment. A warrant of committal was sent to the prison the same day. The HMP Pentonville prison officers had produced Adeyeye at Court and returned him. However, in error, Adeyeye was released mistakenly from prison the following day. M’s solicitors received the following email:

“... We have released Mr Adeyeye in error. We didn’t receive the 12 month warrant until late on Mon 20th (18:05) and it was not flagged up before he was released on morning of 21st April for the 6 month sentence we had been holding him on.

I will be contacting the police for them to apprehend him and return to custody. He is currently unlawfully at large.

I will keep you updated as I get updates. We apologise for this error.”

17. This email is dated 23rd April 2026, i.e. two days after Adeyeye’s release. I note that the email uses the future tense, i.e. “*I will be contacting the police*”. Thus, it would appear that nothing had been done at all by that stage. There is also to my mind an alarming lack of urgency in the tone of the email generally. It would appear that the international arrest warrant had also “*not been flagged up*”. It requires to be stated unambiguously that Adeyeye’s detention in custody is the best, perhaps only, hope for the reunification of this boy with his mother. This release has devastated her.

18. Mr Bryden, Counsel on behalf of the mother, has today asked me to put the names of the parties into the public domain. Though the Family Courts seek to achieve transparency, it is often necessary to protect vulnerable children by anonymising their names. This was the case here. Laurys’ vulnerability is obvious. However, I consider it necessary to review that position. What is required, in every case, is a balancing exercise between the competing rights and interests in play. Article 8 ECHR protects the privacy of the family in these circumstances; Article 10 protects freedom of expression and must reflect the public interest in free reporting by the press. Frequently, that balance is a difficult one. Here, however, I do not find it to be so. It is hoped that publicity will assist in securing Adeyeye’s return to custody. Thus, the Article 8 and Article 10 issues now coincide. I will permit both names and images of father and child to be placed in the public domain. I will also permit the mother’s name to be published. I would also observe that when the State fails in the way that it has done here, there is a public interest in that being put in the public domain too and in transparent terms.

19. Finally, I have been asked to make a number of Disclosure Orders to facilitate the investigation of Adeyeye’s whereabouts. I do so and will approve the Order when drafted. I am sending a copy of this judgment directly to the Governor of HMP Pentonville to be passed on immediately to the Chief Constable of the Metropolitan Police.