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U.S. Citizenship
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APR 23 2007

FILE:

WAC 06 182 53698

Office: CALIFORNIA SERVICE CENTER

Date:

IN RE:

Petitioner:

Beneficiary:

PETITION: Petition for Alien Fiancé(e) Pursuant to Section 101(a)(15)(K) of the Immigration and Nationality Act, 8 U.S.C. § 1101(a)(15)(K)

ON BEHALF OF PETITIONER: SELF-REPRESENTED

INSTRUCTIONS:

This is the decision in your case. All documents have been returned to the office that originally decided your case. Any further inquiry must be made to that office.

Robert P. Wiemann, Chief
Administrative Appeals Office

DISCUSSION: The nonimmigrant visa petition was denied by the Director, California Service Center, and is now on appeal before the Administrative Appeals Office (AAO). The appeal will be dismissed.

The petitioner is a citizen of the United States who seeks to classify the beneficiary, a native and citizen of Iraq, as the fiancé of a United States citizen pursuant to section 101(a)(15)(K) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (the Act), 8 U.S.C. § 1101(a)(15)(K).

The Director denied the petition after determining that the record did not establish that the petitioner and beneficiary had personally met within the two-year period immediately preceding the filing of the petition, as required by section 214(d) of the Act. He further determined that the record did not establish a basis on which to exempt the petitioner from this requirement. *Decision of the Director*, dated August 3, 2006.

Section 101(a)(15)(K) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (the Act), 8 U.S.C. § 1101(a)(15)(K), provides nonimmigrant classification to an alien who:

- (i) is the fiancé(e) of a U.S. citizen and who seeks to enter the United States solely to conclude a valid marriage with that citizen within 90 days after admission;
- (ii) has concluded a valid marriage with a citizen of the United States who is the petitioner, is the beneficiary of a petition to accord a status under section 201(b)(2)(A)(i) that was filed under section 204 by the petitioner, and seeks to enter the United States to await the approval of such petition and the availability to the alien of an immigrant visa; or
- (iii) is the minor child of an alien described in clause (i) or (ii) and is accompanying, or following to join, the alien.

Section 214(d) of the Act, 8 U.S.C. § 1184(d), states, in pertinent part, that a fiancé(e) petition:

. . . shall be approved only after satisfactory evidence is submitted by the petitioner to establish that the parties have previously met in person within two years before the date of filing the petition, have a bona fide intention to marry, and are legally able and actually willing to conclude a valid marriage in the United States within a period of ninety days after the alien's arrival. . . .

Pursuant to 8 C.F.R. § 214.2(k)(2), the petitioner may be exempted from this requirement for a meeting if it is established that compliance would:

- (1) result in extreme hardship to the petitioner; or
- (2) that compliance would violate strict and long-established customs of the beneficiary's foreign culture or social practice, as where marriages are traditionally arranged by the parents of the contracting parties and the prospective bride and groom are prohibited from meeting subsequent to the arrangement and prior to the wedding day. In addition to establishing that the required meeting would be a violation of custom or practice, the petitioner must also establish that any and all other aspects of the traditional arrangements have been or will be met in accordance with the custom or practice.

The regulation does not define what may constitute extreme hardship to the petitioner. Therefore, each claim of extreme hardship must be judged on a case-by-case basis taking into account the totality of the petitioner's circumstances. Generally, a director looks at whether the petitioner can demonstrate the existence of circumstances that are (1) not within the power of the petitioner to control or change, and (2) likely to last for a considerable duration or the duration cannot be determined with any degree of certainty.

The petitioner filed the Petition for Alien Fiancé(e) (Form I-129F) with Citizenship and Immigration Services on May 23, 2006. Therefore, the petitioner and the beneficiary were required to have met during the period that began on September May 23, 2004 and ended on May 23, 2006.

At the time of filing, the petitioner indicated that she and the beneficiary had never met. Therefore, the evidence of record does not establish that the petitioner has complied with the meeting requirement of section 214(d) of the Act.

On appeal, the petitioner states her travel to meet the beneficiary will violate their Middle Eastern strict and long-established customs, culture, and social practice; that she presently is a full-time student and does not want to interrupt her studies to travel to meet the petitioner; that she has a part-time job to sustain her personal and college needs; and that she would like to be married in the presence of her family and friends, away from the turmoil of the Middle East. *Statement from the petitioner*, dated August 21, 2006.

While the AAO acknowledges the statements of the petitioner, it does not find that she has offered evidence to establish that compliance with the meeting requirement during the specified period would have constituted an extreme hardship for her or that such a meeting would have violated the customs of the beneficiary's culture or social practice. Having to take time off of work and school to travel to meet the beneficiary is part of the normal process and does not constitute an extreme hardship to the petitioner. Although the petitioner asserts that traveling to meet the beneficiary would violate her custom, she does not submit any documentation to support her assertion. Moreover, her statement focuses on being unable to travel, not being unable to meet the beneficiary. The AAO also notes that the petitioner is not required to meet her fiancé in Iraq. She has, however, presented no evidence that she and her fiancé have explored meeting in another country, including the United States. Therefore, the appeal will be dismissed.

The denial of the petition is without prejudice. Once the petitioner and beneficiary have met, she may file a new I-129F petition on the beneficiary's behalf so that a new two-year meeting period will apply.

The burden of proof in these proceedings rests solely with the petitioner. Section 291 of the Act, 8 U.S.C. § 1361. The petitioner has not met that burden.

ORDER: The appeal is dismissed.