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



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

#5

DATE: **JUN 08 2019** Office: BANGKOK, THAILAND

FILE: [REDACTED]

IN RE: Applicant: [REDACTED]

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

ON BEHALF OF APPLICANT:

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.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Perry Rhew".

Perry Rhew  
Chief, Administrative Appeals Office

**DISCUSSION:** The waiver application was denied by the District Director, Bangkok, Thailand, and is now before the Administrative Appeals Office (AAO) on appeal. The appeal will be sustained.

The record reflects that the applicant is a 45 year-old-native and citizen of Cambodia who was found to be 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 attempting to procure entry into the United States through fraud or the willful misrepresentation of a material fact. The record reflects that the applicant is the child of a United States citizen and is the beneficiary of an approved Petition for Alien Relative (Form I-130) filed on his behalf. The applicant seeks a waiver of inadmissibility pursuant to section 212(i) of the Act, U.S.C. § 1182(i), in order to reside in the United States with his mother.

The District Director found that the applicant had failed to establish extreme hardship to a qualifying relative and denied the Application for Waiver of Grounds of Inadmissibility (Form I-601) accordingly. *Decision of the District Director*, dated December 16, 2008.

On appeal, counsel asserts that denial of the applicant's waiver request would result in extreme hardship to his mother. *Form I-290B*, dated January 14, 2009 and the accompanying brief in support of the appeal.

The record includes, but is not limited to, a statement from the applicant's mother, supportive statements from the applicant's siblings, a brief from counsel in support of the appeal, statements from [REDACTED] the applicant's mother's physician, copies of hand-written progress notes and laboratory results dated from 2005 through 2008, relating to the applicant's mother, a report of a psychological evaluation of the applicant's mother by [REDACTED] and copies of country condition reports on Cambodia. The entire record was reviewed and considered in arriving at a decision on the appeal.

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

- (i) In general.-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.
- . . . .
- (iii) Waiver authorized.-For provision authorizing waiver of clause (i), see subsection (i).

Section 212 of the Act provides, in pertinent part, that:

- (i) (1) The Attorney General [now the Secretary of Homeland Security, "Secretary"] may, in the discretion of the [Secretary], waive the application of clause (i) of subsection (a)(6)(C) in the case of an immigrant 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 [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...

In the present case, the record indicates that twice in 1999 and once in 2004, the applicant attempted to obtain a non-immigrant visa by submitting fraudulent documents to United States government officials in support of the visa applications. On August 11, 1999, the applicant's United States citizen mother filed a Petition for Alien Relative on the applicant's behalf (Form I-130), which was approved on December 21, 1999. The applicant was found inadmissible pursuant to section 212(a)(6)(C)(i) of the Act. On October 8, 2008, the applicant filed a Form I-601 waiver. On December 16, 2008, the District Director denied the applicant's Form I-601, finding that the applicant had attempted to procure an immigration benefit by fraud or the willful misrepresentation of a material fact and had failed to demonstrate extreme hardship to a qualifying relative

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 can be considered only insofar as it results in hardship to a qualifying relative. The applicant's mother 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 a qualifying relative, 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.

The applicant’s mother states that she and her family endured extreme hardship under the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia, from the time they came into power in 1975 until she was able to leave the country in 1980 and immigrate to the United States in 1982. The applicant’s mother states that she was separated from the applicant in 1977, when he was taken away by the Khmer Rouge to work in a labor camp, that she was very concerned for his safety and overall wellbeing because she did not know if he was dead or alive and that it was not until 1992, when she found out that he was alive. The applicant’s mother states that all her other children are living in the United States with her and that since she is old and has serious medical problems, her wish is that the applicant will join the family in the United States. *See Statement from* [REDACTED]. The applicant’s mother also states she still has nightmares about the Khmer Rouge, that she has a serious heart condition and cannot take any emotional trauma and that “it would break my heart if [the applicant] is not allowed to come to the U.S.” *id.*

The record contains a letter from [REDACTED], dated April 27, 2009. [REDACTED] states that the applicant’s mother has been his patient for the past 20 years, that she has been under his care for high blood pressure, arteriosclerotic heart disease, and peptic ulcer disease. [REDACTED] also states that given

the severity of the applicant's mother's experience under the [REDACTED], any emotional trauma or distress will gravely affect her heart condition, thereby jeopardizing her well-being. *See Letter from [REDACTED]*, [REDACTED] dated April 27, 2009. The record also contains a psychological evaluation of the applicant's mother by [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] diagnosed the applicant's mother with Major Depression, recurrent, severe with psychotic features and Post-traumatic Stress Disorder. [REDACTED] stated that the applicant's mother has had a long history of depression and anxiety due to torture and hard labor in Cambodia, the death of her husband, separation from the applicant, and adjustment problems in the refugee camp and that her mental condition became worse after the petition to bring the applicant to the United States was denied. [REDACTED] noted that the applicant's mother has been seeing a psychiatrist, [REDACTED], since March 2009 for psychotherapy sessions and that she has been prescribed medications for depression, nervousness, insomnia and auditory hallucination. [REDACTED] recommends that the applicant be allowed to come to the United States because continued separation from the applicant would cause severe mental problems and possible suicide to his mother. *See Comprehensive Psychological Evaluation of [REDACTED] by [REDACTED]*, dated March 9, 2009.

Based on the family's traumatic past under the Khmer Rouge, supportive statements from other family members, the applicant's mother's declining health, the emotional and psychological hardship the applicant's mother continues to endure, and the psychological report from [REDACTED], the AAO finds that continued separation from the applicant, given her background, would have a profound effect on the applicant's mother. Thus, the applicant has established that the hardship his mother will face, if his waiver request is denied, will be unusual or beyond the common result of removal or inadmissibility and rises to the level of extreme hardship.

Regarding relocation, the applicant's mother states that she does not want to relocate to Cambodia because of the difficulties she and her family endured there, she has been living in the United States for a prolonged period of time and her entire family, except for the applicant have settled in the United States. Also, the applicant's mother states that she still has nightmares today about the [REDACTED]. Given the hardships the applicant's mother endured while living in Cambodia, her significant ties in the United States, her long term residence in the United States and the documented atrocities committed by the [REDACTED] against families including the applicant's mother, the applicant's mother will experience extreme hardship if she were to relocate to Cambodia to be with the applicant.

A review of the evidence in the record, when considered in the aggregate, shows that the applicant has established that his United States citizen mother would suffer extreme hardship if the applicant's waiver request is denied. Here the range of factors considered in the aggregate takes the case beyond those hardships ordinarily associated with deportation or inadmissibility, and supports a finding of extreme hardship. *See Matter of O-J-O-*, 21 I&N Dec. at 383; *Matter of Cervantes-Gonzalez*, 22 I&N Dec. at 565-66.

Extreme hardship is a requirement for eligibility, but once established it is but one favorable discretionary factor to be considered. *Matter of Mendez-Morales*, 21 I&N Dec. 296, 301 (BIA 1996). For waivers of inadmissibility, the burden is on the applicant to establish that a grant of a waiver of inadmissibility is warranted in the exercise of discretion. *Id.* at 299. The adverse factors evidencing an alien's undesirability as a permanent resident must be balanced with the social and humane considerations

presented on his behalf to determine whether the grant of relief in the exercise of discretion appears to be in the best interests of this country. *Id.* at 300.

The AAO notes that *Matter of Marin*, 16 I & N Dec. 581 (BIA 1978), involving a section 212(c) waiver, is used in waiver cases as guidance for balancing favorable and unfavorable factors and this cross application of standards is supported by the Board of Immigration Appeals (BIA). In *Matter of Mendez-Moralez*, the BIA, assessing the exercise of discretion under section 212(h) of the Act, stated:

We find this use of *Matter of Marin, supra*, as a general guide to be appropriate. For the most part, it is prudent to avoid cross application, as between different types of relief, of particular principles or standards for the exercise of discretion. *Id.* However, our reference to *Matter of Marin, supra*, is only for the purpose of the approach taken in that case regarding the balancing of favorable and unfavorable factors within the context of the relief being sought under section 212(h)(1)(B) of the Act. *See, e.g., Palmer v. INS*, 4 F.3d 482 (7th Cir.1993) (balancing of discretionary factors under section 212(h)). We find this guidance to be helpful and applicable, given that both forms of relief address the question of whether aliens with criminal records should be admitted to the United States and allowed to reside in this country permanently.

*Matter of Mendez-Moralez* at 300.

In *Matter of Mendez-Moralez*, in evaluating whether section 212(h)(1)(B) relief is warranted in the exercise of discretion, the BIA stated that:

The factors adverse to the applicant include the nature and underlying circumstances of the exclusion ground at issue, the presence of additional significant violations of this country's immigration laws, the existence of a criminal record and, if so, its nature, recency and seriousness, and the presence of other evidence indicative of an alien's bad character or undesirability as a permanent resident of this country. . . . The favorable considerations include family ties in the United States, residence of long duration in this country (particularly where the alien began his residency at a young age), evidence of hardship to the alien and his family if he is excluded and deported, service in this country's Armed Forces, a history of stable employment, the existence of property or business ties, evidence of value and service to the community, evidence of genuine rehabilitation if a criminal record exists, and other evidence attesting to the alien's good character (e.g., affidavits from family, friends, and responsible community representatives). . . .

*Id.* at 301.

The BIA further states that upon review of the record as a whole, a balancing of the equities and adverse matters must be made to determine whether discretion should be favorably exercised. The equities that the applicant for section 212(h)(1)(B) relief must bring forward to establish that he merits a favorable exercise of administrative discretion will depend in each case on the nature and circumstances of the ground of exclusion sought to be waived and on the presence of any additional adverse matters, and as

the negative factors grow more serious, it becomes incumbent upon the applicant to introduce additional offsetting favorable evidence. *Id.* at 301.

The negative factors in this case are the applicant's attempts to enter the United States by fraud or the willful misrepresentation of a material fact. The positive factors in this case include the extreme hardship the applicant's United States citizen mother faces if the waiver is denied, and his family ties in the United States including siblings who reside in the United States.

Although the applicant's violations of immigration law cannot be condoned, the positive factors in this case outweigh the negative factors. In these proceedings, the burden of establishing eligibility for the waiver rests entirely with the applicant. *See* section 291 of the Act, 8 U.S.C. § 1361. In this case, the applicant has met his burden and the appeal will be sustained.

**ORDER:** The appeal is sustained.