

[REDACTED]

March 30, 2021

[REDACTED]

BY CERTIFIED MAIL

USCIS Arlington Asylum Office
1525 Wilson Boulevard, Suite 300
Arlington, VA 22209

Re: Expedited Interview Request Form for [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Dear Asylum Officer:

This letter supports [REDACTED] expedited interview request form. This firm represents [REDACTED] on a pro bono basis.

There are two reasons why expedited review is appropriate here: first, urgent humanitarian reasons compel providing [REDACTED] with an interview; and, second, the mental distress [REDACTED] has suffered as a result of the more-than-seven-year delay counsel expedited relief as well.

Urgent Humanitarian Reasons

[REDACTED] meets the requirements for an expedited interview for urgent humanitarian reasons.

In June 2014, [REDACTED] escaped persecution in the Republic of Congo to come to the United States. He promptly filed an I-589 Application for Asylum and for Withholding of Removal, which USCIS received on [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] application has been pending ever since—for over seven years—as he awaits scheduling of his asylum interview.

He continues to suffer from the effects of the persecution that drove him out of the Republic of Congo. [REDACTED] left the Congo after recording and releasing an album critical of the Congolese government. Since then, the government ransacked his recording studio, searched for him at his mother's house, and threatened to go after [REDACTED] brother if they were not able to find [REDACTED]. The government made it clear that they wanted to find [REDACTED] and would continue to look for him as long as he remained in the Congo. Two years ago, because of the situation in the Congo, [REDACTED] mother fled to France because she feared government reprisals. Before she left, the government ransacked her house looking for her son and threatening to take his younger brother instead.

The Congolese government has supporters in [REDACTED] local community in the United States too. Since moving to the United States, and years after fleeing persecution in the Congo, supporters of the Congolese government contacted [REDACTED] employer to look for him. The

[REDACTED]

Congolese government has a history of seeking out and suppressing any critics of the government, like [REDACTED]

Because of this well-known history and [REDACTED] personal experiences in the Congo and the United States, he does not associate with the local Congolese community. He is completely cut off from his family and cannot associate with anyone even remotely associated with his homeland for fear of further persecution. He fears that supporters of the Congolese government living in the United States would try to harm him, or would provide information to the Congolese government, because they remember the critical album he produced and would seek to curry favor with a corrupt government by harassing one of its vocal opponents. This continues to limit [REDACTED] ability to fully participate in his local community and to practice the profession he loves—music.

By approving the expedited request, [REDACTED] will know he is safe in the United States and will not be forced to return to the Republic of the Congo. By having the safety and security of asylum and a permanent immigration status in the United States, [REDACTED] will be free of his fundamental fear of being returned to a country where he will almost certainly be subject to further persecution and harm.

Mental Distress

[REDACTED] I-589 application should also be given expedited review because of the significant mental distress this seven-year delay has caused him.

To evaluate the effect of this delay on [REDACTED] mental state, this firm engaged the services of Dr. Joseph Gorin, a Neuropsychologist with over 25 years of clinical experience. Dr. Gorin conducted several hours of evaluations with [REDACTED] in February 2021. His report evaluating [REDACTED] is attached as Exhibit A to this letter.

According to Dr. Gorin, [REDACTED] “stress level has increased the longer he waits for a resolution of his immigration status.” Ex. A (Gorin Rep.) at 3. The lack of immigration status has prevented [REDACTED] from earning a degree due to a lack of ability to get financial aid. *Id.* He has become “very nervous and depressed” as a result of his pending asylum application. *Id.*

Dr. Gorin also found that [REDACTED] “had numerous symptoms that are consistent with posttraumatic symptoms” and that “it is highly likely that these symptoms are the result of his experiences in the Congo and the approximately seven-year long wait he has experienced regarding the processing of his asylum application.” *Id.* at 4.

In conclusion, Dr. Gorin diagnosed [REDACTED] with an adjustment disorder with anxiety and depression. *Id.* at 5. In Dr. Gorin’s professional opinion,

[REDACTED] depression is related to the difficulty of moving on with his life that is created by the extended uncertainty regarding his immigration status. He would

[REDACTED]

USCIS
March 30, 2021
Page 3

like to go to school and he would like to settle down and have a family, but does not feel he can do either because he could be removed.

Id. Dr. Gorin attributed [REDACTED] increased anxiety “due to the slowness of the resolution of his immigration case,” and that “[i]t is likely that these symptoms will tend to be exacerbated the longer that [REDACTED] has to wait for a resolution of his application.” *Id.* at 5-6.

Dr. Gorin also concluded that, [REDACTED] symptoms are very likely to improve if he has a reasonable timely resolution of his [asylum] application.” *Id.* at 6.

Thus, Dr. Gorin’s evaluation three two things plain: first, that [REDACTED] is experiencing significant mental distress in the form of anxiety and depression; second, that the cause of [REDACTED] mental distress is the delay he has experienced with his asylum application; and, third, that his symptoms are “very likely” to improve if his asylum application is timely resolved. Accordingly, [REDACTED]’s I-589 application should be given expedited review for this reason as well.

CONCLUSION

[REDACTED] meets the requirements for an expedited interview and respectfully requests that he be scheduled for an interview as soon as possible.

Should you wish to discuss any matters that would help advance [REDACTED] I-589 application, please do not hesitate to contact me at [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]