

Press Release: U.S. Government Agrees to Act on Cases of Iraqi and Afghan Allies Suing Over Failure to Act on Visa Applications

MARCH 21, 2016 | PRESS LINKS, PRESS RELEASES | AFGHANISTAN, AFGHANS, CONGRESS, INTERNATIONAL REFUGEE ASSISTANCE PROJECT (IRAP), IRAQ, IRAQS, LAWSUIT, MANDAMUS, SPECIAL IMMIGRANT VISA (SIV), U.S. GOVERNMENT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

U.S. GOVERNMENT AGREES TO ACT ON CASES OF IRAQI AND AFGHAN ALLIES SUING OVER FAILURE TO ACT ON VISA APPLICATIONS

Consent order underscores Government's responsibility to decide Plaintiffs' Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) applications swiftly

Washington, D.C., March 21, 2016 – The U.S. Government today entered into an agreement with nine Iraqi and Afghan Plaintiffs suing the Departments of State and Homeland Security over lengthy delays in processing applications for Special Immigrant Visas (SIVs) set aside for Iraqis and Afghans in danger because of their past support for to U.S. troops, including as interpreters. The Government and the Iraqi and Afghan Plaintiffs have agreed to a 90-day suspension of the Plaintiffs' federal lawsuit, during which period the Government will work to finally process the Plaintiffs' SIV applications, which have been pending from between one to six years.

The International Refugee Assistance Project (IRAP) at the Urban Justice Center lauds the agreement as a major step forward: "Our Iraqi and Afghan allies risked their lives to support U.S. troops overseas and have faced death threats and assassination attempts from extremists because of their service," said Mark Doss, a Staff Attorney at IRAP. "We welcome this constructive step and are hopeful that the Government will quickly grant these visas and allow the Plaintiffs to begin a new life in peace and safety in the United States."

IRAP originally filed the lawsuit against the U.S. Government on behalf of nine Plaintiffs in February 2015, explaining that the U.S. Government had failed to take timely action on the Plaintiffs' SIV applications, despite Congress's instruction that the Departments of State and Homeland Security should process SIV applications from at-risk Iraqi and Afghan allies within nine months. On January 28, 2016, United States Senior District Judge Gladys Kessler rejected the Government's motion to dismiss, confirming the Government's obligation to take timely action on the Plaintiffs' visa applications.

You can download the full press release as a PDF here: [IRAP Mandamus Agreement Press Release FINAL](#).

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