



NEWS RELEASE

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INS Grants 12-Month Extension of Temporary Protected Status (TPS) For Eligible Hondurans and Nicaraguans

WASHINGTON — As part of the Clinton Administration's ongoing efforts to assist countries affected by Hurricane Mitch, Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) Commissioner Doris Meissner announced today the extension of Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for Honduras and Nicaragua for a period of 12 months until July 5, 2001.

This extension covers an estimated 100,000 Hondurans and 6,000 Nicaraguans who have already applied for TPS. The re-registration period begins upon publication in the *Federal Register*, which is expected early next week, and continues for 30 days from that date.

"While these countries have begun the process of recovering from the devastation of Hurricane Mitch, severe disruption to the living conditions continues. This decision reflects the Administration's continued commitment to provide assistance to the countries devastated by Hurricane Mitch," Meissner said.

Hondurans and Nicaraguans currently registered under TPS who desire an extension must re-register by filing both the TPS application (Form I-821) and an application for employment authorization (Form I-765) with an INS Service Center. For re-registration, there is no fee for Form I-821. However, a \$100 fee must accompany Form I-765 if an applicant requests employment authorization. If the applicant does not require employment authorization or already has employment authorization, Form I-765 is still required but no fee is necessary. 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.

An applicant may request a waiver of TPS-related application fees by submitting proper documentation of inability to pay.

This extension does not allow Nicaraguans or Hondurans who entered the United States after December 30, 1998 to file for TPS. This extension covers only Nicaraguans and Hondurans who have been continually present in the United States as of January 5, 1999 and who have continually resided in the United States since December 30, 1998, unless they are eligible for late initial registration. An extension of TPS does not change the required dates of continuous physical presence and residence in the United States. However, late initial registration is possible in some circumstances. In order to qualify for late initial registration, applicants must meet the original continuous physical presence

and residency requirements and they must demonstrate that during the initial registration period they:

- Were in a valid nonimmigrant status, or had been granted voluntary departure, or any relief from removal;
- Had an application for change of status, adjustment of status, asylum, voluntary departure, or any relief from removal pending or subject to further review or appeal; or
- Were the spouse or child of an alien currently eligible to be a TPS registrant.

Applications for late initial registration must be submitted no later than 60 days from the expiration or termination of the alien's previous status.

Section 244 of the Immigration and Nationality Act authorizes the Attorney General to grant TPS to aliens in the United States who are nationals of countries where armed conflict, natural disaster or other extraordinary conditions have created a temporary situation to which return is either unsafe or unfeasible.

Honduras and Nicaragua join Bosnia, Burundi, Kosovo Province in the state of Serbia-Montenegro, Liberia, Montserrat, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Angola and Sudan as countries currently designated for TPS. The United States also granted TPS to Lebanon from March 1991 to March 1993; Kuwait, from March 1991 to March 1992; and Rwanda, from June 1994 to June 1995.