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Technological Systems Issue
JUNE 15, 2015

Passport/Visa Systems Errors

- The Bureau of Consular Affairs is currently experiencing technical problems with our visa systems. These issues have resulted in delays in printing visas and may mean rescheduling some visa interviews.
- This issue is not specific to any particular country or visa category.
- Overseas passports are now being processed. Domestic passport services are functioning, and we were always able to issue emergency passports to U.S. citizens overseas with urgent travel needs.
- The Consular Consolidated Database (CCD) problems we are experiencing are not the same challenges we overcame last summer. We are working urgently around the clock to correct the problems and restore our system to full operational status as soon as possible.
- We apologize to applicants who are experiencing delays or were unable to obtain a passport overseas, Consular Report of Birth Abroad, or U.S. visa.
- We are seeking to assist nonimmigrant visa applicants with urgent humanitarian travel. Individuals with an urgent humanitarian need for travel should contact their nearest U.S. embassy or consulate.
- We are aware of pending overseas adoption cases, including in China. We are prioritizing these cases and seek to issue these visas with few delays.
- We regret the inconvenience to travelers, and remain committed to facilitating legitimate travel while protecting our borders.
- We will post updates to Travel.State.Gov as more information becomes available.

Q: Is this the same issue as last year? Was it not fixed?

- This is not the same issue as last year.

Q: What is going on? Why can't the Department issue visas, passports, and other travel documents?

- We are working as quickly as possible to resolve our technical issues.
- We apologize to travelers and recognize that this may cause hardship to individuals waiting for visas overseas.

Q: What caused this outage? Was it a malicious action or hack?

- There is no evidence the problem is cyber security related. We are working urgently to correct the problem and expect the system to be fully operational again soon.

Q: How is this affecting consular operations?

Passports – Overseas Issuance of Passports

- Passport applications accepted overseas on or after May 26, 2015, were affected, but overseas passports are now being issued. If you applied for a U.S. passport between May 26 and June 14 and have travel plans within the next 10 business days, please consider requesting an emergency passport at the U.S. embassy or consulate at which you originally applied. Information about how to apply for an emergency passport is available on the website of the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate.

Visas

- A hardware failure on June 9 halted the flow of biometric clearance requests from posts to the Consular Consolidated Database (CCD).   Individuals who submitted online applications or were interviewed for visas on or after June 9 may experience a delay in the processing.
- The systems in place to perform required national security checks before we issue visas are experiencing technical difficulties. As a result, we are unable to print visas.
- We cannot bypass the legal requirements necessary to screen visa applicants before we issue visas for travel.
- As a result, there is a backlog of visas waiting to be processed. We are working as quickly as possible to resolve the issue and to clear the backlog.
- The technical issues we are experiencing have disrupted or prevented some of the Department's primary data-share partners from accessing visa records.

Q: Can you print a visa without using the data system?

- Security measures prevent consular officers from printing a visa until the case completes the required national security checks.
- Service to our customers will be interrupted until the system is brought back online.

Q: Can the Department just print travel letters for those who need to travel quickly?

- At this time we are able to issue passports to U.S. citizens overseas for emergency travel.
- Domestic passport operations are functioning. U.S. citizens applying for a passport domestically will receive passports within the four-to-six week standard for routine passports and two-to-three weeks for expedited passports.
- We are seeking to assist nonimmigrant visa applicants with urgent humanitarian travel. Please contact the embassy or consulate where you applied for additional information.

Q: How long before you restore full system functionality?

- Overseas passports are now being issued. We are working urgently to restore visa processing. We expect the systems to be fully operational again soon.

Q: How many overseas passport applicants have been affected?

- Overseas passport applications account for less than five percent of our annual passport workload. During the overseas passport systems issues that have since been resolved, we were able to issue emergency overseas passports to U.S. citizens who needed them for urgent travel.

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