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U.S. DELAYS REFUGEE IMMIGRANT FLIGHTS

The U.S. Bureau of Population, Resettlement and Migration (PRM) of the Department of State has distributed notifications, that there are presently refugee processing and arrival delays that have resulted from a new Department of Homeland Security (DHS) protocol. We believe that this is related to the turmoil resulting from political upheaval in the Middle East and North Africa, but this has not been confirmed.

This protocol affects all refugees and is not limited by nationality or country of origin or asylum. PRM is working closely with DHS and the International Organization of Migration (IOM) to minimize delays and to prioritize the departure of minor cases, cases with medical needs, and cases with protection concerns. PRM expects flight cancellations to decrease over time and the process to normalize over the next 60 days.

PRM is expecting higher arrivals in the U.S. in the third and fourth quarters because arrivals so far this year are lower than previously expected. Efforts are being made to spread arrivals over both third and fourth quarters to avoid a large surge at the end of the year. But regional totals should be met, which may well result in high numbers of arrivals in the fourth quarter, 2011.