



## NEWS RELEASE

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### **President Bush Announces El Salvador Designated For Temporary Protected Status Following Devastating Earthquakes**

WASHINGTON – President George W. Bush today announced that Salvadorans residing in the United States since February 13, 2001 have been granted Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for a period of 18 months. Eligible Salvadorans will not be removed and can apply for permission to work in the United States during the designated period. The TPS designation is part of ongoing efforts by the United States to assist El Salvador in recovering from devastating earthquakes.

The TPS designation was made by Attorney General John Ashcroft. It covers as many as 150,000 potential applicants and applies only to those Salvadorans who have continuously resided in the United States since February 13, 2001. The TPS application period begins upon publication in the *Federal Register*, which is expected early next week, and continues for 18 months from that date.

"The havoc caused by these earthquakes makes it extremely difficult for Salvadorans to return home safely at this time," said Acting INS Commissioner Mary Ann Wyrsh. "Given that reality, granting them temporary protected status is the prudent and humane thing to do."

On January 17, 2001, the Salvadoran Government formally requested that the Attorney General designate El Salvador under the TPS program. After consultation with the Department of State and INS, Attorney General Ashcroft elected to designate El Salvador under the TPS program. This consultation indicated that the extent of death, displacement and damage in El Salvador has resulted in a substantial but temporary disruption of living conditions in El Salvador, such that the country is temporarily unable to handle adequately the return of nationals.

All Salvadorans eligible for TPS must submit both an Application for Temporary Protected Status, Form I-821, and an Application for Employment Authorization, Form I-765, and supporting evidence to demonstrate both Salvadoran nationality and also continuous residence in the United States as of February 13, 2001. These forms are available from the toll-free INS Forms line, 1-800-870-3676, and from the INS Web site, [www.ins.usdoj.gov](http://www.ins.usdoj.gov).

Form I-821 must include a \$50 filing fee, along with a \$25 fingerprinting fee. Applicants for employment authorization should submit a Form I-765 with the \$100 filing fee.

Applicants who already have or do not wish to receive employment authorization still must submit a completed Form I-765, but without the accompanying fee. An applicant may be eligible to receive a waiver of TPS-related application filing fees.

On January 13, 2001 and on February 13, El Salvador was devastated by two major earthquakes. To date, the earthquakes have resulted in at least 1,100 deaths, 7,859 injured, and over 2,500 missing. In addition, the earthquakes have displaced an estimated 1.3 million persons out of El Salvador's population of 6.2 million, more than 80,000 whom are living in temporary camps. Losses in housing, infrastructure and the agricultural sector exceed \$2.8 billion—over half of the country's annual budget. These factors have clearly resulted in a substantial, but temporary disruption of living conditions in El Salvador.

El Salvador joins Angola, Burundi, Honduras, Liberia, Montserrat, Nicaragua, Sierra Leone, Somalia and Sudan as countries currently designated for TPS.