



U.S. Citizenship  
and Immigration  
Services

(b)(6)

[REDACTED]

Date: **MAR 19 2014**

Office: CALIFORNIA SERVICE CENTER [REDACTED]

IN RE:

Petitioner: [REDACTED]

Beneficiary: [REDACTED]

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

ON BEHALF OF PETITIONER:

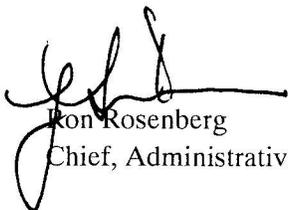
SELF-REPRESENTED

INSTRUCTIONS:

Enclosed please find the decision of the Administrative Appeals Office (AAO) in your case.

This is a non-precedent decision. The AAO does not announce new constructions of law nor establish agency policy through non-precedent decisions. If you believe the AAO incorrectly applied current law or policy to your case or if you seek to present new facts for consideration, you may file a motion to reconsider or a motion to reopen, respectively. Any motion must be filed on a Notice of Appeal or Motion (Form I-290B) within 33 days of the date of this decision. **Please review the Form I-290B instructions at <http://www.uscis.gov/forms> for the latest information on fee, filing location, and other requirements. See also 8 C.F.R. § 103.5. Do not file a motion directly with the AAO.**

Thank you,



Ron Rosenberg  
Chief, Administrative Appeals Office

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

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

The director denied the nonimmigrant visa petition because the petitioner failed to establish that he and the beneficiary met in person during the two-year period immediately preceding the filing of the petition or demonstrate that he is eligible for a waiver of the meeting requirement. On appeal, the petitioner presented evidence of having met the beneficiary in Istanbul in September 2013.

*Applicable Law*

A "fiancé(e)" is defined at Section 101(a)(15)(K) of the Act as:

subject to subsections (d) and (p) of section 214, an alien who -

(i) is the fiancée or fiancé of a citizen of the United States . . . and who seeks to enter the United States solely to conclude a valid marriage with the petitioner within ninety days after admission[.]

Section 214(d)(1) of the Act, 8 U.S.C. § 1184(d)(1), 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 2 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 except that the Secretary of Homeland Security in [her] discretion may waive the requirement that the parties have previously met in person. . . .

The statutory requirement of an in-person meeting between the petitioner and the beneficiary is further explained at 8 C.F.R. § 214.2(k)(2), which states:

The petitioner shall establish to the satisfaction of the director that the petitioner and K-1 beneficiary have met in person within the two years immediately preceding the filing of the petition. As a matter of discretion, the director may exempt the petitioner from this requirement only if it is established that compliance would result in extreme hardship to the petitioner or that compliance would violate strict and long-established customs of the K-1 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. Failure to establish that

the petitioner and K-1 beneficiary have met within the required period or that compliance with the requirement should be waived shall result in the denial of the petition. Such denial shall be without prejudice to the filing of a new petition once the petitioner and K-1 beneficiary have met in person.

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.

#### *Factual and Procedural History*

The petitioner filed the fiancé(e) petition with U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services on February 6, 2013. Therefore, the petitioner and the beneficiary were required to have met in person between February 6, 2011 and February 6, 2013. The director denied the petition, finding that the petitioner failed to establish that he and the beneficiary met in person during the requisite two-year period or demonstrate that he is eligible for a waiver of the meeting requirement.

On the appeal notice the petitioner states that he plans to meet the beneficiary in Istanbul, Turkey, in September.

#### *Analysis*

Although the petitioner presented evidence on appeal of having met the beneficiary in Istanbul in September 2013, his meeting was not within the requisite time period. The relevant time period in which the personal meeting between the petitioner and the beneficiary must occur is within the two year period before the filing date of the petition. Section 214(d)(1) of the Act. Here, the petitioner and beneficiary met after the petition was filed. A petitioner must establish eligibility at the time of filing the nonimmigrant visa petition. A visa petition may not be approved at a future date after the petitioner or beneficiary becomes eligible under a new set of facts. *Matter of Katigbak.*, 14 I&N Dec. 45, 49 (Reg. Comm. 1971). While the evidence of the meeting in September 2013 would be relevant to any new fiancé(e) petition that the petitioner may file for the beneficiary in the future, it has no relevance to whether the couple met during the period applicable to this petition, which was between February 6, 2011 and February 6, 2013.

The petitioner initially asserted that compliance with the meeting requirement during the requisite period would have constituted a hardship because the war made it unsafe for him to be in Syria. The petitioner on appeal stated that he traveled to Turkey to meet the beneficiary, and provided evidence of having met her in Turkey in September 2013. The petitioner's evidence of having met the beneficiary in Turkey demonstrates that meeting in a third country would have been a viable option for the couple during the requisite period. The petitioner also declared that traditional customs of Syrian culture prohibit a couple from having physical contact prior to their wedding day, and he submitted an Internet article from the website r [REDACTED] in support of his declaration. Even

though the petitioner claimed that Syrian culture prohibits physical contact between a couple prior to their wedding day, the beneficiary provided evidence of having met the beneficiary in person prior to their wedding. The petitioner has therefore failed to demonstrate that he would have suffered hardship or violated the beneficiary's cultural practices if they complied with the meeting requirement.

*Conclusion*

The statutorily required personal meeting between the petitioner and the beneficiary did not occur during the required time period and the petitioner is not exempt from the requirement. Consequently, the instant petition must remain denied and the appeal is dismissed. The denial of this petition is without prejudice to the filing of a new petition now that the petitioner and the beneficiary have met in person. 8 C.F.R. § 214.2(k)(2).

In fiancé(e) visa petition proceedings, it is the petitioner's burden to establish eligibility for the immigration benefit sought. Section 214(d)(1) of the Act, 8 U.S.C. § 1184(d)(1); *Matter of Otiende*, 26 I&N Dec. 127, 128 (BIA 2013). Here, that burden has not been met.

**ORDER:** The appeal is dismissed.