

Other State

KEYWORD SEARCH |

Home

Issues & Press

Travel & Business

Countries

Youth & Education

Careers

About State

Fact Sheet

Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration
Washington, DC
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Fraud in Africa Priority Three (P-3) Program

UPDATED FACT [SHEET](#)

Q:What is this program?

A: A "Priority Three," or "P-3 " designation grants access to the US Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP) to individuals of certain nationalities who are claimed as a parent, spouse, or minor child by certain legal residents in the United States. Priority One and Two applicants are granted access to the program through a referral by UNHCR, a U.S. Embassy or qualified NGO, or special direct registration programs based on the individual's vulnerability and/ refugee characteristics. Being granted access to the program is only the first step, however. DHS must determine that an applicant, regardless of priority, is a refugee under U.S. law and is otherwise admissible.

Access to the USRAP based on family ties has been available to various nationalities since the 1980s. In recent years, applications to the P-3 program have been overwhelmingly African – primarily Somalis, Ethiopians and Liberians – accounting for some 95% of the P-3 applications.

Q: Why did the US decide to conduct DNA testing of some nationality groups applying for resettlement in the US?

A: The Departments of State and Homeland Security jointly decided to test a sample of refugee cases due to reported fraud in the P-3 program, particularly in Kenya.

Q: What is the rate of fraud that has been discovered?

A: The rate of fraud discovered varies among nationalities and from country to country, and is difficult to establish definitively as many individuals refused to submit DNA samples. We were, however, only able to confirm all claimed biological relationships in fewer than 20% of cases (family units). The remainder contained at least one negative result (fraudulent relationship) or refused to be tested.

Q: Which refugees are being tested? From which countries?

A: We initially tested a sample of some 500 refugees (primarily Somali and Ethiopian) in Nairobi, Kenya under consideration for U.S. resettlement through the P-3 program. After that sample suggested high rates of fraud, we expanded testing to Ethiopia, Uganda, Ghana, Guinea, Gambia and Cote d'Ivoire. Most of the approximately 3,000 refugees tested are from Somalia, Ethiopia, and Liberia. Note that the initial DNA testing was limited to members of families applying for the P-3 program, and not between the applicants and the anchor relative in the United States.

Q: When did resettlement in the US stop?

The State Department halted P-3 family reunification processing and resettlement in Kenya and Ethiopia in March, and in the other locations noted above in May.

Q: What exactly does suspension entail? Have you stopped accepting applicants for the P-3 program?

A: We stopped accepting applications for the P-3 program on October 22. The Departments of State and Homeland Security, along with our resettlement agency partners, are currently discussing how to handle applications that were submitted earlier this year.

Q: How does the Department plan to address the fraud?

The Department is working closely with the Department of Homeland Security to develop and implement new procedures for verifying family relationship claims. These new procedures may include voluntary DNA testing. The P-3 program in Africa remains suspended until we have finalized and implemented these new measures into place.

Q: What measures will be taken against the thousands of refugees who have come into the United States through the P-3 program in the last 20 years?

A: That is a question for the Department of Homeland Security.

Q: Why did you only conduct DNA testing in Africa?

A: We began in Africa because African P-3s have accounted for more than 95% of P-3 refugee arrivals worldwide in recent years. In addition, we received frequent reports – which were correct, as it turned out – that there was widespread fraud in the program there.

Q: How many relatives of refugees or asylees have come from Africa to the US via the P-3 program in recent years?

A: Since October 1, 2003, some 36,000 people have arrived from Africa through the P-3 program.

Q: How many P-3s were admitted to the United States, from elsewhere in the world, in recent years?

A: Since October 1, 2003, some 400 people have arrived from other parts of the world through the P-3 program.

Q: Could you go back to the application process. How does it work exactly?

A: Anchor relatives who are members of eligible nationalities (18 in FY 2008) file Affidavits of Relationship, which are essentially the application for their relatives under the P-3. The Refugee Processing Center (RPC – a Department of State contractor) logs them and sends them to DHS for review. DHS clears some of the applicants for processing, and rejects others. (For more information about that aspect of the process, we refer you to DHS.) DHS returns approved affidavits to the RPC, who forwards them to the appropriate Overseas Processing Entities (OPEs) for processing. The OPEs open cases, prescreen them, and present them to DHS for the final interview.

Q. Which countries' citizens are eligible for consideration through the P-3 Program?

A: For fiscal year 2009, the following nationalities are eligible:

Afghanistan
Bhutan

Burma
Burundi
Central African Republic
Colombia
Cuba
Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK)
Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)
Eritrea
Ethiopia
Haiti
Iran
Iraq
Somalia
Sudan
Uzbekistan
Zimbabwe

Q: Is the P-3 program suspended in those countries where DNA testing has not taken place and/or there is no evidence of fraud?

A: Although the Department of State is not currently accepting Affidavits of Relationship (AORs) for any nationality as of October 22, 2008, Overseas Processing Entities (OPEs) continue to process those AORs that were forwarded overseas prior to March 2008.

Q: What is the State Department doing to ensure African refugees continue to be included in the USRAP in numbers commensurate with the humanitarian needs of the region?

A: We continue to work closely with UNHCR to determine which African refugee populations are appropriate candidates for group and individual referrals. For example, we recently authorized the processing of several thousand Eritrean refugees in a camp in Ethiopia and continue to receive P-1 referrals of Congolese, Burundians, Somalis, and other African nationalities. PRM's Acting Assistant Secretary Sam Witten recently visited Kenya and East Africa where he reconfirmed the USG's ongoing commitment to the resettlement of African refugee groups in need of resettlement with UNHCR and other partners.

 [BACK TO TOP](#)

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