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U.S. Department of Homeland Security
U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services
Office of Administrative Appeals MS 2090
Washington, DC 20529-2090

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

[redacted]

D14

FILE: [redacted] Office: VERMONT SERVICE CENTER Date: OCT 15 2010

IN RE: Petitioner: [redacted]

PETITION: Petition for U Nonimmigrant Classification as a Victim of a Qualifying Crime Pursuant to Section 101(a)(15)(U) of the Immigration and Nationality Act, 8 U.S.C. § 1101(a)(15)(U)

ON BEHALF OF PETITIONER:

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. The fee for a Form I-290B is currently $585, but will increase to $630 on November 23, 2010. Any appeal or motion filed on or after November 23, 2010 must be filed with the $630 fee. 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
Chief, Administrative Appeals Office

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

The petitioner seeks nonimmigrant classification under section 101(a)(15)(U) of the Immigration and Nationality Act ("the Act"), 8 U.S.C. § 1101(a)(15)(U), as an alien victim of certain qualifying criminal activity.

The director denied the petition because the petitioner did not establish that: (1) he has been the victim of qualifying criminal activity; (2) he has suffered substantial physical and mental abuse as a result of having been the victim of qualifying criminal activity; (3) he possesses credible and reliable information establishing that he has knowledge of the details concerning the qualifying criminal activity upon which his petition is based; (4) he has been, is being, or is likely to be helpful to United States (U.S.) law enforcement authorities investigating or prosecuting the qualifying criminal activity; and (5) the qualifying criminal activity violated the laws of the United States or occurred in the United States. The director also noted throughout his decision that the petitioner did not submit the requisite law enforcement certification, Form I-918 Supplement B, U Nonimmigrant Status Certification (Form I-918 Supplement B).

On appeal, the petitioner submits a statement and indicates on the Form I-290B, Notice of Appeal or Motion, that a brief or other evidence will be submitted to the AAO within 30 days. We note that the petitioner submitted the Form I-290B on December 21, 2009 and as of this date, we have not received any additional evidence to supplement the record. The record is, therefore, considered complete and ready for adjudication.

Applicable Law

Section 101(a)(15)(U) of the Act, provides, in pertinent part, for U nonimmigrant classification to:

> (i) subject to section 214(p), an alien who files a petition for status under this subparagraph, if the Secretary of Homeland Security determines that --
>
> (I) the alien has suffered substantial physical or mental abuse as a result of having been a victim of criminal activity described in clause (iii);
> (II) the alien . . . possesses information concerning criminal activity described in clause (iii);
> (III) the alien . . . has been helpful, is being helpful, or is likely to be helpful to a Federal, State, or local law enforcement official, to a Federal, State, or local prosecutor, to a Federal or State judge, to the Service, or to other Federal, State, or local authorities investigating or prosecuting criminal activity described in clause (iii); and
> (IV) the criminal activity described in clause (iii) violated the laws of the United States or occurred in the United States (including in Indian country and military installations) or the territories and possessions of the United States;

***

(iii) the criminal activity referred to in this clause is that involving one or more of the following or any similar activity in violation of Federal, State, or local criminal law: rape; torture; trafficking; incest; domestic violence; sexual assault; abusive sexual contact; prostitution; sexual exploitation; female genital mutilation; being held hostage; peonage; involuntary servitude; slave trade; kidnapping; abduction; unlawful criminal restraint; false imprisonment; blackmail; extortion; manslaughter; murder; felonious assault; witness tampering; obstruction of justice; perjury; or attempt, conspiracy, or solicitation to commit any of the above mentioned crimes[.]

Section 214(p) of the Act, 8 U.S.C. § 1184(p), further prescribes, in pertinent part:

(1) Petitioning Procedures for Section 101(a)(15)(U) Visas

The petition filed by an alien under section 101(a)(15)(U)(i) shall contain a certification from a Federal, State, or local law enforcement official, prosecutor, judge, or other Federal, State, or local authority investigating criminal activity described in section 101(a)(15)(U)(iii). This certification may also be provided by an official of the Service whose ability to provide such certification is not limited to information concerning immigration violations. This certification shall state that the alien "has been helpful, is being helpful, or is likely to be helpful" in the investigation or prosecution of criminal activity described in section 101(a)(15)(U)(iii).

* * *

(4) Credible Evidence Considered

In acting on any petition filed under this subsection, the consular officer or the [Secretary of Homeland Security] as appropriate, shall consider any credible evidence relevant to the petition.

The regulation at 8 C.F.R. § 214.14(c)(4), prescribes the evidentiary standards and burden of proof in these proceedings:

The burden shall be on the petitioner to demonstrate eligibility for U-1 nonimmigrant status. The petitioner may submit any credible evidence relating to his or her Form I-918 for consideration by USCIS. USCIS shall conduct a de novo review of all evidence submitted in connection with Form I-918 and may investigate any aspect of the petition. Evidence previously submitted for this or other immigration benefit or relief may be used by USCIS in evaluating the eligibility of a petitioner for U-1 nonimmigrant status. However, USCIS will not be bound by its previous factual determinations. USCIS will determine, in its sole discretion, the evidentiary value of previously or concurrently submitted evidence, including Form I-918, Supplement B, "U Nonimmigrant Status Certification."

The regulation at 8 C.F.R. § 214.14(a) provides the following pertinent definitions:

> (2) *Certifying agency* means a Federal, State, or local law enforcement agency, prosecutor, judge, or other authority, that has responsibility for the investigation or prosecution of a qualifying crime or criminal activity. This definition includes agencies that have criminal investigative jurisdiction in their respective areas of expertise, including, but not limited to, child protective services, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, and the Department of Labor.
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> (3) *Certifying official* means:
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> (i) The head of the certifying agency, or any person(s) in a supervisory role who has been specifically designated by the head of the certifying agency to issue U nonimmigrant status certifications on behalf of that agency; or
> (ii) A Federal, State, or local judge.
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> ***
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> (5) *Investigation or prosecution* refers to the detection or investigation of a qualifying crime or criminal activity, as well as to the prosecution, conviction, or sentencing of the perpetrator of the qualifying crime or criminal activity.
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> ***
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> (8) *Physical or mental abuse* means injury or harm to the victim's physical person, or harm to or impairment of the emotional or psychological soundness of the victim.
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> (9) *Qualifying crime or qualifying criminal activity* includes one or more of the following or any similar activities in violation of Federal, State or local criminal law of the United States: Rape; torture; trafficking; incest; domestic violence; sexual assault; abusive sexual contact; prostitution; sexual exploitation; female genital mutilation; being held hostage; peonage; involuntary servitude; slave trade; kidnapping; abduction; unlawful criminal restraint; false imprisonment; blackmail; extortion; manslaughter; murder; felonious assault; witness tampering; obstruction of justice; perjury; or attempt, conspiracy, or solicitation to commit any of the above mentioned crimes. The term "any similar activity" refers to criminal offenses in which the nature and elements of the offenses are substantially similar to the statutorily enumerated list of criminal activities.
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> ***
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> (14) *Victim of qualifying criminal activity* generally means an alien who has suffered direct and proximate harm as a result of the commission of qualifying criminal activity.

The eligibility requirements for U nonimmigrant classification are further explicated in the regulation at 8 C.F.R. § 214.14, which states, in pertinent part:

> (b) *Eligibility.* An alien is eligible for U-1 nonimmigrant status if he or she demonstrates all of the following . . .:

(1) The alien has suffered substantial physical or mental abuse as a result of having been a victim of qualifying criminal activity. Whether abuse is substantial is based on a number of factors, including but not limited to: The nature of the injury inflicted or suffered; the severity of the perpetrator's conduct; the severity of the harm suffered; the duration of the infliction of the harm; and the extent to which there is permanent or serious harm to the appearance, health, or physical or mental soundness of the victim, including aggravation of pre-existing conditions. No single factor is a prerequisite to establish that the abuse suffered was substantial. Also, the existence of one or more of the factors automatically does not create a presumption that the abuse suffered was substantial. A series of acts taken together may be considered to constitute substantial physical or mental abuse even where no single act alone rises to that level;

(2) The alien possesses credible and reliable information establishing that he or she has knowledge of the details concerning the qualifying criminal activity upon which his or her petition is based. The alien must possess specific facts regarding the criminal activity leading a certifying official to determine that the petitioner has, is, or is likely to provide assistance to the investigation or prosecution of the qualifying criminal activity. . . .

(3) The alien has been helpful, is being helpful, or is likely to be helpful to a certifying agency in the investigation or prosecution of the qualifying criminal activity upon which his or her petition is based, and since the initiation of cooperation, has not refused or failed to provide information and assistance reasonably requested. . . .; and

(4) The qualifying criminal activity occurred in the United States (including Indian country and U.S. military installations) or in the territories or possessions of the United States, or violated a U.S. federal law that provides for extraterritorial jurisdiction to prosecute the offense in a U.S. federal court.

Facts and Procedural Posture

The record in this case provides the following pertinent facts and procedural history: The petitioner is a native and citizen of Haiti who claims to have entered the United States in November 2001 without inspection. The petitioner filed the instant Form I-918 U petition on May 23, 2008. On July 16, 2009, the director issued a Notice of Intent to Deny (NOID) the petition for failure to submit the requisite law enforcement certification, failure to demonstrate that the petitioner had suffered substantial physical or mental abuse as a result of having been a victim of qualifying criminal activity, failure to submit evidence that the petitioner has been or would be helpful to a certifying agency investigating or prosecuting the alleged criminal activity, and failure to establish that the qualifying criminal activity violated a U.S. federal law that provides for extraterritorial jurisdiction. The petitioner responded to the NOID with additional evidence, which the director found insufficient to establish the petitioner's eligibility. Accordingly, the director denied the petition and the petitioner's Form I-192, Application

for Advance Permission to Enter as a Nonimmigrant. The petitioner timely appealed.

On appeal, the petitioner cites 8 C.F.R. § 245.24(c),[1] which he states allows him to submit an affidavit describing his efforts to obtain the required law enforcement certification in lieu of the actual certification. The petitioner claims that he went to the police station to have the Form I-918 Supplement B signed, but officials refused to sign it. The petitioner states that, although he is citing a regulation that pertains to the adjustment of status of U nonimmigrants, those individuals seeking initial U nonimmigrant status should also be permitted to submit alternate evidence in lieu of the law enforcement certification because of the barriers they face obtaining evidence from law enforcement officials. Regarding the issue of jurisdiction over the crime of which the petitioner was a victim, the petitioner states the crimes of which he was a victim can also be prosecuted in the United States. The petitioner cites to 18 U.S.C. § 2340A to support his assertions. Finally, the petitioner states that he has suffered substantial physical and mental abuse as a result of the torture that he suffered in Haiti. The petitioner's claims fail to overcome the grounds for denial. We affirm the director's determinations and the appeal will be dismissed.

Law Enforcement Certification

The petitioner's citation to the language at 8 C.F.R. § 245.24(e)(2) is misplaced, as that section of the regulations relates to individuals who have already been granted U nonimmigrant status and are seeking to adjust to lawful permanent resident status. The law enforcement certification is a statutory requirement at section 214(p)(1) of the Act, 8 U.S.C. § 1184(p)(1). The regulation further prescribes that a Form I-918 petition must be filed with the Form I-918 Supplement B, U Nonimmigrant Status Certification. 8 C.F.R. § 214.14(c)(2)(i). The certification must state: (1) that the certifier is the head of the certifying agency or a supervisor designated to issue U nonimmigrant status certifications, or a federal, state or local judge; (2) that the certifying agency is a federal, state or local law enforcement entity, or prosecutor, judge or other authority that has responsibility for the detection, investigation, prosecution, conviction or sentencing of qualifying criminal activity; (3) that the petitioner is a victim of qualifying criminal activity that the agency is investigating or prosecuting; (4) that the petitioner possesses information concerning the qualifying criminal activity; (5) that the petitioner has been, is being, or is likely to be helpful to an investigation or prosecution of the qualifying criminal activity; and (6) that the qualifying criminal activity violated U.S. law or occurred in the United States. *Id.*

Rather than submitting the certification required by statute and regulation, the petitioner submitted a statement regarding his actions in going to the police station to have an official there sign the certification. Such a statement, however, does not suffice. As the petitioner has failed to submit the certification required by section 214(p)(1) of the Act, 8 U.S.C. § 1184(p)(1), he has not overcome this ground of the director's denial decision.

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[1]In his statement, the petitioner quotes the language at 8 C.F.R. § 245.24(e)(2), not the language from 8 C.F.R. § 245.24(c).

Victim of Qualifying Criminal Activity

The petitioner has not demonstrated that he was a victim of a qualifying crime or criminal activity. The petitioner claims that he worked as a customs broker in one of the Haitian ports and a man named "" tried to recruit him into the Lavalas movement. The petitioner states that threatened him and that he tried to avoid because he feared what might happen to him. The petitioner states that he left Haiti after the killing of a journalist and that after he left, his mother's house was broken into by heavily armed gangsters looking for him. The petitioner also maintains that his cousin was killed because the cousin helped him flee Haiti.

The petitioner's statement fails to establish that he was the victim of a qualifying crime or criminal activity. His statement lacks probative details regarding the threats and intimidation made by The petitioner submits a report that his mother made to the authorities regarding the alleged break in of her home. According to the petitioner's mother, members of a group named " " went to her home, ransacked it, and wanted to know where to find the petitioner before leaving. We note that as the petitioner was not present during this alleged break in, he cannot establish that he was a victim of this incident, as he was not directly or proximately harmed. Similarly, the death certificate that the petitioner submits of his cousin does not establish that the petitioner was the victim of a qualifying crime or criminal activity. Nothing in the petitioner's statement establishes that he suffered direct and proximate harm as a result of the commission of qualifying criminal activity.

The affidavits that the petitioner submits from friends also do not support his claims. Preliminarily, we note that the three affidavits are identical, which diminishes their probative value. Although the affiants state their knowledge of the petitioner's "persecution," no one explains how he or she is aware of the events attested to. Like the petitioner's statement, nothing in these affidavits establishes that the petitioner suffered direct and proximate harm as a result of the commission of qualifying criminal activity. Accordingly, the petitioner has not established that he was the victim of a qualifying crime or criminal activity, as required by section 101(a)(15)(U)(i) of the Act and as defined at section 101(a)(15)(U)(iii) of the Act and the regulation at 8 C.F.R. § 214.14(a)(9), (14).

Substantial Physical or Mental Abuse

As the petitioner did not establish that he was the victim of a qualifying crime or criminal activity, he has also failed to establish that he suffered substantial physical or mental abuse as a result of having been a victim of a qualifying crime or criminal activity, as required by section 101(a)(15)(U)(i)(I) of the Act. Even if the petitioner could establish that he was the victim of a qualifying crime or criminal activity, he has not demonstrated that he suffered substantial physical or mental abuse as a result of his alleged victimization. When assessing whether a petitioner has suffered substantial physical or mental abuse as a result of having been a victim of qualifying criminal activity, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) looks at, among other issues, the extent to which there is permanent or serious harm to the appearance, health, or physical or mental soundness of the victim, including aggravation of pre-existing conditions. 8 C.F.R. § 214.14(b)(1). The record contains no evidence of

the petitioner's physical or mental abuse, as that term is defined in the regulation at 8 C.F.R. § 214.14(a)(8), or evidence that addresses the factors relevant to a determination of substantial abuse that are listed in the regulation at 8 C.F.R. § 214.14(b)(1). Accordingly, the petitioner has not met this criterion.

Possession of Information Concerning Qualifying Criminal Activity

As the petitioner did not establish that he was the victim of a qualifying crime or criminal activity, he has also failed to establish that he possesses information concerning such a crime or activity, as required by section 101(a)(15)(U)(i)(II) of the Act, 8 U.S.C. § 1101(a)(15)(U)(i)(II).

Helpfulness to Authorities Investigating or Prosecuting the Qualifying Criminal Activity

As previously discussed, the petitioner did not submit the requisite U Nonimmigrant Status Certification and provided no evidence from a certifying official that a certifying agency was investigating or prosecuting the alleged crimes. On appeal, the petitioner does not specifically address this portion of the director's decision. As the petitioner did not establish that he was the victim of a qualifying crime or criminal activity, he has also failed to establish that he has been, is being or is likely to be helpful to a federal, state, or local law enforcement official, prosecutor, federal or state judge, USCIS or other federal, state or local authorities investigating or prosecuting the qualifying criminal activity, as required by 101(a)(15)(U)(i)(III) of the Act, 8 U.S.C. § 1101(a)(15)(U)(i)(III).

Qualifying Criminal Activity in Violation of U.S. Laws

As the petitioner did not establish that he was the victim of a qualifying crime or criminal activity, he has also failed to establish that the qualifying criminal activity violated the laws of the United States or occurred in the United States, as required by section 101(a)(15)(U)(i)(IV) of the Act.

The petitioner claims on appeal that pursuant to 18 U.S.C. § 2340A, federal courts have jurisdiction over the alleged criminal activity perpetrated against him. 18 U.S.C. § 2340A states, in pertinent part:

> (a) Offense.— Whoever outside the United States commits or attempts to commit torture shall be fined under this title or imprisoned not more than 20 years, or both, and if death results to any person from conduct prohibited by this subsection, shall be punished by death or imprisoned for any term of years or for life.
>
> (b) Jurisdiction.— There is jurisdiction over the activity prohibited in subsection (a) if—
> (1) the alleged offender is a national of the United States; or
> (2) the alleged offender is present in the United States, irrespective of the nationality of the victim or alleged offender.

The petitioner has not shown how the United States would have jurisdiction over the alleged crimes

perpetrated against him in Haiti pursuant to 18 U.S.C. § 2340A. The petitioner has never named his alleged offenders and, therefore, cannot establish that they are nationals of or present in the United States. While torture is named as a qualifying crime at section 101(a)(15)(U)(iii) of the Act, the petitioner has not cited any particular U.S. federal law that provides for extraterritorial jurisdiction to prosecute the alleged crime, as required by the regulation at 8 C.F.R. § 214.14(b)(4).

Conclusion

The petitioner did not submit the certification required by section 214(p)(1) of the Act. The petitioner also has not demonstrated that he was a victim of qualifying criminal activity and he has not met any of the eligibility requirements at section 101(a)(15)(U)(i) of the Act. The petitioner is consequently ineligible for nonimmigrant classification pursuant to section 101(a)(15)(U) of the Act and his petition must be denied.

The petition will be denied for the above stated reasons, with each considered as an independent and alternative basis for denial. As in all visa petition proceedings, the petitioner bears the burden of proving his eligibility for U nonimmigrant status. Section 291 of the Act, 8 U.S.C. § 1361; 8 C.F.R. § 214.14(c)(4). Here, that burden has not been met. Accordingly, the appeal will be dismissed.

ORDER: The appeal is dismissed.