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Technological Systems Issue

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Visa Systems Issues

The Bureau of Consular Affairs continues to experience technical problems with our visa systems. This is a global issue, and we are working around the clock to fix it. More than 100 computer experts from both the private and public sectors across the United States are working on this problem 24/7. That said, we do not expect the system will be online before next week. The problems stem from a hardware failure in a State Department facility in the United States on June 9. That failure is preventing the Department from processing and transmitting biometric data checks at visa-issuing embassies and consulates. We cannot bypass the legal requirements to screen visa applicants before we issue visas for travel. Each visa decision is a national security decision, and we take our obligation to protect the United States seriously.

We regret the inconvenience to travelers and recognize that this is causing hardship to those waiting for visas, and in some cases, their family members or employers in the United States. We will continue to post regular updates on our website, travel.state.gov.

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

There is no evidence the problem is cyber-security related.

Q: How long before you restore full system functionality?

Public and private sector experts are working around the clock to correct the visa problem, but we do not expect the system will be online before next week.

Overseas and domestic passports are being issued.

Q: How many travelers are affected by this outage?

Most posts were able to handle visa interviews and some visa printing as usual through the end of last week. This week, many posts have had to reschedule visa appointments. We handle an average 50,000 applications daily worldwide. Many applicants do not have immediate travel plans and will receive visas in time for planned trips. We are prioritizing urgent medical and other humanitarian cases as well as H2A agricultural workers.

Q: Once operational, how will cases be prioritized?

We are already prioritizing urgent humanitarian cases and temporary agricultural workers. Once the systems are fully operational, we will work as quickly as possible to clear the backlog of pending visa cases.

We apologize to travelers and recognize that this has caused hardship to some individuals waiting for visas.

Q: What about domestic passports?

Domestic passport operations are functioning, with some intermittent processing delays. While some of these issues have affected same-day service at our passport agencies, we continue to issue passports to U.S. citizens with urgent overseas travel needs.

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