



SYLVESTER TURNER
MAYOR

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OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
CITY OF HOUSTON
TEXAS

November 22, 2023

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

I write to express my hope that the administration will redesignate El Salvador, Nicaragua, Honduras, and Nepal for Temporary Protected Status (TPS) and also designate Guatemala.

As you know, on Wednesday, June 21, 2023, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) extended - but did not redesignate - the TPS designations of those four countries. The decision to extend these designations was necessary to resolve the status of about 260,000 long standing U.S. residents who, as DHS found, would face danger if returned to their home countries. However, the failure to redesignate these countries left as many as 2 million people from the same countries unprotected, even though they would face the same dangers if returned. Those include all of those who have come since the last designation which - in the case of the Central American countries - was nearly a quarter of a century ago. In addition, the failure to designate Guatemala has left perhaps another million people without protection.

The case for redesignating or designating these countries for TPS is overwhelming given that DHS has already found that the country conditions for all but Guatemala meet the threshold requirements under the statute and that conditions in Guatemala are very similar to its Central American neighbors.

Designating TPS for those countries would significantly reduce the undocumented population, jumpstart the economy, empower workers, and reduce inflation by making work permits available to help address tight labor markets.

I am confident that most Americans would strongly support redesignation and designation of these countries once it is announced. The average beneficiary of such redesignations has already lived and worked here for years, and the public has consistently supported

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programs to provide legal status for long term residents who have set down roots here and who would face danger in their home countries if removed.

I understand the concerns some have raised about the impact that redesignating TPS might have on border arrivals, even though TPS itself would only benefit those who are already here. But previous TPS designations haven't led to massive increases at the border, and in general legalization of long-standing residents in the interior hasn't led to such increases. Border numbers respond to multiple factors and are unpredictable, as was seen when the end of Title 42 was followed by a dip in border arrivals, contrary to conventional wisdom. The bottom line is that future migration is uncertain, whereas the dramatic positive impact of **TPS** on migrants, their families, and the economy is undeniable.

Thank you for your consideration on the redesignation of TPS for El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Nepal and a new designation for Guatemala.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Sylvester Turner". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "S" and a long, sweeping underline.

Sylvester Turner
Mayor



U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
Services

February 5, 2024

The Honorable John Whitmire
Mayor of Houston
P.O. Box 1562
Houston, TX 77251

Dear Mayor Whitmire:

This letter is in response to a November 22, 2023 letter from Mayor Turner to President Biden requesting redesignation of El Salvador, Nicaragua, Honduras, and Nepal and designation of Guatemala for Temporary Protected Status (TPS). The White House referred your letter to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS), and I am responding on behalf of the Department.

By law, the Secretary of Homeland Security may designate or redesignate a country for TPS and extend or terminate a country's existing TPS designation based upon specific statutory criteria. To designate or redesignate a country for TPS or extend a country's TPS designation, the Secretary must find one or more of the following facts: (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 that permitting the country's nationals to remain temporarily in the United States would not be contrary to the national interest of the United States.¹

El Salvador, Nicaragua, Honduras, and Nepal were initially designated for TPS due to natural disasters.² Following a recent review of the countries' conditions and consultation with appropriate U.S. government agencies, on June 21, 2023, DHS announced the extension of the TPS designations for each of these countries.³ On December 14, 2023, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) extended the re-registration periods for these TPS extensions.⁴

¹ See Immigration and Nationality Act § 244(b)(1).

² El Salvador (66 FR 14214) was designated for TPS on March 9, 2001, following a series of earthquakes; Nicaragua (64 FR 526) and Honduras (64 FR 524) were designated for TPS on January 5, 1999, following Hurricane Mitch; and Nepal (80 FR 36346) was designated for TPS on June 24, 2015, following an earthquake.

³ <https://www.uscis.gov/humanitarian/update-on-ramos-v-nielsen>.

⁴ See 88 FR 86665.

DHS is closely monitoring conditions in El Salvador, Nicaragua, Honduras, Nepal, and Guatemala in consultation with other government agencies, and is committed to administering its programs in an equitable manner.

USCIS may also, upon request, grant immigration relief to eligible noncitizens affected by emergencies or unforeseen circumstances. Such relief may include:

- Change or extension of nonimmigrant status for eligible noncitizens 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 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
- Replacement of lost or damaged immigration or travel documents issued by USCIS, such as a Permanent Resident Card (Green Card).

More information is available at <https://www.uscis.gov/humanitarian/special-situations>.

Thank you again for your letter and interest in this important issue. Should you require any additional assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ur M. Jaddou", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Ur M. Jaddou
Director