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## Democratic Republic of the Congo

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### Notice: Clarification regarding Embassy Kinshasa adoption-related immigrant visa procedures

This notice is intended to clarify the recent procedural changes in processing adoption related immigrant visas and their impact on pending and future adoptions from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).

We appreciate the patience of families and all those involved in adoptions from the DRC as the change in procedures is implemented.

*Explanation of the change in procedures effective January 2013:* Embassy Kinshasa is now conducting the required case review and I-604 investigation prior to the visa interview to verify that an adopted child is eligible to immigrate as an "orphan" under U.S. immigration law. In light of a significant increase in the adoption workload, the unreliability of documents in the DRC, and the difficulty of traveling within the country, Embassy Kinshasa anticipates that case reviews and I-604 investigations will now take approximately **three to six months** to complete. Case reviews may take longer if children come from an area experiencing civil unrest or where the security situation does not allow Embassy staff to travel safely. Please note that adoption cases will be processed as expeditiously as possible.

*Impact on families with previously scheduled interviews when the Embassy announced the change in procedures in January 2013:* Embassy Kinshasa will honor scheduled visa interview appointments. However, the case review and I-604 investigation is still required for each case. U.S. citizens are cautioned that the case review and I-604 investigation will take approximately three to six months to complete. While previously scheduled visa interviews will take place, Embassy Kinshasa cannot guarantee that case reviews and I-604 investigations will be completed before the interviews or that visas will be approved within any specified time after the interview date.

*Impact on families without scheduled interviews and new cases:* Each case is unique and, therefore, it is difficult to estimate how long a case review and I-604 investigation will take or when it will be completed. Families in this group can expect to be contacted by Embassy Kinshasa twice: first, upon receipt of the approved Form I-600 petition from the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services National Benefits Center, and second, when the U.S. Embassy is ready to schedule a visa appointment.

*Security situation reminder:* Because of the security situation in the DRC, Embassy Kinshasa discourages U.S. citizens from traveling to the DRC solely for the purpose of filing the Form I-600 petition. Anyone considering travel to the DRC is strongly encouraged to review the Department of State's travel warning for the DRC. Due to these concerns, the Embassy recommends that only those U.S. citizens residing in the DRC file their Form I-600 petitions at Embassy Kinshasa. Residents of the United States are encouraged to file their Form I-600 petition directly with the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services National Benefits Center.

*Departing the DRC after visa issuance:* The processing time for an exit permit with the DRC's Direction Generale de Migration (DGM) is approximately seven days. There is no fee for the exit permit. The DGM conducts its own investigations to ensure Congolese adoption procedures have been followed. Embassy Kinshasa will not contact the DGM to request

expedited processing of the exit permit. The Department of State strongly discourages the practice of paying “expediting fees” to Congolese offices in an attempt to move the adoption process more quickly. These “fees” can be perceived as bribes that encourage corruption.

If you have concerns, questions, or information regarding the change in procedures or a specific adoption from the DRC, please contact the U.S. Department of State, Office of Children’s Issues at [AskCI@state.gov](mailto:AskCI@state.gov).