United States Department of State
Washington, D.C. 20520
October 24, 2017

PROGRAM ANNOUNCEMENT 2018-05

From: Kelly Gauger, Office of Admissions
       Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration

To: Resettlement Support Centers

Subject: Changes to Security Advisory Opinion (SAO) Requirements

New requirements for the Security Advisory Opinion (SAO) criteria will go into effect October 25th, 2017. Resettlement Support Centers (RSCs) must ensure all cases with members who fall under the new SAO criteria are cleared under these new requirements before proceeding with travel arrangements. All cases with a case member who falls under the new SAO requirements, where travel is scheduled for departure on or after October 25th, 2017, must have their travel arrangements canceled until the new SAO is cleared. There is no grandfather period for cases impacted by the new SAO criteria.

New SAO requirements:
1. Females from all of the current SAO nationalities
2. Males and females

Additionally, applicants will no longer be processed immediately.

If an applicant previously had an SAO triggered by a certain year and now has a biometric data difference, the RSC will still need to request a new SAO to ensure the updated information is reviewed by the vetting partners. RSCs should no longer set these
applicants to NRQ (Not Required) per the previous guidance. This is a permanent change.

RSCs should update cases with the information as required in PRM Program Announcement 2018-04 “Data Collection Changes for Refugees” prior to requesting security checks for the new SAO requirements.

NOTE: At this time, RSCs should **not request** new SAOs until further guidance is received from PRM. This includes SAOs that would be triggered based on the new information collected, as well as routine SAO requests/re-requests that various cases may require. Further guidance on SAO requests and processing will be issued shortly.

The Refugee Processing Center (RPC) will update the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) to reflect these changes.

For questions about this program announcement, please contact Jennifer Smith at **Redacted**