

**SUPPORTING STATEMENT  
FOR PAPERWORK REDUCTION ACT SUBMUISSION  
OMB Number 1405-xxxx  
Special Immigrant Visa Biodata Form, DS-234**

**A. JUSTIFICATION**

1. Section 525 of the Division J of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2008, Public Law, 110-161, signed into law December 26, 2007, provided that Iraqi and Afghan aliens granted special immigrant status under section 101(a)(27) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) shall be eligible for resettlement assistance, entitlement programs, and other benefits available to refugees admitted through the United States Refugee Admissions Program for a period not to exceed six months. Likewise, section 1244(g) of the Subtitle C of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2008 (The Refugee Crisis in Iraq Act of 2008), Public Law 110-181, signed into law on January 28, 2008, provided that Iraqis granted special immigrant status shall be eligible for the same resettlement assistance, entitlement programs, and other benefits provided to refugees admitted through the United States Refugee Admissions Program for a period not to exceed eight months. Similarly, Section 602 of the Division F of the Omnibus Appropriations Act, 2009, Public Law 111-8, signed into law on March 11, 2009, provided that an Afghan who is granted special immigrant status shall be eligible for resettlement assistance, entitlement programs, and other benefits available to refugees admitted under section 207 of the INA for a period not to exceed 8 months. In order to elect the portion of these benefits administered by the Department of State, Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) applicants must submit information that will allow the Department of State to identify an appropriate resettlement site in the United States and correctly allocate additional services.

2. Under section 1059 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2006, Public Law 109-163, up to 50 Iraqi and Afghan translators who have worked for the U.S. military have been eligible for SIVs each fiscal year (FY). The Refugee Crisis in Iraq Act of 2007, as amended by Public Law 110-242, provides up to 5,000 (primary applicant) Iraqi Special Immigrant Visas in FY 2008 and up to 5,000 more in each of the following four fiscal years. The Afghan Allies Protection Act of 2009 authorizes issuance of up to 1,500 SIVs annually through fiscal year 2013. There will be up to 12,000 Iraqis and Afghans eligible for the resettlement benefits each fiscal year by estimation. SIV applicants who qualify for and request resettlement support upon arrival in the United States must complete this form for each family member and submit it to the National Visa Center (NVC), along with the Resettlement Benefits Election Form. Both documents will be submitted via email as scanned attachments to the NVC.

3. Submission of forms are done electronically. Respondents can either complete the form online, using the .pdf version to fill in the required information or print the form and fill in required information "by hand". The form must be scanned and emailed to the NVC. This is the most efficient means of collecting and processing the data. The NVC will forward the forms to the Refugee Processing Center (RPC) via a SharePoint website which uses the Worldwide Refugee Admissions Processing System (WRAPS), permitting faster dissemination of the information to the resettlement agencies.

4. There is no duplication of collection. The information necessary for the processing of the Afghan and Iraqi SIV applications is not available elsewhere.
5. The information collection does not involve small businesses or other small entities.
6. Failure to collect this data would seriously impact the ability of the resettlement agencies to place Afghans and Iraqis in appropriate resettlement locations in the United States.
7. There are no special circumstances associated with this collection.
8. An Emergency 60-day Notice will be published in the *Federal Register* in accordance with 5 CFR 1320.8.
9. Respondents receive neither payments nor gifts for providing their biodata forms. However, the level of resettlement benefits, which SIV recipients will receive in the United States is based, in part, upon needs that are identified through a review of the data provided.
10. Respondents are notified that the information in their files is released to State Department personnel, officers of other federal agencies including Health and Human Services and the Department of Homeland Security, and resettlement agency employees on a need to know basis. Guidelines for the disclosure of information are attached to the cooperative agreements between the voluntary agencies and the State Department.
11. Information on religion and ethnicity is provided by the respondent, as it can be useful in determining which resettlement agency or resettlement site is appropriate.
12. The estimated burden time to complete the DS-234 is 20 minutes. The National Defense Authorization Act, 2006, authorizes 50 Iraq and Afghan translators/interpreters annually, the Refugee Crisis in Iraq Act authorizes 5,000 annual primary applicants, and the Afghan Allies Protection Act authorizes 1,500 annually. The estimated total annual applicants (primary applicants and family members) is 12,000. The annual burden in hours based on these figures is 4,000 hours.
13. There are no costs to respondents associated with this collection.
14. RPC staff estimates devoting 10 minutes each to input information submitted by applicants. The total cost to the Federal Government at \$47.44 hourly rate to process 12,000 applicants is \$ 94,880.
15. The burden change indicated is due to this submission as a new collection.
16. The Department does not plan to publish the results of this collection.
17. The Department will display the expiration date for OMB approval of the information collection.
18. There are no exceptions to the certification statement.

#### B. COLLECTION OF INFORMATION EMPLOYING STATISTICAL METHODS

This collection does not employ statistical methods.