

JUSTIFICATION FOR EMERGENCY REVIEW

Special Immigrant Visa Biodata Form, DS -0234, OMB Number 1405-xxxx

Recent legislation has created new categories of Iraqis and Afghans affiliated with the United States who are eligible to apply for Special Immigrant Visas. Under the relevant legislative authorities, SIV recipients may, if they choose, elect benefits for which refugees who are resettled to the United States are eligible. This program was created as a critical protection tool available to those Iraqis and Afghans who served the United States and have been targeted for harm because of their U.S. affiliations.

The Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration, which administers the provision of refugee resettlement benefits to SIV recipients who elect them, provides a loan for travel to the United States and funds basic living assistance and support for up to 90 days after the SIV recipient arrives in the United States. A PRM-funded resettlement agency uses the information collected in this form to select the resettlement site best suited to the SIV recipient given any U.S.-based family or other ties, and to make appropriate preparations for their arrival, including arranging medical services that may be necessary.

The delay in the preparation of this package for OMB occurred as a result of discussions on ways to refine this form in order to collect better information for use by the resettlement agencies in the provision of services, and the removal of language which incorrectly indicated that SIV holders may be denied a visa if this form was not submitted. Applicants will still be able to apply for and receive an SIV without this form. However, receipt of resettlement benefits to which they are entitled by law could be jeopardized.

The Department has therefore determined that:

1. This collection is needed prior to the time periods normally associated with a routine submission for review under the provisions of the Paperwork Reduction Act, because the prior approved form expires on February 29, 2012;
2. This collection is essential to the mission of the Department of State; and

3. The use of normal clearance procedures will prevent the Department obtaining this information.

Without this form, the Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration would not have a mechanism by which to gather detailed information from Iraqi and Afghan SIV recipients that is used to place them in appropriate resettlement locations and to provide the necessary housing, medical, and other benefits that applicants may require. As these visa holders are all former employees of the U.S. government or U.S. government contractors in Iraq and Afghanistan, the United States has a special interest in ensuring that these individuals receive the full range of benefits available to them.

Therefore, the Department of State requests emergency OMB approval for this collection by February 29, 2012.