



International Refugee
Assistance Project

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FOLLOWING COURT VICTORY FOR IRAQI AND AFGHAN U.S. ALLIES, GOVERNMENT SUBMITS PLAN TO PROCESS THOUSANDS OF DELAYED SIV APPLICANTS

(Washington, DC) – Yesterday, the government and plaintiffs submitted a proposed joint plan to address the delayed applications of an estimated 10,000 Afghans and Iraqis who supported U.S. missions in their home countries and came under threat as a result. This was in response to [a court order](#) in 2019 that ruled the delay in processing Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) applications to be unlawful.

Previously, on February 5, a federal judge had ordered the government to [propose a plan](#) within 30 days to expeditiously process all class members' applications. The government's initial plan was rejected by the Court; this proposal is the result of joint negotiations ordered by the Court following that initial failure.

According to the new plan, the government will adjudicate an estimated 10,000 outstanding applications, completing all government-controlled steps within agreed upon timeframes. For example, Chief of Mission approval, which verifies an applicant's employment supporting U.S. missions, must be granted or denied within 120 days. This ensures that the vast majority of applicants, who have been waiting in limbo for years, will see their cases advance through the remainder of the process. The government also committed to reporting on the progress of the adjudications every 90 days.

The [International Refugee Assistance Project](#) (IRAP) and Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer US LLP represented the Afghan and Iraqi plaintiffs, whose applications had been pending for more than nine months in government control. Previously, the [lawsuit revealed](#) that many applicants in the SIV application process had even waited more than four years for adjudication of their applications.

Deepa Alagesan, Supervising Attorney in IRAP's Litigation Department, said in response to the plan: "We are thrilled to secure a plan from the government that will bring our clients one step closer to



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safety. Our clients have been living in dangerous and untenable situations for so long while waiting for decisions in their cases that could mean life or death. Our government owes these men and women the prompt, good-faith adjudications of their applications that it promised them.”

Rebecca Curwin, Associate at Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer US LLP, added: “We are looking forward to the long overdue adjudication of thousands of SIV applications under the new plan, which will bring relief to our Afghan and Iraqi allies who have been waiting in fear for years.”

To view the plan, [click here](#).

To view the press release, [click here](#).

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