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Lesotho

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Notice: Change in Processing Timeline for Adoption Cases in Lesotho

The U.S. Embassy in Maseru, Lesotho wishes to advise adoptive parents of procedural changes that may increase the processing time for some adoption cases. Adoptive parents and adoption service providers should be aware that consular officers are required, by law, to complete an I-604 Determination on Child for Adoption (sometimes referred to as an "orphan investigation"), in all IR-3 and IR-4 adoption cases. Depending on the circumstances of the case, this investigation could take up to several weeks to complete.

When a Form I-600 is adjudicated by USCIS in the United States, consular officers in Maseru must conduct an I-604 investigation to verify the child's orphan status prior to immigrant visa processing by the U.S. Consulate in Johannesburg. For Form I-600 petitions filed at the U.S. Embassy in Maseru, the I-604 investigation is initiated after the prospective adoptive parents have appeared before a consular officer to sign the petition. Adoptive parents are advised that they need to have flexible travel plans while awaiting the results of the I-604 investigation.

The U.S. Embassy will work with adoptive parents and their adoption agency to ensure that each case is processed in the most expeditious manner possible in accordance with laws and regulations. If families have concerns about their adoption, we ask that they share this information with the Embassy. The Embassy takes all allegations of fraud or misconduct seriously.

The best way to contact the Embassy is by email at USConsularMaseru@state.gov. Please include your full name, the child's name, your adoption agency, the date of the adoption (month and year), and, if possible, the immigrant visa case number for the child's case (this number begins with the letters JHN followed by several numbers, and can be found on any document sent to you by the National Visa Center. Please let us know if we have your permission to share concerns about your specific case with Lesotho government officials.

The U.S. Embassy continues to work with the Government of Lesotho to ensure that appropriate safeguards exist to protect adoptive children, their birth parents, and prospective adoptive parents. Please continue to monitor adoption.state.gov for updated information.