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**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
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PROPERTY, AND THE INTERNET

March 5, 2020

Mr. Kenneth T. Cuccinelli  
Acting Director  
United States Citizenship and Immigration Services  
20 Massachusetts Avenue, 4th Floor  
Washington, DC 20529

Dear Acting Director Cuccinelli:

I am writing to inquire about the processing of refugee and United States Refugee Admissions Program (USARAP) cases abroad.

I have several constituents whose cases are pending an interview with United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) overseas. Those cases are to take place in Amman, Jordan and Baghdad, Iraq.

One such case consists of the three family members of an interpreter who worked with our armed forces in Iraq. That interpreter's father was later kidnapped and murdered in retribution for her work, prompting the rest of the family to flee to Turkey. Their cases have been pending since 2013.

The other matter involves the daughter of a U.S. citizen who also fled circumstances in Iraq and is currently in Jordan. She was recently diagnosed with breast cancer and would greatly benefit being near family where she can access comfort and assistance with her children while she undergoes treatment.

It is my understanding that neither Baghdad nor Amman have hosted USCIS interviews for over a year. This has resulted in the complete stoppage in processing for these cases and others. When will these USCIS interviews resume, and if so, how quickly can the scheduling begin? Lives, including those who have sacrificed to assist our troops, are hanging in the balance while USCIS has not been conducting the necessary administrative interviews in the region.

I look forward to your prompt reply.

Sincerely,



Eric Swalwell  
Member of Congress



**U.S. Citizenship  
and Immigration  
Services**

The Honorable Eric Swalwell  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Swalwell:

Thank you for your March 5, 2020 letter.

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) appreciates your interest in the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP). The USRAP is an interagency effort involving a number of governmental and non-governmental partners, both overseas and in the United States, who work together to resettle refugees in the United States. To this end, USCIS works closely with the Department of State's Bureau for Population, Refugees and Migration (PRM) to determine which refugee processing locations worldwide are prioritized for refugee resettlement interviews.

Several factors are considered when selecting interview locations for refugee processing teams. These factors include the specific regional allocations identified in the annual Presidential Determination on Refugee Admissions for the fiscal year (FY), as well as the security situation at interview locations. The allocation categories identified for admission in FY 2020 include Iraqis who have applied directly to the USRAP based on certain specific factors, such as their or a family member's service on behalf of the U.S. effort in Iraq.

USCIS last completed refugee processing trips in Iraq during Quarter 1 of FY 2019 and Jordan in Quarter 2 of FY 2020. Due to the security situation in Iraq, USCIS has not recently sent teams to Iraq. However, we continue to monitor the situation closely, and a significant number of Iraqi refugee applicants are in the post-USCIS interview pipeline requiring further action. Our refugee officers are continuing to process those cases domestically. We defer to PRM, which has overall responsibility for managing the USRAP, for specific information regarding the selection of processing locations and the scheduling of refugee cases for interviews with USCIS in FY 2020.

The Honorable Eric Swalwell  
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Thank you again for your letter and interest in this important issue. Should you require any additional assistance, please have your staff contact the USCIS Office of Legislative and Intergovernmental Affairs at (202) 272-1940.

Respectfully,

JOSEPH B EDLOW  
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JOSEPH B EDLOW  
Date: 2020.04.03  
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Joseph Edlow  
Deputy Director for Policy