

BACKGROUND:

Post Operational Status Updates:

I. Libyan Processing –U.S. Embassy Tripoli has suspended all embassy operations in Libya, including all consular services, as of July 26. U.S. Consulate General Casablanca is currently the designated IV processing post for Libyan residents; however, due to a lack of transportation infrastructure and a visa requirement for Libyan citizens, many Libyans face challenges in traveling to Casablanca and opt to travel to Amman, Jordan instead. State is in the process of officially designating Amman as an alternative IV processing post for Libyan applicants.

- The blanket authorization to process clearly approvable I-130 petitions for Syrians and Libyans is valid until the end of July 2015. U.S. Embassy Tunis reported an increase in the number of locally filed I-130 petitions since the summer.

II. Sana'a Processing

Because of frequent closures, Embassy Sana'a continues to face a backlog in the processing of immigrant visa cases and is therefore unable to accept new cases at this time.

- At this time, Sana'a is also suspending DNA collections.
- The Bureau of Consular Affairs is working to identify alternatives for Yemeni IV applicants, and hopes to designate additional locations to accept and process Yemeni cases in the near future.

III. Iraq Processing

Routine non-immigrant visa services have been temporarily suspended. Post is handling officials (As and Gs), emergency medical cases on a case-by-case basis, and is processing some returning students and exchange visitor visas that have US government interest.

- Baghdad continues to interview and process IVs and is scheduling cases locally.

III. Syrian Processing

Amman remains the processing post for Syrian applicants. Post is working with the Jordanian authorities and Royal Jordanian Airlines to allow scheduled applicants to enter the country. Post has seen a higher rate of

Syrians arriving for their appointment, and we are transferring some Syrian cases to Beirut. However, as of January 5th, the Government of Lebanon has imposed visa restrictions for Syrians. VO is working with post on possible options.

Monrovia: Post is continuing to process NIVs normally. Post resumed interviewing IVs, but medical examinations and DNA collection have been suspended since August 2014. On January 21, 2015, and after consultation with CDC/DGMQ, VO approved Monrovia resuming medical examinations and DNA collection if the EAC and in-country public health authorities and international Ebola teams determine it is safe. Post's EAC met on January 27, 2015 and approved the resumption of medical exams and DNA. Post has a backlog of approximately 600 IV cases, 416 DV cases, and 500 pending DNA kits.

V. Conakry: Post is continuing to process NIVs normally. Senegal has reopened its borders to Guineans. IV applicants should now be able to travel to Dakar and be processed without issue.

VI. Freetown: Post is continuing to process NIVs and IVs normally, with the exception of IV cases where DNA is recommended. Post is not collecting DNA because DHL will not agree to ship samples. Post has approximately 138 pending DNA kits. With regard to medical examinations, the laboratory that collects sputum samples to further tests applicants who show signs or symptoms of tuberculosis is closed. Approximately 3 cases are pending as a result. Applicants have the option to obtain a medical examination elsewhere.

I-601A Provisional Waivers –

- One of President Obama's executive actions on immigration included expanding the number of individuals who can benefit from the provisional waiver program. The executive action directed USCIS to develop regulations allowing spouses and sons and daughters of lawful permanent residents and the sons and daughters of U.S. citizens to apply for provisional waivers. USCIS and CA/VO held an initial teleconference in December and agreed to continue coordination on this program as a final rule is developed.

Refugee/Asylee Follow-to-Join Updates

- USCIS is not considering implementing a circuit ride pilot this fiscal year.
- In April 2014, USCIS field offices in China began adjudicating Form I-730 petitions for beneficiaries residing in China, implementing Phase I of the decision to shift the approval of petitions to field offices. USCIS plans to launch Phase II, in FY2016. During Phase II, all offices where USCIS has a presence will adjudicate Forms I-730.
- USCIS would like to begin the discussions on ways to implement Phase III, encompassing the approvals of Form I-730s for beneficiaries residing in countries without USCIS International Field Offices. USCIS is considering the option of delegating authority to State consular officers to approve clearly approvable I-730s, similar to I-130 process.
- USCIS would like to form a working group with State to further discuss security check requirements for I-730s.
- USCIS would like to expand DOD ABIS checks to all I-730 beneficiaries over the age of 14. In locations where Consular Affairs collect fingerprints for I-730 beneficiaries, DOD ABIS checks are completed for four nationalities only. USCIS would like to begin discussions with State on developing a process for ensuring all fingerprinted I-730 beneficiaries receive DOD ABIS checks.
- USCIS is modifying travel packet guidance to improve security of case file documents. USCIS has implemented the first change, requiring staff to send all paper security check records directly to the National Records Center (NRC) instead of including such documents in the travel packet. In the near future, USCIS plans to have staff remove all case documents that are not needed by CBP from the travel packets, and instead send such documents directly to NRC.
- USCIS is available to assist State with I-730 training for Consular Officers deploying to posts without a USCIS presence. USCIS proposes calendaring a meeting with CA/VO specifically to discuss USCIS participation in Consular Officer I-730 training.

I-131A Update

USCIS is awaiting guidance from OMB on when the new form can be published. In the meantime, USCIS is gathering data on the volume of cases processed at posts where one or more DHS components are present. USCIS will work with CA/VO to develop new procedural guidance to be implemented once the form is published.

- CA/VO requested USCIS' procedural guidance to its offices before VO can finalize an ALDAC and FAM changes. CA will also investigate work-flow and technical issues (i.e., updating ACRS) and Economy Act implications that would potentially delay any implementation by the time the OMB approves the form.

I-130 "adoption" filing exception

USCIS published information on filing a Form I-130 for U.S. Prospective Adoptive Parents living abroad. This information was published on the USCIS website and shared with IO Field Offices and DOS/ VO colleagues on February 3, 2015.

TPS

The decision to designate, designate in part, or not designate the Philippines for Temporary Protected Status remains pending at the DHS Secretary's office. No official decision has been made as of February 18, 2015.

- An initial designation of TPS for Guatemala is still under review. No official decision has been made as of February 18, 2015. If Guatemala is designated for TPS, USCIS is looking at an increased workload of 1.3 million filings or 600,000 individuals.
- An initial designation of TPS for the West African countries of Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Guinea occurred on November 21, 2014. The 180-day initial filing period runs until May 20, 2015.
- TPS extensions for Honduras and Nicaragua were announced on October 16, 2014. The 60-day reregistration period ended on December 15, 2014.
- An extension for TPS for El Salvador was announced on January 7, 2015. The 60-day reregistration period runs through March 9, 2015.

- TPS for Syria was extended and redesignated on January 5, 2015. USCIS will accept initial TPS applications for TPS Syria through July 6, 2015. The reregistration period will run through July 6, 2015.
- TPS for Somalia and Haiti are both currently under review

Cuban Family Reunification Parole (CFRP) Program

On December 18, 2014, USCIS announced via Federal Register Notice future changes to the application process for the Cuban Family Reunification Parole (CFRP) Program. The changes require that, beginning on February 17, 2015, future CFRP petitioners file a Form I-131, *Application for Travel Document*, and the required fee (currently \$360) or fee waiver request on behalf of each family member in Cuba they wish to have considered for parole under this program.

- USCIS is “grandfathering” cases that were already in process prior to December 18, 2014. In addition, USCIS will grandfather cases filed by petitioners who received a program eligibility notice from the NVC at any time prior to December 18, 2014, and who submitted to the NVC before February 17, 2015, complete documentation necessary to apply for the CFRP Program. These grandfathered cases are not subject to the new filing requirements.
- Individuals who did not submit all documentation required to apply for the program prior to February 17, 2015, must wait for NVC to send them a new invitation before they can apply for the program.
- USCIS will be hosting a national stakeholder engagement on the CFRP Program on March 18 to provide information regarding the program changes and to answer questions. CA/VO, NVC, and USINT are invited to join USCIS in this and other related stakeholder engagements.

Haitian Family Reunification Parole (HFRP)

- On December 18, 2014, USCIS published a Federal Register notice establishing the Haitian Family Reunification Parole (HFRP) Program. The HFRP Program allows certain Haitian beneficiaries of approved noncurrent I-130 visa petitions who are in Haiti to be reunited with U.S. family members without waiting for an immigrant visa to become available.

- The National Visa Center (NVC) is expected to begin issuing invitations for the HFRP Program during the week of March 9, 2015. Those invited to apply for the program are U.S. citizens and Lawful Permanent Residents (LPRs) who have filed approved Form I-130 petitions on behalf of Haitian family members for whom visas are expected to be available within 18 to 30 months. The filing deadline for an HFRP Program application will be indicated in the Invitation Letter.
- U.S. petitioners who apply to the HFRP Program on behalf of family members in Haiti will be required to file a Form I-131, *Application for Travel Document*, and Form I-134, *Affidavit of Support*, for each family member they wish to have considered for parole. The filing fee for the Form I-131 is currently \$360.
- To benefit from the program, I-130 beneficiaries must be in Haiti and be eligible for an immigrant visa in all respects, save an immediately available visa number. If found eligible, principal beneficiaries and their derivative family members will be paroled into the United States for a period of three years, during which time their approved I-130s are expected to become current and they will apply for adjustment of status. USCIS anticipates that HFRP Program beneficiaries will arrive in the United States up to approximately two years before their immigrant visas become available.
- A public engagement on the HFRP Program was held at USCIS Headquarters on February 26, 2015 and in-person meetings with stakeholders in Miami, Boston and New York have been scheduled for the week of March 2.

Central American Minors (CAM) Refugee/Parole Program

- The Department of State and U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) recently announced the Central American Minors (CAM) Refugee/Parole Program. The CAM program began accepting applications on December 1, 2014.