U.S. Department of Homeland Security
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Washington, DC 20529

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

[redacted]

FILE: [redacted] Office: CALIFORNIA SERVICE CENTER Date: AUG 2 9 2004

IN RE: Petitioner:
Beneficiary: [redacted]

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 of the Administrative Appeals Office 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, Director
Administrative Appeals Office

identifying data deleted to prevent clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy

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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 naturalized citizen of the United States who seeks to classify the beneficiary, a native of Afghanistan and resident of the United Kingdom, 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 petitioner and the beneficiary were already married and therefore, the beneficiary could not be classified as the fiancé of a United States citizen under section 101(a)(15)(K) of the Act. *Decision of the Director*, dated July 1, 2003.

Section 101(a)(15)(K) of 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. . . .

In conjunction with the petition, the petitioner submitted a copy of a marriage certificate reflecting that the petitioner and the beneficiary were married on May 29, 2002 in [redacted]

On appeal, the record contains a statement from the petitioner indicating that she and the beneficiary were married in a Muslim ceremony, but have not yet wed in a civil ceremony. The petitioner states that in light of this fact, she was advised to file the Form I-129F Petition for Alien Fiancé(e) . *Letter from Ariana Nazari*, dated July 8, 2003.

8 C.F.R. § 214.2(k)(7) provides, in part:

> To be classified as a K-3 spouse as defined in section 101(a)(15)(k)(ii) of the Act, or the K-4 child of such alien defined in section 101(a)(15)(k)(ii) of the Act, the alien spouse must be the beneficiary of an immigrant visa petition filed by a U.S. citizen on Form I-130, Petition for

> Alien Relative, and the beneficiary of an approved petition for a K-3 nonimmigrant visa filed on Form I-129F . . .

The AAO notes that the beneficiary *may* be eligible to apply for classification as a K-3 nonimmigrant. If the beneficiary seeks to be classified as a K-3 nonimmigrant, the regulations at 8 C.F.R. § 214.2(k)(7) require that a Form I-130, Petition for Alien Relative, be approved prior to the proper filing of a Form I-129F petition on behalf of the beneficiary.

Although the petitioner contends that she and the beneficiary "are not yet legally married, but are married according to our religion," the AAO notes that religious weddings are recognized as valid in the United States and therefore, the petitioner and the beneficiary are considered married for purposes of proceedings under section 101(a)(15)(K) of the Act. *Letter from Ariana Nazari*, dated July 8, 2003. The appeal will be dismissed because the decision of the director was correct; the beneficiary cannot be classified as the fiancé of a United States citizen pursuant to section 101(a)(15)(K) of the Act, 8 U.S.C. § 1101(a)(15)(K), because he and the petitioner are already married.

Pursuant to 8 C.F.R. § 214.2(k)(2), the denial of the petition is without prejudice. The petitioner may file a new Form I-129F petition on the beneficiary's behalf when sufficient evidence is available.

The burden of proof in these proceedings rests solely with the petitioner. *See* Section 291 of the Act, 8 U.S.C. § 1361. The petitioner has not met that burden. Therefore, the appeal will be dismissed.

ORDER: The appeal is dismissed.