Congress of the United States  
Washington, DC 20515  

March 22, 2024  

Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas  
U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
301 7th St, SW  
Washington, DC 20528  

Secretary Antony Blinken  
U.S. Department of State  
2201 C St, NW  
Washington, DC 20451  

Dear Secretary Mayorkas and Secretary Blinken,

Thank you for your ongoing efforts to advance protections for refugees and asylees who make significant contributions to the American economy. We are writing today to urge you to review country conditions and consider the designation of Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for Ecuador.

As you know, Section 244A(b)(1)(A) of the Immigration and Nationality Act grants the Administration the authority to denote TPS to the nationals of a particular country if requiring the return of their nationals to that state would pose a serious threat to their personal safety.

Long considered a bastion of peace in the region, Ecuador has seen a sharp rise in violence for the last couple of years, with violent deaths nearly doubling between 2022 and 2023.\(^1\) In response to the rise in cartel-related violence, President Noboa instituted a 60-day state of emergency on January 8th and later declared the country to be in an “internal armed conflict,” imposing a nationwide curfew and authorizing the military to patrol the streets and take control of prisons.\(^2\) Since January 9th, the Ecuadorian Military has detained more than 3,200 individuals and recovered thousands of pieces of weapons and ammunition.\(^3\) Despite these measures, armed groups continue to threaten the press, medical institutions, community leaders, and the public at large.

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[https://www.eluniverso.com/noticias/seguridad/mas-de-3000-detenidos-bloque-de-seguridad-estado-excepcion-ecuador-seguridad-toque-queda-nota/](https://www.eluniverso.com/noticias/seguridad/mas-de-3000-detenidos-bloque-de-seguridad-estado-excepcion-ecuador-seguridad-toque-queda-nota/)
While the Biden Administration has offered assistance to the Ecuadorian Government, this does not address the more than 450,000\textsuperscript{4} Ecuadorian immigrants living in the United States. In addition, Ecuador has been the second-highest source country for asylum seekers in New York City since 2022.\textsuperscript{5} Despite the well-documented insecurity that drove these constituents to make the perilous journey through the Darién Gap, many of them are in removal proceedings and face imminent deportation. A TPS designation would allow many in our Ecuadorian community to breathe a sigh of relief by keeping families together and making them eligible for work authorization to support themselves.

We must protect our Ecuadorian constituents from deportation to a conflict zone. We urge you to consider a TPS Designation for Ecuador.

Sincerely,

Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez
Member of Congress

Robert J. Menendez
Member of Congress

Adriano Espaillat
Member of Congress

Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator

Nanette Diaz Barragán
Member of Congress
Chairwoman, Congressional Hispanic Caucus


Joaquin Castro  
Member of Congress

Tony Cárdenas  
Member of Congress

Sylvia R. Garcia  
Member of Congress

Greg Casar  
Member of Congress

Darren Soto  
Member of Congress

Grace Meng  
Member of Congress

Nydia M. Velázquez  
Member of Congress

Yvette D. Clarke  
Member of Congress

Jamaal Bowman, Ed.D.  
Member of Congress

Dan Goldman  
Member of Congress

Delia C. Ramirez  
Member of Congress

Mike Quigley  
Member of Congress
Grace F. Napolitano
Member of Congress

Ilhan Omar
Member of Congress

Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress

James P. McGovern
Member of Congress

Cori Bush
Member of Congress

Jesus G. "Chuy" Garcia
Member of Congress

Pramila Jayapal
Member of Congress

Melanie Stansbury
Member of Congress

Jim Himes
Member of Congress

Jimmy Gomez
Member of Congress
April 3, 2024

The Honorable Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Ocasio-Cortez:

Thank you for your March 22, 2024 letter to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) requesting Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for Ecuadorian citizens in the United States. I am responding on behalf of the Department.

The Secretary of Homeland Security may designate a country for TPS and extend or terminate a country’s existing TPS designation based upon specific statutory criteria. In order to designate a country for TPS or extend a country’s TPS designation, the Secretary must find one or more of the following:

1. there is an ongoing armed conflict within the country that would pose a serious threat to the personal safety of the country’s nationals if they were returned;
2. there has been an environmental disaster resulting in a substantial, but temporary, disruption of the living conditions in the area affected, the country is temporarily unable to handle adequately the return of its nationals, and the country has officially requested TPS designation; or
3. there exist extraordinary and temporary conditions in the country that prevent nationals from returning in safety, and the Secretary does not find that permitting the country’s nationals to remain temporarily in the United States would be contrary to the national interest of the United States.

To determine TPS eligibility, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) relies upon specific requirements found in federal statutes and policies. You can find more information about these requirements under the “Eligibility Requirements” heading at uscis.gov/humanitarian/temporary-protected-status.

I appreciate your concerns and the information you shared about conditions in Ecuador. Please be assured DHS continues to monitor conditions in Ecuador and remains committed to administering its programs, including TPS, in an equitable manner. DHS also offers immigration relief and applies flexibilities that may be available upon request to eligible individuals in the United States affected by emergencies or unforeseen circumstances. Such relief and flexibilities may include:
• Change or extension of nonimmigrant status, if eligible nationals are currently in the United States, even if the request is filed after the authorized period of admission has expired;
• Expedited processing of requests for advance parole documents;
• Expedited adjudication of requests for off-campus employment authorization for eligible F-1 students experiencing severe economic hardship;
• Expedited adjudication of employment authorization applications, where appropriate;
• Assistance if applicants received a Request for Evidence or a Notice of Intent to Deny and were unable to appear for an interview, submit evidence, or respond in a timely manner because of the circumstances; and
• Expedited replacement of lost or damaged immigration or travel documents issued by USCIS, such as a Permanent Resident Card (Green Card).


Thank you again for your letter and interest in this important issue. The cosigners of your letter will receive a separate, identical response. Should you require any additional assistance, please have your staff contact the USCIS Office of Legislative Affairs at (240) 721-3801.

Respectfully,

Ur M. Jaddou
Director