

U.S. Department of Homeland Security
U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services
Administrative Appeals Office (AAO)
20 Massachusetts Ave., N.W., MS 2090
Washington, DC 20529-2090



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

[REDACTED]

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DATE: **DEC 04 2012**

Office: California Service Center

FILE: [REDACTED]

IN RE: Applicant: [REDACTED]

APPLICATION: Application for Temporary Protected Status under Section 244 of the Immigration and Nationality Act, 8 U.S.C. § 1254

INSTRUCTIONS:

ON BEHALF OF APPLICANT: SELF-REPRESENTED

Enclosed please find the decision of the Administrative Appeals Office in your case. All of the documents related to this matter have been returned to the California Service Center. Please be advised that any further inquiry that you might have concerning your case must be made to that office.

If you believe the law was inappropriately applied by us in reaching our decision, or you have additional information that you wish to have considered, you may file a motion to reconsider or a motion to reopen. The specific requirements for filing such a request can be found at 8 C.F.R. § 103.5. All motions must be submitted to the California Service Center by filing a Form I-290B, Notice of Appeal or Motion, with a fee of \$630. Please be aware that 8 C.F.R. § 103.5(a)(1)(i) requires that any motion must be filed within 30 days of the decision that the motion seeks to reconsider or reopen.

Thank, you,

Ron Rosenberg
Acting Chief, Administrative Appeals Office

DISCUSSION: The application was denied by the Director, California Service Center, and is now before the Administrative Appeals Office on appeal. The appeal will be dismissed.

The applicant is a native and citizen of Haiti who is seeking Temporary Protected Status (TPS) under section 244 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (the Act), 8 U.S.C. §1254. The director denied the application on June 15, 2012, because the applicant was not eligible for TPS as he had been firmly resettled in the Turks and Caicos. The director further determined that the applicant could not establish his continuous residence in the United States since January 12, 2011, as he entered the United States on February 1, 2011.

On appeal, the applicant reasserts his claim of eligibility for TPS and contends that he is not firmly resettled in the Turks and Caicos and he fears returning there because of threats from political opponents. The applicant does not submit additional evidence.

Section 244(c) of the Act, and the related regulations in 8 C.F.R. § 244.2, provide that an applicant who is a national of a foreign state as designated by the Attorney General, now the Secretary, Department of Homeland Security (Secretary), is eligible for TPS only if such alien establishes that he or she:

- (a) Is a national of a state designated under section 244(b) of the Act;
- (b) Has been continuously physically present in the United States since the effective date of the most recent designation of that foreign state;
- (c) Has continuously resided in the United States since such date as the Secretary may designate;
- (d) Is admissible as an immigrant except as provided under section 244.3;
- (e) Is not ineligible under 8 C.F.R. § 244.4.

The term *continuously physically present*, as defined in 8 C.F.R. § 244.1, means actual physical presence in the United States for the entire period specified in the regulations. An alien shall not be considered to have failed to maintain continuous physical presence in the United States by virtue of brief, casual, and innocent absences as defined within this section.

The term *continuously resided*, as defined in 8 C.F.R. § 244.1, means residing in the United States for the entire period specified in the regulations. An alien shall not be considered to have failed to maintain continuous residence in the United States by reason of a brief, casual and innocent absence as defined within this section or due merely to a brief temporary trip abroad required by emergency or extenuating circumstances outside the control of the alien.

On January 21, 2010, the Secretary designated Haiti as a country eligible for TPS. This designation allowed nationals of Haiti who have continuously resided in the United States since January 12, 2010, and who have been continuously physically present in the United States since January 21, 2010, to apply for TPS. On May 19, 2011, the Secretary announced an extension of the TPS initial designation for Haiti until January 22, 2013. On May 19, 2011, the Secretary also re-designated Haiti for TPS eligibility which became effective on July 23, 2011, and remains in effect until January 22, 2013, upon the applicant's re-registration during the requisite time period. This re-designation allowed nationals of Haiti who have continuously resided in the United States since January 12, 2011, and who have been continuously physically present in the United States since July 23, 2011, to apply for TPS. The initial registration period for the new re-designation began on May 19, 2011, and ended on November 15, 2011.

The burden of proof is upon the applicant to establish that he or she meets the above requirements. Applicants shall submit all documentation as required in the instructions or requested by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). 8 C.F.R. § 244.9(a). The sufficiency of all evidence will be judged according to its relevancy, consistency, credibility, and probative value. To meet his or her burden of proof the applicant must provide supporting documentary evidence of eligibility apart from his or her own statements. 8 C.F.R. § 244.9(b).

The first issue in this proceeding is whether the applicant firmly resettled in the Turks and Caicos and, therefore is ineligible for TPS.

An alien shall not be eligible for TPS if the Attorney General finds that the alien was firmly resettled in another country prior to arriving in the United States. Sections 244(c)(2)(B)(ii) and 208(b)(2)(A)(vi) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (the Act).

As defined in 8 C.F.R. § 208.15, an alien is considered to be firmly resettled if, prior to arrival in the United States, he or she entered into another country with, or while in that country received, an offer of permanent resident status, citizenship, or some other type of permanent resettlement unless he or she establishes:

(a) That his or her entry into that country was a necessary consequence of his or her flight from persecution, that he or she remained in that country only as long as was necessary to arrange onward travel, and that he or she did not establish significant ties in that country; or

(b) That the conditions of his or her residence in that country were so substantially and consciously restricted by the authority of the country of refuge that he or she was not in fact resettled. In making his or her determination, the asylum officer or immigration judge shall consider the conditions under which other residents of the country live: the type of housing, whether permanent or temporary, made available to the refugee; the types and extent of employment available to the refugee; and the extent to which the refugee received permission to hold property and to enjoy other rights and privileges.

such as travel documentation that includes a right of entry or reentry, education, public relief, or naturalization, ordinarily available to others resident in the country.

The record indicates that the applicant is a permanent resident of the Turks and Caicos, and that he has been provided the same privileges as other permanent residents in the country. The applicant does not dispute his permanent residence in the Turks and Caicos, but contends that he fled the country because of threats from individuals who deemed him to be a political opponent, and that the government of the Turks and Caicos is unable to protect him. We note the applicant's claim that he fears returning to the Turks and Caicos; however, the record is clear that the applicant has been firmly resettled there. The applicant purports to have fled persecution in Haiti in July 1997 and settled in Turks and Caicos, and after about 10 years he obtained permanent residence. The record reveals that the applicant had been employed in Turks and Caicos. The record also reflects that the applicant entered the United States as a nonimmigrant visitor on October 26, 2008, and on September 21, 2009. After both visits, the applicant returned to the Turks and Caicos.

We find that the applicant has been firmly resettled in the Turks and Caicos prior to arriving in the United States. Therefore, he is ineligible for TPS under the provisions of section 244(c)(2)(B)(ii) of the Act.

The next issue in this proceeding is whether the applicant established the requisite continuous residence in the United States.

The record reflects that the applicant entered the United States on February 1, 2011, as a nonimmigrant visitor. Therefore, the applicant cannot establish his continuous residence in the United States since January 12, 2011.

The application will be denied for the above stated reasons, with each considered as an independent and alternative basis for denial. An alien applying for TPS has the burden of proving that he or she meets the requirements enumerated above and is otherwise eligible under the provisions of section 244 of the Act. The applicant has failed to meet this burden.

ORDER: The appeal is dismissed.