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PUBLICATION

Technical Issues Prompt Suspension of Overseas U.S. Visa Processing

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Earlier this month, the United States Department of State ("DOS") announced that, due to technical problems, it was temporarily unable to issue U.S. visas at consular posts abroad. This problem is currently affecting overseas visa processing worldwide.

According to the notice posted at travel.state.gov, applicant biometric data is not being processed properly, which is preventing overseas posts from performing the security checks necessary to issue visas. As a result, consular posts are unable to issue U.S. visas to these individuals.

The above problems have also affected some U.S. passport processing abroad. Domestic passport operations are still functioning, with some processing delays. However, the technical problems have adversely affected the intake of some mailed applications and same-day service at passport agencies.

The United States Consulate General in Toronto has confirmed that consular posts have been unable to print most immigrant and non-immigrant visas for applicants who were approved after June 8, 2015. They have also been unable to process new applications submitted on or after June 9, 2015.

Individuals with visa interview appointments that are scheduled in Canada on June 22 or 23, 2015, are being advised to reschedule their appointments, if they submitted a DS-160 online application after June 9, 2015. However, individuals who submitted their DS-160 online applications prior to June 9, 2015, should plan to attend their scheduled visa interview appointments.

Any non-immigrant who is currently in the United States, and who does not already hold a currently-valid U.S. visa, should consider delaying their trip abroad until this technical problem has been resolved. Otherwise, they may experience delays in obtaining a new visa at a

consular post abroad. Even after the technical problem has been addressed, visa processing delays are expected as consular posts work to clear the backlog of pending cases.

The only exception would apply to foreign nationals who are entitled to automatic visa revalidation under 22 CFR §41.112(d). According to 22 CFR §41.112(d), certain non-immigrants in the United States who travel solely to contiguous territory (i.e. Canada or Mexico) for a period of 30 days or less may be readmitted and their expired visas will be deemed revalidated for that one entry.

DOS officials have stated that they are hoping to have their visa systems working again sometime this week.