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United States – Technical Issues Cause Delays at Consulates for Passport/Visa Issuance

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The U.S. Department of State (the "State Department") has issued a statement that its Bureau of Consular Affairs has been experiencing technical problems with its passport/visa system.¹ This issue is worldwide and is not specific to any particular country, citizenship document, or visa category.

Why This Matters

Applicants applying for services at U.S. Consulates should anticipate delays in obtaining a passport, Consular Report of Birth Abroad, or visa. The State Department has not given a timeline as to when the passport/visa system will be fully operational, but U.S. authorities maintain they are working urgently to correct the problem and expect to be fully operational again soon. It is not immediately clear how many people are affected by the situation.

The problems with the passport/visa system database have resulted in an "extensive backlog" of applications, which has, in turn, hampered efforts to get the system fully back on-line. The database is the State Department's system of record and is used to approve, record, and print visas and other documents to help ensure that national security checks are conducted on applicants.²

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Footnotes:

1 See, U.S. Department of State Web site: <http://travel.state.gov/content/visas/english.html> .

2 See: "Computer Crash Halts US Visa, Passport Operation," Voice of America News (online), July 24, 2014, at: <http://www.voanews.com/content/us-visa-passort-operation-halted-by-computer-crash/1964222.html> .

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