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U. S. Department of Homeland Security  
U. S. Citizenship and Immigration Services  
Office of Administrative Appeals (AAO)  
20 Massachusetts Ave., N.W., MS2090  
Washington, DC 20529-2090



**U.S. Citizenship  
and Immigration  
Services**



H5

FILE:



Office: ACCRA, GHANA

Date:

**FEB 28 2011**

IN RE:

Applicant:



APPLICATION: Application for Waiver of Grounds of Inadmissibility pursuant to section 212(i) of the Immigration and Nationality Act, 8 U.S.C. § 1182(i)

ON BEHALF OF APPLICANT:

SELF-REPRESENTED

INSTRUCTIONS:

Enclosed please find the decision of the Administrative Appeals Office in your case. All of the documents related to this matter have been returned to the office that originally decided your case. Please be advised that any further inquiry that you might have concerning your case must be made to that office.

If you believe the law was inappropriately applied by us in reaching our decision, or you have additional information that you wish to have considered, you may file a motion to reconsider or a motion to reopen. The specific requirements for filing such a request can be found at 8 C.F.R. § 103.5. All motions must be submitted to the office that originally decided your case by filing a Form I-290B, Notice of Appeal or Motion, with a fee of \$630. Please be aware that 8 C.F.R. § 103.5(a)(1)(i) requires that any motion must be filed within 30 days of the decision that the motion seeks to reconsider or reopen.

Thank you,

*Perry Rhew*

Perry Rhew

Chief, Administrative Appeals Office

**DISCUSSION:** The application was denied by the Field Office Director, Accra, Ghana and is now before the Administrative Appeals Office (AAO) on appeal. The appeal will be dismissed.

The applicant is a native and citizen of the Gambia who is inadmissible to the United States pursuant to section 212(a)(6)(C)(i) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (the Act), 8 U.S.C. § 1182(a)(6)(C)(i), for having attempted to procure a visa by fraud or willful misrepresentation. The applicant is married to a United States citizen. She seeks a waiver of inadmissibility in order to reside in the United States with her spouse.

The Field Office Director found that, based on the evidence in the record, the applicant had failed to establish extreme hardship to her qualifying relative. The application was denied accordingly. *Decision of the Field Office Director*, dated September 30, 2008.

On appeal, the applicant asserts that her spouse would suffer extreme hardship should the waiver application be denied. *Form I-290B, Notice of Appeal or Motion*.

In support of these assertions the record includes, but is not limited to, statements from the applicant; statements from the applicant's spouse; a medical letter and medical records for the applicant's spouse; and a statement from a State Representative. The entire record was reviewed and considered in rendering a decision on the appeal.

Section 212(a)(6)(C) of the Act provides, in pertinent part, that:

- (i) Any alien who, by fraud or willfully misrepresenting a material fact, seeks to procure (or has sought to procure or has procured) a visa, other documentation, or admission into the United States or other benefit provided under this Act is inadmissible.

The record reflects that the applicant submitted an application for a nonimmigrant visa on March 27, 1997 in which she stated her date of birth was [REDACTED] *Form OF-156, Nonimmigrant Visa Application*, dated March 27, 1997. The applicant's nonimmigrant visa application was refused on April 16, 1997. *Id.* On February 11, 1999 the applicant applied for a nonimmigrant visa and listed her date of birth as [REDACTED] *Form OF-156, Nonimmigrant Visa Application*, dated February 11, 1999. The applicant also stated on this application that she had never applied for a U.S. visa before. *Id.* The applicant's nonimmigrant visa application was refused on March 3, 1999. *Id.* The applicant filed a third nonimmigrant visa on a date unspecified in the record which was refused on March 24, 1999. *Form OF-156, Nonimmigrant Visa Application*, undated. In this application, the applicant stated her date of birth was [REDACTED] and noted that she had previously applied for a nonimmigrant visa in 1997 and 1999. *Id.* On the applicant's Form DS-230, Application for Immigrant Visa and Alien Registration and the Form I-130, Petition for Alien Relative, the applicant's date of birth is listed as June 4, 1976. *Form DS-230; Form I-130*. The applicant's misrepresentations of her date of birth and the fact that she had previously applied for a visa to the United States are material because they tended to shut off a line of inquiry relevant to the alien's eligibility and which might well have resulted in proper determination that she be excluded, as that previous visa application had been denied. See *Matter of S- and B-C-*, 9 I&N Dec. 436, 448-449 (AG

1961). As such, the AAO finds that the applicant is inadmissible under section 212(a)(6)(C)(i) of the Act.

Section 212(i) of the Act provides, in pertinent part:

- (1) The Attorney General [now the Secretary of Homeland Security (Secretary)] may, in the discretion of the Attorney General [Secretary], waive the application of clause (i) of subsection (a)(6)(C) in the case of an alien who is the spouse, son or daughter of a United States citizen or of an alien lawfully admitted for permanent residence, if it is established to the satisfaction of the Attorney General [Secretary] that the refusal of admission to the United States of such immigrant alien would result in extreme hardship to the citizen or lawfully resident spouse or parent of such an alien.

A waiver of inadmissibility under section 212(i) of the Act is dependent on a showing that the bar to admission imposes extreme hardship on a qualifying relative, which includes the U.S. citizen or lawfully resident spouse or parent of the applicant. Hardship to the applicant or children can be considered only insofar as it results in hardship to a qualifying relative. The applicant's spouse is the only qualifying relative in this case. If extreme hardship to a qualifying relative is established, the applicant is statutorily eligible for a waiver, and USCIS then assesses whether a favorable exercise of discretion is warranted. *See Matter of Mendez-Morales*, 21 I&N Dec. 296, 301 (BIA 1996).

As a qualifying relative is not required to depart the United States as a consequence of an applicant's inadmissibility, two distinct factual scenarios exist should a waiver application be denied: either the qualifying relative will join the applicant to reside abroad or the qualifying relative will remain in the United States. Ascertaining the actual course of action that will be taken is complicated by the fact that an applicant may easily assert a plan for the qualifying relative to relocate abroad or to remain in the United States depending on which scenario presents the greatest prospective hardship, even though no intention exists to carry out the alleged plan in reality. *Cf. Matter of Ige*, 20 I&N Dec. 880, 885 (BIA 1994) (addressing separation of minor child from both parents applying for suspension of deportation). Thus, we interpret the statutory language of the various waiver provisions in section 212 of the Act to require an applicant to establish extreme hardship to his or her qualifying relative(s) under both possible scenarios. To endure the hardship of separation when extreme hardship could be avoided by joining the applicant abroad, or to endure the hardship of relocation when extreme hardship could be avoided by remaining in the United States, is a matter of choice and not the result of removal or inadmissibility. As the Board of Immigration Appeals stated in *Matter of Ige*:

[W]e consider the critical issue . . . to be whether a child would suffer extreme hardship if he accompanied his parent abroad. If, as in this case, no hardship would ensue, then the fact that the child might face hardship if left in the United States would be the result of parental choice, not the parent's deportation.

*Id.* See also *Matter of Pilch*, 21 I&N Dec. 627, 632-33 (BIA 1996).

Extreme hardship is “not a definable term of fixed and inflexible content or meaning,” but “necessarily depends upon the facts and circumstances peculiar to each case.” *Matter of Hwang*, 10 I&N Dec. 448, 451 (BIA 1964). In *Matter of Cervantes-Gonzalez*, the Board provided a list of factors it deemed relevant in determining whether an alien has established extreme hardship to a qualifying relative. 22 I&N Dec. 560, 565 (BIA 1999). The factors include the presence of a lawful permanent resident or United States citizen spouse or parent in this country; the qualifying relative’s family ties outside the United States; the conditions in the country or countries to which the qualifying relative would relocate and the extent of the qualifying relative’s ties in such countries; the financial impact of departure from this country; and significant conditions of health, particularly when tied to an unavailability of suitable medical care in the country to which the qualifying relative would relocate. *Id.* The Board added that not all of the foregoing factors need be analyzed in any given case and emphasized that the list of factors was not exclusive. *Id.* at 566.

The Board has also held that the common or typical results of deportation, removal and inadmissibility do not constitute extreme hardship, and has listed certain individual hardship factors considered common rather than extreme. These factors include: economic disadvantage, loss of current employment, inability to maintain one’s present standard of living, inability to pursue a chosen profession, separation from family members, severing community ties, cultural readjustment after living in the United States for many years, cultural adjustment of qualifying relatives who have never lived outside the United States, inferior economic and educational opportunities in the foreign country, or inferior medical facilities in the foreign country. *See generally Matter of Cervantes-Gonzalez*, 22 I&N Dec. at 568; *Matter of Pilch*, 21 I&N Dec. at 631-32; *Matter of Ige*, 20 I&N Dec. at 883; *Matter of Ngai*, 19 I&N Dec. 245, 246-47 (Comm’r 1984); *Matter of Kim*, 15 I&N Dec. 88, 89-90 (BIA 1974); *Matter of Shaughnessy*, 12 I&N Dec. 810, 813 (BIA 1968).

However, though hardships may not be extreme when considered abstractly or individually, the Board has made it clear that “[r]elevant factors, though not extreme in themselves, must be considered in the aggregate in determining whether extreme hardship exists.” *Matter of O-J-O-*, 21 I&N Dec. 381, 383 (BIA 1996) (quoting *Matter of Ige*, 20 I&N Dec. at 882). The adjudicator “must consider the entire range of factors concerning hardship in their totality and determine whether the combination of hardships takes the case beyond those hardships ordinarily associated with deportation.” *Id.*

We observe that the actual hardship associated with an abstract hardship factor such as family separation, economic disadvantage, cultural readjustment, et cetera, differs in nature and severity depending on the unique circumstances of each case, as does the cumulative hardship a qualifying relative experiences as a result of aggregated individual hardships. *See, e.g., In re Bing Chih Kao and Mei Tsui Lin*, 23 I&N Dec. 45, 51 (BIA 2001) (distinguishing *Matter of Pilch* regarding hardship faced by qualifying relatives on the basis of variations in the length of residence in the United States and the ability to speak the language of the country to which they would relocate).

Family separation, for instance, has been found to be a common result of inadmissibility or removal in some cases. *See Matter of Shaughnessy*, 12 I&N Dec. at 813. Nevertheless, family ties are to be considered in analyzing hardship. *See Matter of Cervantes-Gonzalez*, 22 I&N Dec. at 565-66. The question of whether family separation is the ordinary result of inadmissibility or removal may depend on the nature of family relationship considered. For example, in *Matter of Shaughnessy*, the

Board considered the scenario of parents being separated from their soon-to-be adult son, finding that this separation would not result in extreme hardship to the parents. *Id.* at 811-12; *see also U.S. v. Arrieta*, 224 F.3d 1076, 1082 (9th Cir. 2000) (“Mr. Arrieta was not a spouse, but a son and brother. It was evident from the record that the effect of the deportation order would be separation rather than relocation.”). In *Matter of Cervantes-Gonzalez*, the Board considered the scenario of the respondent’s spouse accompanying him to Mexico, finding that she would not experience extreme hardship from losing “physical proximity to her family” in the United States. 22 I&N Dec. at 566-67.

The decision in *Cervantes-Gonzalez* reflects the norm that spouses reside with one another and establish a life together such that separating from one another is likely to result in substantial hardship. It is common for both spouses to relocate abroad if one of them is not allowed to stay in the United States, which typically results in separation from other family members living in the United States. Other decisions reflect the expectation that minor children will remain with their parents, upon whom they usually depend for financial and emotional support. *See, e.g., Matter of Ige*, 20 I&N Dec. at 886 (“[I]t is generally preferable for children to be brought up by their parents.”). Therefore, the most important single hardship factor may be separation, particularly where spouses and minor children are concerned. *Salcido-Salcido*, 138 F.3d at 1293 (quoting *Contreras-Buenfil v. INS*, 712 F.2d 401, 403 (9th Cir. 1983)); *Cerrillo-Perez*, 809 F.2d at 1422.

Regardless of the type of family relationship involved, the hardship resulting from family separation is determined based on the actual impact of separation on an applicant, and all hardships must be considered in determining whether the combination of hardships takes the case beyond the consequences ordinarily associated with removal or inadmissibility. *Matter of O-J-O*, 21 I&N Dec. at 383. Nevertheless, though we require an applicant to show that a qualifying relative would experience extreme hardship both in the event of relocation and in the event of separation, in analyzing the latter scenario, we give considerable, if not predominant, weight to the hardship of separation itself, particularly in cases involving the separation of spouses from one another and/or minor children from a parent. *Salcido-Salcido*, 138 F.3d at 1293.

If the applicant’s spouse joins the applicant in the Gambia, the applicant needs to establish that her spouse will suffer extreme hardship. The applicant’s spouse is a native of the Gambia. *Naturalization certificate*. His father is deceased and his mother lives in the Gambia. *Form G-325A, Biographic Information sheet, for the applicant’s spouse*. The applicant’s spouse notes that due to his heart condition, he is under regular care in the United States and may not have access to adequate medical care in the Gambia. *Statement from the applicant’s spouse*, dated November 15, 2008. The record includes a statement from the physician of the applicant’s spouse that confirms that the applicant’s spouse has a heart condition and needs to be followed by cardiologists. *Statement from [REDACTED]* dated November 4, 2008. His physician notes that he has to live in an area where there is subspecialty care and a major medical center. *Id.* She further advises that he should not travel away from a major medical center for an extended period of time. *Id.* Medical records included in the record note that in October 2008, the applicant’s spouse visited his physician for a six-month follow-up examination. *Medical records*, dated October 20, 2008. His physician advised him to return in one year. *Id.* While the record does not include published country conditions documentation regarding the availability and adequacy of healthcare in the Gambia, the AAO acknowledges the health conditions of the applicant’s spouse as documented by a

licensed healthcare professional and notes that he is in need of follow-up care. The AAO acknowledges the disruption of his consistent medical care in the United States were he to relocate to the Gambia. When looking at the record before it, the AAO finds that the applicant has demonstrated extreme hardship to her spouse if he were to reside in the Gambia.

If the applicant's spouse resides in the United States, the applicant needs to establish that her spouse will suffer extreme hardship. As previously noted, the applicant's spouse is a native of the Gambia. *Naturalization certificate*. His father is deceased and his mother lives in the Gambia. *Form G-325A, Biographic Information sheet, for the applicant's spouse*. The applicant's spouse has a heart condition for which he receives treatment in the United States. *Medical records for the applicant's spouse*. There is nothing in the record that indicates the applicant's spouse is unable to care for himself. The applicant notes that she misses her dear spouse. *Statement from the applicant*, dated October 26, 2008. While the AAO acknowledges the difficulties of being separated from one's spouse, it notes that the record fails to include evidence concerning the emotional or psychological effects of the separation on the applicant's spouse or addressing his psychological condition. The record also fails to address whether being separated from the applicant is affecting the applicant's spouse on a financial level. The applicant's spouse indicates that he has a child in the United States whom he helps raise. *Statement from the applicant's spouse*, dated November 15, 2008. The record fails to include any type of documentation, such as a birth certificate for the child and evidence of child support payments, to show such a relationship and document the type of care he provides. Going on record without supporting documentary evidence will not meet the burden of proof of this proceeding. *See Matter of Soffici*, 22 I&N Dec. 158, 165 (Comm. 1998)(citing *Matter of Treasure Craft of California*, 14 I&N Dec. 190 (Reg. Comm. 1972)). When looking at the aforementioned factors, the AAO does not find that the applicant has demonstrated extreme hardship to her spouse if he were to remain in the United States.

As the record has failed to establish the existence of extreme hardship to the applicant's qualifying relative caused by the applicant's inadmissibility to the United States if he remains in the United States, the applicant is not eligible for a waiver of her inadmissibility under section 212(a)(6)(C)(i) of the Act. Having found the applicant statutorily ineligible for relief, no purpose would be served in discussing whether she merits a waiver as a matter of discretion.

In proceedings for application for waiver of grounds of inadmissibility under section 212(a)(6)(C) of the Act, the burden of proving eligibility remains entirely with the applicant. *See Section 291 of the Act*, 8 U.S.C. § 1361. Here, the applicant has not met that burden. Accordingly, the appeal will be dismissed.

**ORDER:** The appeal is dismissed.