

§ 208.8 Limitations on travel outside the United States.

(a) An applicant who leaves the United States without first obtaining advance parole under § 212.5(e) of this chapter shall be presumed to have abandoned his or her application under this section.

(b) An applicant who leaves the United States pursuant to advance parole under § 212.5(e) of this chapter and returns to the country of claimed persecution shall be presumed to have abandoned his or her application, unless the applicant is able to establish compelling reasons for such return.

§ 208.9 Procedure for interview before an asylum officer.

(a) The Service shall adjudicate the claim of each asylum applicant whose application is complete within the meaning of § 208.3(c)(3) and is within the jurisdiction of the Service.

(b) The asylum officer shall conduct the interview in a nonadversarial manner and, except at the request of the applicant, separate and apart from the general public. The purpose of the interview shall be to elicit all relevant and useful information bearing on the applicant's eligibility for asylum. At the time of the interview, the applicant must provide complete information regarding his or her identity, including name, date and place of birth, and nationality, and may be required to register this identity electronically or through any other means designated by the Attorney General. The applicant may have counsel or a representative present, may present witnesses, and may submit affidavits of witnesses and other evidence.

(c) The asylum officer shall have authority to administer oaths, verify the identity of the applicant (including through the use of electronic means), verify the identity of any interpreter, present and receive evidence, and question the applicant and any witnesses.

(d) Upon completion of the interview, the applicant or the applicant's representative shall have an opportunity to make a statement or comment on the evidence presented. The asylum officer may, in his or her discretion, limit the length of such statement or comment and may require its submis-

sion in writing. Upon completion of the interview, the applicant shall be informed that he or she must appear in person to receive and to acknowledge receipt of the decision of the asylum officer and any other accompanying material at a time and place designated by the asylum officer, except as otherwise provided by the asylum officer. An applicant's failure to appear to receive and acknowledge receipt of the decision shall be treated as delay caused by the applicant for purposes of § 208.7(a)(3) and shall extend the period within which the applicant may not apply for employment authorization by the number of days until the applicant does appear to receive and acknowledge receipt of the decision or until the applicant appears before an immigration judge in response to the issuance of a charging document under § 208.14(b).

(e) The asylum officer shall consider evidence submitted by the applicant together with his or her asylum application, as well as any evidence submitted by the applicant before or at the interview. As a matter of discretion, the asylum officer may grant the applicant a brief extension of time following an interview during which the applicant may submit additional evidence. Any such extension shall extend by an equivalent time the periods specified by § 208.7 for the filing and adjudication of any employment authorization application.

(f) The asylum application, all supporting information provided by the applicant, any comments submitted by the Department of State or by the Service, and any other information specific to the applicant's case and considered by the asylum officer shall comprise the record.

(g) An applicant unable to proceed with the interview in English must provide, at no expense to the Service, a competent interpreter fluent in both English and the applicant's native language or any other language in which the applicant is fluent. The interpreter must be at least 18 years of age. Neither the applicant's attorney or representative of record, a witness testifying on the applicant's behalf, nor a representative or employee of the applicant's country of nationality, or if

stateless, country of last habitual residence, may serve as the applicant's interpreter. Failure without good cause to comply with this paragraph may be considered a failure to appear for the interview for purposes of § 208.10.

§ 208.10 Failure to appear at an interview before an asylum officer or failure to follow requirements for fingerprint processing.

Failure to appear for a scheduled interview without prior authorization may result in dismissal of the application or waiver of the right to an interview. Failure to comply with fingerprint processing requirements without good cause may result in dismissal of the application or waiver of the right to an adjudication by an asylum officer. Failure to appear shall be excused if the notice of the interview or fingerprint appointment was not mailed to the applicant's current address and such address had been provided to the Office of International Affairs by the applicant prior to the date of mailing in accordance with section 265 of the Act and regulations promulgated thereunder, unless the asylum officer determines that the applicant received reasonable notice of the interview or fingerprinting appointment. Failure to appear at the interview or fingerprint appointment will be excused if the applicant demonstrates that such failure was the result of exceptional circumstances.

[63 FR 12986, Mar. 17, 1998]

§ 208.11 Comments from the Department of State.

(a) The Service shall forward to the Department of State a copy of each completed application it receives. At its option, the Department of State may provide detailed country conditions information relevant to eligibility for asylum or withholding of removal.

(b) At its option, the Department of State may also provide:

(1) An assessment of the accuracy of the applicant's assertions about conditions in his or her country of nationality or habitual residence and his or her particular situation;

(2) Information about whether persons who are similarly situated to the

applicant are persecuted or tortured in his or her country of nationality or habitual residence and the frequency of such persecution or torture; or

(3) Such other information as it deems relevant.

(c) Asylum officers and immigration judges may request specific comments from the Department of State regarding individual cases or types of claims under consideration, or such other information as they deem appropriate.

(d) Any such comments received pursuant to paragraphs (b) and (c) of this section shall be made part of the record. Unless the comments are classified under the applicable Executive Order, the applicant shall be provided an opportunity to review and respond to such comments prior to the issuance of any decision to deny the application.

[62 FR 10337, Mar. 6, 1997, as amended at 64 FR 8488, Feb. 19, 1999]

§ 208.12 Reliance on information compiled by other sources.

(a) In deciding an asylum application, or in deciding whether the alien has a credible fear of persecution or torture pursuant to § 208.30 of this part, or a reasonable fear of persecution or torture pursuant to § 208.31, the asylum officer may rely on material provided by the Department of State, the Office of International Affairs, other Service offices, or other credible sources, such as international organizations, private voluntary agencies, news organizations, or academic institutions.

(b) Nothing in this part shall be construed to entitle the applicant to conduct discovery directed toward the records, officers, agents, or employees of the Service, the Department of Justice, or the Department of State.

[62 FR 10337, Mar. 6, 1997, as amended at 64 FR 8488, Feb. 19, 1999]

§ 208.13 Establishing asylum eligibility.

(a) *Burden of proof.* The burden of proof is on the applicant for asylum to establish that he or she is a refugee as defined in section 101(a)(42) of the Act. The testimony of the applicant, if credible, may be sufficient to sustain the burden of proof without corroboration. The fact that the applicant previously