

December 19, 2022

Sabeel Rahman, Acting Administrator
Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs
Office of Management and Budget

Dear Acting Administrator Rahman:

The Department of State requests Office of Management and Budget (OMB) emergency processing, pursuant to 5 C.F.R. 1320.13, of the Family Reunification Assistance for Afghan Parolees with immediate family members who are outside of the United States, Form DS-4317, OMB Control Number 1405-XXXX, by December 23, 2022.

The U.S. Government agreed that Afghans paroled under Operation Allies Welcome or those paroled, then subsequently granted Temporary Protected Status (TPS), could request U.S. Government-supported family reunification support for their spouses and unmarried children under 21.

The State Department needs to identify people who fall into these eligibility criteria. While the State Department has, to date, been relying on incoming requests via email to manage the intake of these requests, several problems have presented themselves: a) the volume is unsustainable from a manpower perspective – many more people have been separated from their families than previously anticipated; b) the data collection process via email is prone to errors and incomplete; c) data validation with existing U.S. Government databases is complicated by these errors and incompletions; and d) as it has not been publicly advertised, the current system is inequitable.

To rectify these inefficiencies and others, the Department proposes using an online form available on the Department's website to acquire the most current and accurate data possible to inform our relocation assistance efforts. It will enable the Department to build a current picture of how many Afghans may be eligible for relocation and to progress with assisting them to depart Afghanistan. The online form helps avoid unstructured requests for assistance, such as those that arrive via e-mail messages, which may not include important information, such as family size and their biodata, and which often require entry into other systems in order to

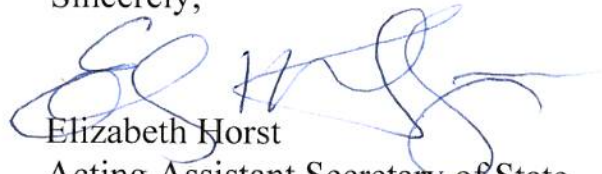
facilitate responses. This form is integrated with other elements of the Department's evolving information technology platform used in crisis-management situations, enhancing the efficient handling of individual cases.

The Department has therefore determined that:

1. This collection is needed prior to the expiration of time periods allowed under 5 CFR part 1320. It is the policy of the United States to expeditiously reunite families who were separated during the withdrawal from Afghanistan. More immediate collection of this information will enable the Department to more quickly estimate of how many Afghans may be eligible for reunification support and prepare them for relocation to an overseas processing location.
2. This collection is essential to the mission of the Department of State, which has committed to upholding promises made to reunite these separated families. Parolee cases only reach the Department through advocacy groups and resettlement agencies. This delays case identification and places an unnecessary requirement upon the parolee whereas a public application-based process can more consistently reach every parolee, regardless of their ability to access an external advocate for support.
3. Under the current method of application, the burden is disproportionately shifted to the public to identify eligible cases and forward this information to the Department of State. An immediately available, public-facing application is the least burdensome and cost-effective method to relieve advocacy groups from identifying, collecting, and transmitting this information to the Department.
4. The normal PRA clearance procedures are likely to cause public harm, since the delay caused by such procedures will significantly impair the ability of the Department of State to expeditiously relocate eligible families from Afghanistan amid ongoing unrest, famine, violence and other adverse conditions. This ongoing separation from their families continues to adversely impact their well-being. Expeditiously collecting the requested information and reuniting these families serves the public's interest.

In light of the foregoing, the Department of State requests OMB's formal emergency review and approval of this information collection.

Sincerely,



Elizabeth Horst
Acting Assistant Secretary of State
Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs