



Department of Justice

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ATTORNEY GENERAL ANNOUNCES 12-MONTH EXTENSION OF TEMPORARY PROTECTED STATUS FOR NATIONALS OF SIERRA LEONE

WASHINGTON, D.C. - The Department of Justice today announced a twelve-month extension to the Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for nationals of Sierra Leone. This extension, which covers approximately 2,209 Sierra Leone nationals, will be in effect from November 2, 2002 until November 2, 2003.

Under this extension, those who already have TPS benefits are eligible to remain and work in the United States for an additional twelve months and continue to maintain their status. There are approximately 2,209 nationals of Sierra Leone (or aliens having no nationality who last habitually resided in Sierra Leone) who are eligible for re-registration. Since this is not a re-designation of TPS for Sierra Leone, those eligible must have been continuously physically present and continuously resided in the United States since November 9, 1999.

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 that are subject to ongoing armed conflict, environmental disaster, or other extraordinary and temporary conditions.

The Departments of Justice and State, as well as the National Security Council, are actively and closely monitoring conditions in Sierra Leone. It was not possible for the Attorney General to determine, prior to the sixty-day period prescribed by statute, whether the conditions for TPS designation continue to be met. If the Attorney General does not make the required determination prior to the sixty-day deadline, the TPS designation is automatically extended for an additional period of six months.

As an exercise of discretion, the Attorney General has decided to extend TPS for twelve months, rather than the automatic period of six months, in order to allow a sufficient period of time to monitor further developments in Sierra Leone.

All current TPS beneficiaries from Sierra Leone must re-register to stay eligible for the program. While the designation of Sierra Leone under the TPS program was extended automatically by virtue of statute, individual TPS beneficiaries must still comply with re-registration requirements in order to maintain their benefits through November 2, 2003.

To re-register for the TPS extension, an applicant must submit Form I-821 (Application for Temporary Protected Status), Form I-765 (Application for Employment Authorization) and two identification photographs to the local INS district office by December 30, 2002.

If the applicant is only seeking to re-register for TPS, there is no filing fee. However, all applicants who also seek an extension of employment authorization must submit a \$120 filing fee with Form I-765 by December 30, 2002. Applicants may request a fee waiver in accordance with the regulations.

Applicants for an extension of TPS benefits do not need to submit new fingerprints nor the \$50 fee. Children who are beneficiaries of this status and have reached the age of 14, but have not been previously fingerprinted,

must pay the \$50 fingerprint fee with their application for extension.

Individuals should submit their re-registration package to the INS district office with jurisdiction over their place of residence during the sixty-day re-registration period that begins October 31, 2002 until December 30, 2002.

Nationals of Sierra Leone (or aliens having no nationality who last habitually resided in Sierra Leone) who previously have not applied for TPS may be eligible to apply under late initial registration provisions.

A late initial registrant must file a complete application package, including supporting documentation and all applicable fees, in accordance with the regulations. In addition to the requirements described above, a late initial registrant must submit the \$50 processing fee with Form I-821 and, if 14 years of age or older, the \$50 fingerprint fee.

TPS beneficiaries who need to travel outside the United States during the coming year must receive advance parole from their local INS office prior to departing the United States. Advance parole allows an individual to travel abroad and return to the United States, and is issued on a case-by-case basis. Individuals who are granted Temporary Protected Status may apply for advance parole by filing Form I-131 at their local INS district office.

An application for TPS does not affect an application for asylum or any other immigration benefit, and vice versa. Denial of an application for asylum, or any other immigration benefit, does not affect an applicant's TPS eligibility, although the grounds for denying one form of relief may also be grounds for denying TPS.

No later than 60 days prior to the November 2, 2003 expiration of this extension, the Attorney General will determine whether the conditions for TPS designation continue to be met in Sierra Leone at that time, or whether TPS should be terminated when the current extension of TPS expires.

Notice of that determination, including the basis for it, will be published in the Federal Register.

If the TPS designation is extended, an alien who has received benefits must re-register under the extension in order to maintain them. If, however, the Attorney General terminates the TPS designation, beneficiaries will return to the same immigration status they maintained before TPS (unless that status had since expired or been terminated), or to any other status they may have acquired while registered.

Accordingly, if an alien had no lawful immigration status prior to receiving TPS and did not obtain any status during the period, he or she will revert to the unlawful status upon termination of the TPS designation.

All forms are available from the toll-free INS Forms line, 1-800-870-3676, or from the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) website at www.ins.gov.

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