

On Thursday, September 11th, 2025 at 12:23 PM, A_FOIAacknowledgement@groups.state.gov <A_FOIAacknowledgement@groups.state.gov> wrote:

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Reference No: F-2025-28025

Request Description: *I am writing to formally request immediate access to the full contents of the file maintained by the U.S. Embassy in Lomé, Togo, concerning U.S. Army veteran Kelvin Blas. It has come to my attention through an intermediary (Kingsley, a local legal advocate in Togo) that this file includes damaging remarks made by a former commanding officer, Michael Burleson, who was reportedly contacted by the embassy after being identified by Kelvin himself. According to the account relayed, Burleson characterized Kelvin's presence in Togo as the result of "chasing wealth," and his statement appears to have heavily influenced the Embassy's posture toward assisting Mr. Blas. This communication—if indeed part of the official file—raises serious concerns about how unsupported hearsay may have contributed to the prolonged abandonment of a U.S. veteran who has repeatedly sought embassy protection and repatriation. Given the high-stakes nature of this situation, and the fact that Mr. Blas has endured homelessness, hunger, illness, and ongoing threats while stranded in Togo, I am demanding the following under the appropriate provisions of the Privacy Act of 1974 (5 U.S.C. § 552a) and all applicable oversight regulations: 1. A complete copy or detailed written inventory of the embassy's file related to Kelvin Blas, including but not limited to: o Any and all email correspondence referencing Kelvin or his case o Communications to or from Michael Burleson or any other military official o Internal memos or determinations affecting his eligibility for consular support o Any notations regarding his passport status and the embassy's decisions on assistance 2. An explanation of how unverified personal commentary—if present—was allowed to override or influence consular action on a stranded U.S. citizen and Army veteran. 3. Clarification of current consular policy regarding repatriation or aid to veterans abroad without possession of a physical passport, and any appeal processes for waiver or exception. This is a matter of national interest and human dignity. I expect a timely and transparent response. I am also sharing this inquiry with press, legal, and advocacy entities due to the severe implications of neglect and mischaracterization in Kelvin's case. Should I not receive a response within 7 days of receipt of this request, I will escalate through congressional offices, veterans' rights organizations, and legal counsel.*

Burger:

This email acknowledges your Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) (5 U.S.C. § 552) request received by the U.S. Department of State, Information Access Programs Directorate on August 4, 2025 seeking the above referenced records. A copy of your request is attached for your reference. This Office assigned your request the subject reference number and placed it in the complex processing track where it will be processed as quickly as possible. (See 22 CFR § 171.1(h))

This Office will not be able to respond within the 20 days provided by the statute due to "unusual circumstances." See 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(6)(B)(i)-(iii). In this instance, the unusual circumstances include the need to search for and collect requested records from other Department offices or Foreign Service posts. Please be advised, unless you advise otherwise, we will treat as non-responsive any compilations of publicly available news

reports and any publicly available documents not created by the U.S. government, such as mass-distribution emails from news media.

For further assistance or to discuss any aspect of these requests, you may contact me, Tyeesha G., at FOIA_Inquiry@state.gov. You may also contact our FOIA Public Liaison via email at FOIAStatus@state.gov or telephone at (202) 261-8484.

Additionally, you may contact the Office of Government Information Services (OGIS) at the National Archives and Records Administration to inquire about the FOIA mediation services they offer. The contact information for OGIS is as follows: Office of Government Information Services, National Archives and Records Administration, 8601 Adelphi Road-OGIS, College Park, Maryland 20740-6001, email at ogis@nara.gov; telephone at 202-741-5770; or toll free at 1-877-684-6448.

Sincerely,

Tyeesha G.

On behalf of,

Ennelle Debrosse
Supervisory Government Information Specialist
FOIA Case Processing Office
Information Access Programs Directorate

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