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## **NGOs Condemn Administration’s Failure to Designate Temporary Protected Status for Venezuela**

Washington, D.C.—In a July 11 [letter](#) to Senator Dick Durbin (D-IL), Acting U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) Director Ken Cuccinelli indicated that the administration will not designate Temporary Protected Status, or TPS, for Venezuela. TPS for Venezuela could provide life-saving protection for at least 72,000 people, ensuring they are not forced to return to the humanitarian emergency that has caused more than 4 million people to flee the country. A recent [report](#) documents the extent of the crisis in Venezuela and why TPS is clearly warranted under the law.

**[Isabella](#), a Venezuelan national in the United States with a long-pending asylum case**, says that TPS would be a blessing. She adds, “I have no family in Venezuela, nowhere to go, everyone has left. We’ve seen a lot of people die, a lot of people struggling, our country crushed, our country lost everything. I saw my family dissolve because we had to separate.”

**Renier, another Venezuelan national, has a child with a serious heart condition who would be at risk in Venezuela.** Renier says returning “would be like a death sentence for my family. There is no security, no access to anything there.”

**Oscar Chacon, Co-founder and Executive Director of Alianza Americas**, stated: “Back in March 2019, the Trump administration stated its concern for the well being of the people of Venezuela and Nicaragua. At that time, Alianza Americas suggested that one concrete measure that President Trump can take to protect nationals of these two countries is to designate them for TPS protections. TPS designation would allow Venezuelans to remain in the United States until there is a peaceful resolution that ensures the well being of all citizens. Republican officials raised their voices urging TPS designation for Venezuela such as [Senators Marco Rubio \(R-FL\)](#) and Ted Cruz (R-TX). We call on the Trump Administration to match its words of concern to humanitarian action, with a TPS designation for Venezuela.”

In [December 2018 Senator Marco Rubio said](#), “Granting this protection will provide a temporary solution to many Venezuelans who fear returning to their homeland due to the ongoing crisis and extraordinarily difficult conditions.” In April 2019 another high profile Republican spoke in support of TPS for Venezuelans, “Temporary Protected Status will allow Venzeuelans fleeing violence to live and work here legally and contribute to our state’s diverse communities until it is safe for them to return home,” [Senator Lindsey Graham \(R-SC\) said in a statement](#).

**Isabel Vinent, Deputy Director of the Florida Immigrant Coalition**, stated: “Despite the Trump administration voicing concerns over the well-being of Venezuelans, we are now witnessing another example of the hypocrisy constantly displayed by the administration when it comes to immigration and foreign policy. Trump could, with the stroke of a pen, grant status that would give protections through TPS for Venezuelans residing in the United States but unfortunately he continuously uses that community as a political football to rile up his own support. We condemn this decision to not grant TPS for Venezuelans and we call on elected officials like Florida Senators Marco Rubio and Rick Scott to call on protections for Venezuelans and TPS holders from other nations that have suffered under the Trump administration.”

**Anna Gallagher, Executive Director of the Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc.**, stated: “By continuing to merely ‘study’ the situation in Venezuela, the administration is abdicating its responsibility to protect vulnerable Venezuelans in the United States from having to return to their dangerously violent country. Food, medicine and electricity have become rare commodities there, making it an unsafe environment for anyone. The administration must follow the law, which calls for TPS to be allowed for people affected by exactly that kind of upheaval. Lives hang in the balance.”

**Mariam Iskajyan, Policy and Advocacy Program Manager at Win Without War**, who recently visited the Venezuela-Colombia border, stated: “The Trump administration’s refusal to grant TPS shows how little it cares about Venezuelan lives. By continuing to deport people into a raging crisis, the United States is actively trapping refuge-seekers in suffering. This inhumane position only builds upon other failed and immoral U.S. policies towards Venezuela, including threatening military force, undermining diplomatic efforts, and blanket sanctions that exacerbate the humanitarian emergency. Taken together, these actions send a horrific message to regional countries and the broader global community that the United States does not value upholding international, moral, and legal responsibilities. We urge Congress to condemn the administration’s cruelty and put forward values-driven solutions that protect, not jeopardize and harm, the lives of human beings.”

**Lariza Dugan-Cuadra, Executive Director of CARECEN San Francisco**, stated: “The failure of the U.S. government to extend TPS to Venezuelans highlights this administration’s hypocrisy and their willingness to further destabilize the region. It is hard to ignore the irony of a government that publicly denounces the conditions forcing Venezuelans to flee while at the same time it advances economic sanctions that exacerbate this humanitarian crisis.”

**Abel Nuñez, Executive Director of CARECEN DC:** “The Trump administration’s call for regime change puts politics before human lives. By failing to authorize TPS for Venezuelans, which could be done simply with the stroke of a pen, he leaves vulnerable a population that could be part of the solution to the crisis in Venezuela. These families, under TPS, could provide stability for their families and support to ending the Venezuelan plight. If the more than 72,000 Venezuelans in the US are deported back to their country, it will only put them in danger and prolong the suffering of the Venezuelan people.

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