



November 16, 2022

The Honorable Alejandro Mayorkas
Secretary of Homeland Security
Department of Homeland Security
Washington, D.C. 20528

The Honorable Antony Blinken
Secretary of State
Department of State
Washington, D.C. 20520

Re: U.S. Catholic Groups Request the Extension and Redesignation of Temporary Protected Status for Haiti, Somalia, and Yemen, and Redesignation of Venezuela

Dear Secretary Mayorkas and Secretary Blinken:

We write on behalf of Catholic Charities USA (CCUSA), the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' (USCCB) Committee on Migration, Catholic Relief Services (CRS), and the Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc. (CLINIC) to express gratitude for the recent designation of Ethiopia for Temporary Protected Status (TPS), as well as the extension and redesignation of Burma. We also wish to extend our deep appreciation for the Administration's decision to extend TPS for those countries whose designations were at issue in the *Ramos v. Nielson* and *Bhattari v. Nielson* cases. This decision reflects the ongoing conditions in those countries, which warrant continued protections for their nationals in the United States. As Haiti, Somalia, and Yemen continue to experience extraordinary and temporary conditions that prevent nationals from safely returning to their homelands, we ask that the Administration continue to make robust use of TPS by extending and redesignating these countries for TPS. We also remain committed to our [prior request](#) for a redesignation of Venezuela for TPS, in addition to the July 2022 extension.

The Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), in consultation with the Secretary of State and others, may designate a country for TPS if conditions in the country meet statutory requirements for such designation, including ongoing armed conflict, natural disasters, or other extraordinary and temporary conditions that temporarily prevent safe return.¹

The Administration last designated Haiti for TPS due to "security concerns, social unrest, an increase in human rights abuses, crippling poverty, and lack of basic resources, which [were] exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic."² CRS provides humanitarian and development assistance across the country and can attest to worsening conditions. Fuel shortages to operate generators and road blockades by gangs create significant barriers for aid workers to provide basic services. The UN reports of a cholera outbreak

¹ 8 U.S.C. 1254a(b)(1); § 244(b)(1) of the Immigration and Nationality Act.

² "Secretary Mayorkas Designates Haiti for Temporary Protected Status for 18 months," Department of Homeland Security press release, May 22, 2021, <https://bit.ly/3O3x1YJ>.

in the nation with 1,700 suspected cases, half of which affect children younger than 14-years-old.³ Conditions in Haiti have become so dire that the UN described it as the country's "worst human rights and humanitarian situation in decades."⁴ The UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) recently issued a plea to nation states to suspend the deportation of Haitians to the country and to provide "temporary protection, humanitarian admission or other legal stay arrangements until the security situation in Haiti permits safe returns."⁵ A group of senators recently called upon the Administration to redesignate the country for TPS amid the deteriorating conditions.⁶ We believe that the alarming humanitarian situation in Haiti morally obligates and federal law supports that the United States extend the current designation and redesignates Haiti for an additional 18 months.

We are also mindful of the approaching expiration of TPS for Yemen and urge you to extend and redesignate the country. Yemen confronts a triple threat of armed conflict, the impact of climate change, and health emergencies. The country has now entered its seventh year of civil war, resulting in the displacement of over four million people and 23.4 million people requiring some form of humanitarian aid.⁷ Violence and human rights abuses against civilians, including women and children, continue in the country amid a UN-backed truce agreement.⁸ Additionally, the country is experiencing unprecedented periods of flood and drought due to climate change, displacing tens of thousands of people and disrupting sustainable agricultural practices, which a majority of the population have relied upon for sustenance and livelihood for generations.⁹ Given these realities, we urge you to extend Yemen's current designation and redesignate the country for TPS prior to the 60-day statutory review deadline of January 2, 2023.

Similarly, as the TPS review deadline for Somalia approaches, we urge you to consider untenable conditions in the country that make safe return impossible. The security situation in the country remains concerning, specifically the recurring deadly attacks against civilians by armed groups. Bombings in Mogadishu last month killed 100 civilians and wounded around 300 people.¹⁰ Days later, a suicide bombing, also in the nation's capital, killed five people outside of a military camp with casualties that included both civilians and new recruits.¹¹ In addition to the violence, famine and drought have worsened the humanitarian crisis in the country, resulting in the internal displacement of about a million people.¹² National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan, in a statement in September, expressed grave concern for the country, describing the situation as "the worst drought in the Horn of Africa in 70 years."¹³ Thousands of children between 6- and 59-months-old suffer from acute malnutrition.¹⁴ While the United States is among the nations that have provided foreign aid to address the crisis, stability in the country will likely take several months to be restored. Therefore, we request an extension and redesignation for Somalia for an additional 18 months.

³ "Cholera outbreak in Haiti hits over 1,700 suspected cases – half of them children," UNICEF press release, Oct. 24, 2022, <https://uni.cf/3NSWGo8>.

⁴ "UNHCR calls on States to refrain from forced returns of Haitians," UNHCR press release, Nov. 3, 2022, <https://bit.ly/3WI7Y2q>.

⁵ *Id.*

⁶ "Democratic senators call for new TPS protection for Haitians," Fronteras, Oct. 31, 2022, <https://bit.ly/3htpVle>.

⁷ "Yemen: One of the world's largest humanitarian crises," UNFPA, Oct. 11, 2022, <https://bit.ly/3Ek9dOg>.

⁸ "Violations and Abuses against Civilians during Yemen's Truce," OCHA Services, Nov. 8, 2022, [Violations and Abuses against Civilians during Yemen's Truce - Yemen | ReliefWeb](https://reliefweb.int/yemen/violations-and-abuses-against-civilians-during-yemen-s-truce).

⁹ "Yemen's future conflicts will be over water," Aljazeera, Oct. 14, 2022, [Yemen's future conflicts will be over water | Water | Al Jazeera](https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/10/14/yemens-future-conflicts-will-be-over-water).

¹⁰ "2 car bombs leave scores of casualties at an intersection in Somalia's capital," NPR, Oct. 29, 2022, <https://n.pr/3hsXC6n>.

¹¹ "Five killed in suicide bombings at Somalia military camp," Aljazeera, Nov. 6, 2022, <https://bit.ly/3A0u6LI>.

¹² "'Catastrophic' drought displaces one million in Somalia, world asked to 'step up' support," UN News, Aug. 11, 2022, ['Catastrophic' drought displaces one million in Somalia, world asked to 'step up' support | IUN News](https://www.un.org/en/news/story/2022/08/catastrophic-drought-displaces-one-million-in-somalia-world-asked-to-step-up-support).

¹³ "Statement by National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan on Projected Famine in Parts of Somalia this Year," White House press release, Sept. 6, 2022, <https://bit.ly/3FYyeiX>.

¹⁴ "Child malnutrition soars in central Somalia area on verge of famine," Reuters, Oct. 13, 2022, <https://reut.rs/3WOUyBO>.

As Catholics, we believe wholeheartedly in protecting the sanctity of every human life. TPS is an important tool provided by Congress to protect human life and to ensure that those who remain in the U.S. under protected status can support themselves and their families and make positive contributions to American communities, consistent with their God-given dignity. Therefore, we urge the Administration to make full use of its TPS authority by extending and redesignating Haiti, Somalia, and Yemen, and providing protection to nationals of other countries warranting new designations.

Thank you for considering our requests and for your work on behalf of the common good.

Respectfully,



Most Reverend Mario E. Dorsonville
Auxiliary Bishop of Washington
Chairman, USCCB Committee on Migration



Sister Donna Markham, OP, PhD
President and CEO
Catholic Charities USA



Sean Callahan
President and CEO
Catholic Relief Services



Anna Gallagher
Executive Director
Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc.



**U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
Services**

December 21, 2022

Most Reverend Mario E. Dorsonville
Auxiliary Bishop of Washington
Chairman, USCCB Committee on Migration
3211 Fourth St. NE
Washington, DC 20017

Dear Reverend Dorsonville:

Thank you for your November 16, 2022, letter to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) requesting Temporary Protected Status (TPS) extensions and re-designations for Haiti, Yemen, and Somalia, and a re-designation for Venezuela in addition to the July 2022 extension. U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) is principally responsible for advising the Secretary on TPS issues and implementing the program, and Secretary Mayorkas asked that I respond on his behalf. I apologize for the delay in my response.

I appreciate the concerns you outlined regarding the situations in Haiti, Yemen, and Somalia, and your interest in extending and redesignating TPS in light of country conditions in each respective country. On December 5, 2022, Secretary Mayorkas announced the extension of Haiti for TPS for 18 months, from February 4, 2023 through August 3, 2023, and the redesignation of Haiti for TPS. For additional information, please see: <https://www.uscis.gov/humanitarian/temporary-protected-status>.

Additionally, DHS is closely monitoring conditions in countries with existing TPS designations including Yemen, Somalia, and Venezuela. DHS is committed to administering its programs, including TPS, in an equitable manner and makes decisions regarding TPS designations after consultation with interagency partners and careful consideration of the circumstances of each country, pursuant to specific statutory criteria.¹ As required by the statute, at least 60 days before the expiration of a foreign state's TPS designation or extension, the Secretary, after consultation with appropriate Government agencies, must review the conditions in the foreign state to determine whether the conditions for the TPS designation continue to be met. DHS has been in consultation with U.S. government agencies to explore whether to extend and/or to redesignate Yemen, Somalia, and Venezuela for TPS and is mindful of the upcoming statutory deadlines for each country.

¹ Additional information is available at <https://uscode.house.gov/view.xhtml?req=granuleid:USC-prelim-title8-section1254a&num=0&edition=prelim>; Immigration and Nationality Act § 244(b)(1) and 244(b)(3)

In addition to TPS, USCIS also offers support that may be available upon request to assist eligible individuals who have been affected by conditions in their respective home countries, including the following:

- Change or extension of nonimmigrant status if eligible individuals 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 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 natural disaster; and
- Replacement of lost or damaged immigration or travel documents issued by USCIS, such as a Permanent Resident Card (Green Card).

More information on these options is available under “Special Situations” on our website at <https://www.uscis.gov/humanitarian/special-situations>.

Thank you again for your letter and interest in these important and timely issues. Please share this response with the other organizations that cosigned your letter. 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", followed by a horizontal line extending to the right.

Ur M. Jaddou
Director