

No Safety in a Warzone: Why TPS is needed for Syria



By Lisa Parisio with Kiyanoush Razaghi



CATHOLIC LEGAL
IMMIGRATION
NETWORK, INC.

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The Catholic Legal Immigration Network calls for the extension of TPS for Syria, which was designated for that status due to ongoing armed conflict and other conditions.

With its civil war showing no signs of ending, Syria's humanitarian crisis continues unabated as well. As Catholics and as Americans, our responsibility to the Syrian people is clear—we must stand with them and do everything in our power to assist them as they seek safety and protection for their families.

Especially at this time, it is also crucial that the United States not miss yet another opportunity to send a clear signal that we welcome our Muslim brothers and sisters.

JEANNE ATKINSON

Executive Director, The Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc.

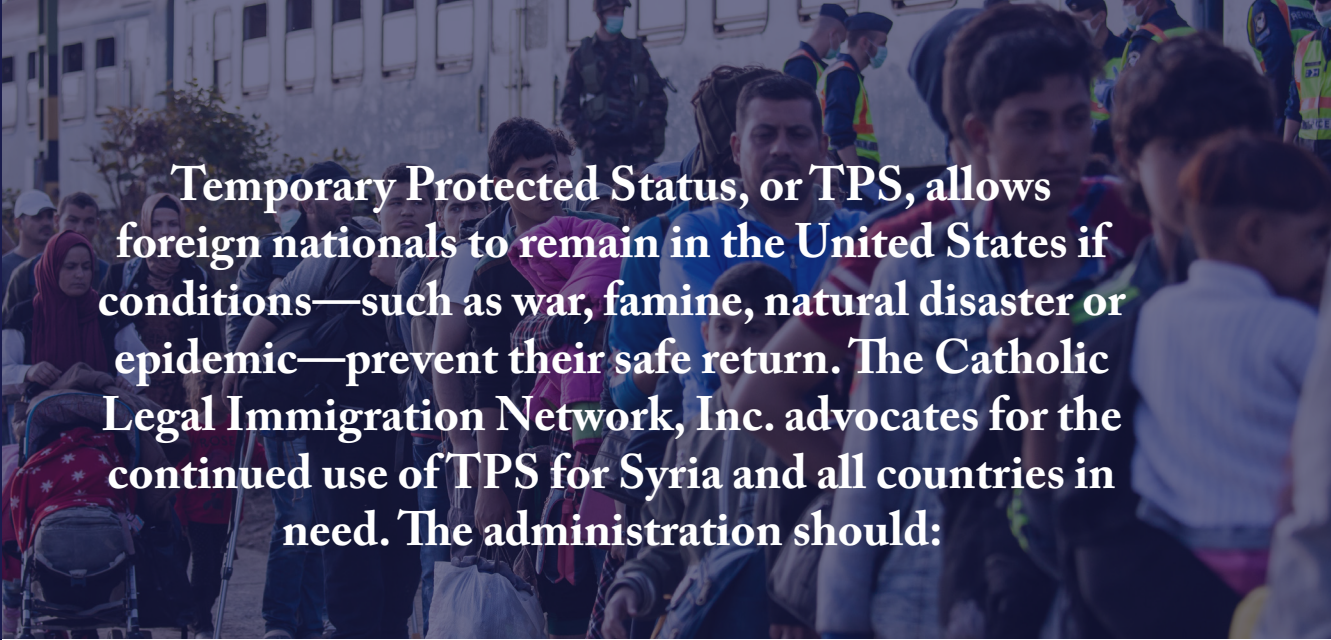


EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report describes the acute need for the administration to extend Temporary Protected Status, or TPS, for Syria. Ongoing armed conflict as well as extraordinary and temporary conditions continue to make the safe return of Syrian nationals impossible. Syria is now in the seventh year of a catastrophic civil war that has shocked the world's conscience and created the largest refugee crisis since World War II. Civilians in Syria suffer loss of infrastructure and widespread displacement. They are subjected to siege warfare and lack of access to food, water and medical aid. They suffer violence, brutality and torture at the hands of the Syrian government, the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, or ISIL, and other actors.

In addition to documenting country conditions, this report contains specific recommendations for the administration and demonstrates how TPS is a vital tool in promoting U.S. interests. The Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc., or CLINIC, unequivocally calls on the administration to continue to protect Syrians here in the United States as well as those elsewhere in the world who are desperately seeking to save their own lives and the lives of their families.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE ADMINISTRATION REGARDING TEMPORARY PROTECTED STATUS FOR SYRIA



Temporary Protected Status, or TPS, allows foreign nationals to remain in the United States if conditions—such as war, famine, natural disaster or epidemic—prevent their safe return. The Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc. advocates for the continued use of TPS for Syria and all countries in need. The administration should:

1

Continue to extend TPS for Syria in 18-month increments until the country recovers from the war as well as the other extraordinary and temporary conditions that prevent Syrian TPS holders from safely returning to their homeland.

2

In addition to the 18-month extension, follow the practice of redesignating TPS for Syria in order to adjust the “continuous residence” date, or the date by which a Syrian person needed to be in the U.S. to qualify for TPS, in order to extend protection to those who have more recently arrived in the U.S. from Syria.

3

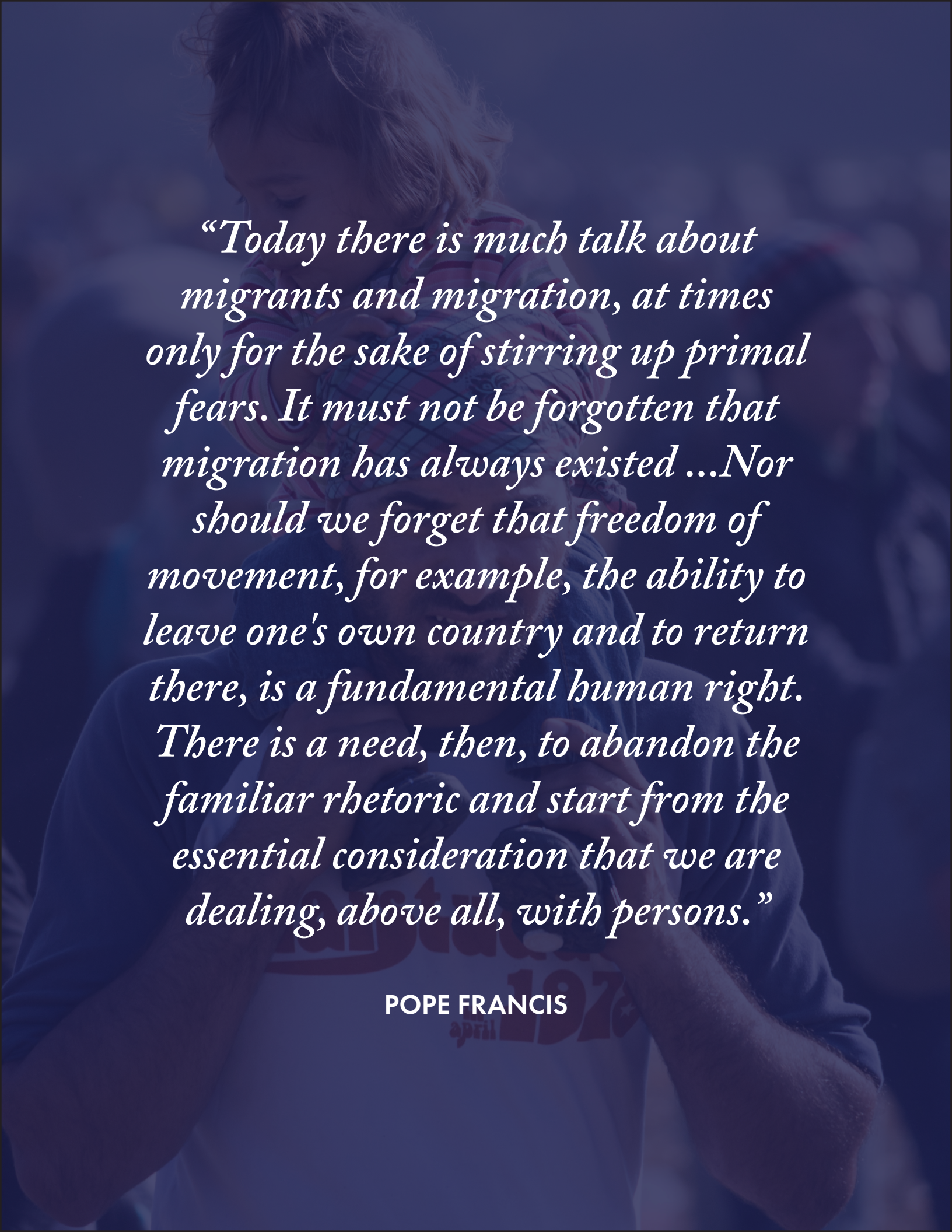
Follow the process for making TPS extension determinations according to the law, which requires consultation with appropriate government agencies such as the State Department, timely publication of Federal Register notices and extending TPS as country conditions continue to warrant it.

4

Engage and consult with experts in civil society in the U.S., Syria and elsewhere in the Middle East to better understand conditions in Syria and the region.

5

Encourage and work with Congress to create a permanent solution for Syrian and other TPS holders who have been in the U.S. for many years because their countries have remained unsafe. TPS for Syria should not be terminated until there is a legislative solution in place to ensure there is no gap in protection for vulnerable people.



“Today there is much talk about migrants and migration, at times only for the sake of stirring up primal fears. It must not be forgotten that migration has always existed ...Nor should we forget that freedom of movement, for example, the ability to leave one's own country and to return there, is a fundamental human right. There is a need, then, to abandon the familiar rhetoric and start from the essential consideration that we are dealing, above all, with persons.”

POPE FRANCIS

INTRODUCTION

Temporary Protected Status is a life-saving humanitarian immigration program grounded in the international concept of *nonrefoulement*, meaning that a country will not return a person to the hands of their persecutor or to conditions that threaten life or freedom. As a signatory of the United Nations Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees, the U.S. has committed to honoring this principle and Congress has codified it through the laws governing TPS, asylum and refugees.¹

Syria first received its TPS designation in 2012, shortly following the outbreak of civil war. Since then, the U.S. has extended and redesignated TPS for Syria three times. Through redesignation, the United States has pushed back the date by which a Syrian person needed to be in the U.S. to qualify for TPS, thereby extending protection to more recently arrived Syrians. Today, at least 5,800 Syrians receive protection from the horrific conflict and humanitarian crisis in Syria through TPS.

Over the course of the civil war and occupation by ISIL, a Syrian war monitor found that nearly half a million Syrian people have been killed.² The United Nations reports that 13.1 million people inside Syria need help.³ Of those, 6.1 million people are internally displaced and nearly 3 million are trapped in besieged areas, with little to no chance of receiving humanitarian aid.⁴ More than 5.4 million people have fled the country.⁵

Under the law, Homeland Security Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen must decide whether to continue extending TPS for Syria by Jan. 30, 2018.⁶ All evidence obliges the secretary to grant an 18-month extension as well as redesignate Syria for TPS in order to protect more people. A failure to extend TPS for Syria would be an affront to the long-standing and cherished American principles that compelled Congress to establish it. It would be a decision to send at least 5,800 Syrians back to an active war zone, where they would be exposed to violence, be at risk of imprisonment and torture and face a lack of food, water, medical care and other basic necessities.

¹ Carla Argueta, *Temporary Protected Status: Current Immigration Policies and Issues*, CONGRESSIONAL RESEARCH SERVICE (Jan. 17, 2017), <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/homesec/RS20844.pdf>.

² *Syrian war monitor says 465,000 killed in six years of fighting*, REUTERS (March 13, 2017), www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-casualties/syrian-war-monitor-says-465000-killed-in-six-years-of-fighting-idUSKBN16K1Q1.

³ *Syria emergency* (Dec. 7, 2017), www.unhcr.org/en-us/syria-emergency.html.

⁴ *Id.*

⁵ *Id.*

⁶ INA §244 (b)(3)(A); 81 Fed. Reg. 50533 (Aug. 1, 2016), www.federalregister.gov/documents/2016/08/01/2016-17933/extension-and-redesignation-of-syria-for-temporary-protected-status.



Syrian refugees and others seeking safety in new countries wait at the Budapest Keleti railway station in Hungary.

In light of the ongoing crisis in Syria and atrocities committed against the Syrian people, Pope Francis,⁷ as well as the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops,⁸ have firmly and repeatedly called on world leaders to take action to protect the Syrian people. In line with the law and our Catholic values, CLINIC urges the administration to:

1. Continue to extend TPS for Syria in 18-month increments until the country recovers from the war and the other extraordinary and temporary conditions that prevent Syrian TPS holders from safely returning to their homeland.
2. In addition to the 18-month extension, follow the practice of redesignating TPS for Syria in order to adjust the “continuous residence” date, or the date by which a Syrian person needed to be in the U.S. to qualify for TPS, in order to extend protection to people who have more recently arrived in the U.S. from Syria.
3. Follow the process for making TPS extension determinations according to the law, which requires consultation with appropriate government agencies such as the State Department, timely publication of Federal Register notices and extending TPS as country conditions continue to warrant it.

⁷ See e.g., ‘Find a political solution to Syrian crisis,’ Pope Francis urges international community, CATHOLIC HERALD (July 5, 2016), www.catholicherald.co.uk/news/2016/07/05/find-a-political-solution-to-syrian-crisis-pope-francis-urges-international-community/.

⁸ *Syrian Refugee Crisis*, U.S. CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS, www.usccb.org/about/migration-policy/syrian-refugee-crisis.cfm.

4. Engage and consult with experts in civil society in the U.S., Syria, and elsewhere in the Middle East to better understand conditions in Syria and the region.
5. Encourage and work with Congress to create a permanent solution for Syrian and other TPS holders who have been in the U.S. for many years because their countries have remained unsafe. TPS for Syria should not be terminated until there is a legislative solution in place to ensure there is no gap in protection for vulnerable people.

TPS: AN OVERVIEW OF THE LAW

Congress established TPS through the Immigration Act of 1990 to protect foreign nationals in the U.S. from being returned to their home country if it became unsafe during the time they were in the United States.⁹ Under the law, the secretary of the Department of Homeland Security, or DHS, may designate a country for TPS in three scenarios:¹⁰

- A. Ongoing armed conflict (such as a civil war) that would pose serious threat to the personal safety of nationals;¹¹
- B. An environmental disaster (such as earthquake or hurricane) or an epidemic and the foreign state is temporarily unable to adequately handle the return of its citizens and the foreign government has requested TPS for its nationals;¹² or
- C. Other extraordinary and temporary conditions that prevent people from the country from safely returning home as long as it is not against the national interest of the United States to allow them to remain.¹³

TPS may be designated or extended in six, 12 or 18-month increments.¹⁴ At least 60 days before the end of a designation period, the secretary of Homeland Security must review country conditions in consultation with appropriate agencies of the government, for example the State Department, and determine whether conditions warrant extension.¹⁵ The decision must be published on a timely basis in the Federal Register.¹⁶ Under the law, TPS may be extended as many times as necessary, as long as the dangerous country conditions continue.¹⁷ TPS can also be redesignated for a country if necessary.¹⁸

⁹ INA §244.

¹⁰ INA §244 (b).

¹¹ INA §244 (b)(1)(A).

¹² INA §244 (b)(1)(B).

¹³ INA §244 (b)(1)(C).

¹⁴ INA §244 (b)(2)(B).

¹⁵ INA §244 (b)(3)(A).

¹⁶ *Id.*

¹⁷ *See generally* INA §244.

¹⁸ *Id.*

Nationals of a TPS-designated country and people without nationality who last lived in a TPS-designated country, and who were physically in the United States when the designation or redesignation was made and meet certain requirements, may be eligible for TPS.¹⁹ If granted, applicants are temporarily protected from deportation and may receive work authorization to support themselves while they remain in the U.S.²⁰

In certain limited circumstances, TPS holders may apply for authorization to travel abroad.²¹ TPS does not provide a path to lawful permanent resident status or citizenship.²²

TPS FOR SYRIA: BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Syria was first designated for TPS in March 2012 under the section of the Immigration and Nationality Act that permits designation due to extraordinary and temporary conditions within the country that prevent nationals from returning to the country safely.²³ Since the original designation, as the civil war and ISIL occupation developed and expanded, Syria has been redesignated.²⁴ Due to the horrific conditions in Syria, the country currently qualifies for and is designated for TPS under *two* sections of the Immigration and Nationality Act: extraordinary and temporary conditions *and* an ongoing armed conflict within the country.²⁵ Due to the ongoing conflict and humanitarian crisis on the ground, returning Syrians to the country would pose a serious risk to their personal safety.²⁶

In the spring of 2011, violence erupted in Syria as the government, led by Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, began using military force to suppress political demonstrations.²⁷ Within the first year of Assad's brutal assault against the Syrian people, 7,500 civilians were killed and hundreds of thousands were internally displaced.²⁸ As part of its suppression efforts, the Assad government also began conducting mass, indiscriminate arrests and torturing its own people.²⁹ The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, or UNHCR, reported that at least 35,000 people had fled the country seeking safety in Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan by Feb. 2012.³⁰ However, the Jordanian government reported that

¹⁹ INA §244 (a)(1).

²⁰ INA §244 (a)(1)(A); INA §244 (a)(1)(B).

²¹ INA §244 (c)(4)(B).

²² See generally INA §244.

²³ INA §244 (b)(1)(C); 77 Fed. Reg. 19026 (March 29, 2012), www.federalregister.gov/documents/2012/03/29/2012-7498/designation-of-syrian-arab-republic-for-temporary-protected-status.

²⁴ 78 Fed. Reg. 36223 (June 17, 2013), www.federalregister.gov/documents/2013/06/17/2013-14101/extension-and-redesignation-of-syria-for-temporary-protected-status.

²⁵ 81 Fed. Reg. 50533 (Aug. 1, 2016), www.federalregister.gov/documents/2016/08/01/2016-17933/extension-and-redesignation-of-syria-for-temporary-protected-status.

²⁶ INA §244 (b)(1)(A); INA §244 (b)(1)(C); 81 Fed. Reg. 50533 (Aug. 1, 2016), www.federalregister.gov/documents/2016/08/01/2016-17933/extension-and-redesignation-of-syria-for-temporary-protected-status.

²⁷ 77 Fed. Reg. 19026 (March 29, 2012), www.federalregister.gov/documents/2012/03/29/2012-7498/designation-of-syrian-arab-republic-for-temporary-protected-status.

²⁸ *Id.*

²⁹ *Id.*

³⁰ *Id.*



By Feb. 2012, UNHCR reported that at least 35,000 Syrians had fled to neighboring Lebanon, Turkey and Jordan.

approximately 80,000 Syrians had fled to Jordan alone during that time.³¹

Since the original 2012 designation, the United States has continuously extended TPS for Syria in 18-month increments, the maximum time period allowed by law,³² and has redesignated the country each time.³³ These redesignations have moved up the continuous residence date—the date by which an applicant for TPS must have been continuously present and residing in the U.S.—allowing more Syrian nationals in the U.S. to be eligible to apply for TPS and to be protected from the atrocities in Syria.³⁴

Since the original TPS designation, the protracted conflict in Syria has mushroomed into the largest refugee and humanitarian crisis since World War II. In Dec. 2012, UNHCR reported that 900,000

³¹ *Jordan says it hosts over 80,000 Syrian refugees*, AL ARABIYA NEWS (Feb. 26, 2012) www.english.alarabiya.net/articles/2012/02/26/197135.html.

³² INA §244 (b)(3)(A).

³³ 77 Fed. Reg. 19026 (March 29, 2012), www.federalregister.gov/documents/2012/03/29/2012-7498/designation-of-syrian-arab-republic-for-temporary-protected-status; 78 Fed. Reg. 36223 (June 17, 2013), www.federalregister.gov/documents/2013/06/17/2013-14101/extension-and-redesignation-of-syria-for-temporary-protected-status; 80 Fed. Reg. 245 (Jan. 5, 2015), www.federalregister.gov/documents/2015/01/05/2014-30871/extension-and-redesignation-of-the-syrian-arab-republic-for-temporary-protected-status; 81 Fed. Reg. 50533 (Aug. 1, 2016), www.federalregister.gov/documents/2016/08/01/2016-17933/extension-and-redesignation-of-syria-for-temporary-protected-status.

³⁴ 78 Fed. Reg. 36223 (June 17, 2013), www.federalregister.gov/documents/2013/06/17/2013-14101/extension-and-redesignation-of-syria-for-temporary-protected-status; 80 Fed. Reg. 245 (Jan. 5, 2015), www.federalregister.gov/documents/2015/01/05/2014-30871/extension-and-redesignation-of-the-syrian-arab-republic-for-temporary-protected-status; 81 Fed. Reg. 50533 (Aug. 1, 2016), www.federalregister.gov/documents/2016/08/01/2016-17933/extension-and-redesignation-of-syria-for-temporary-protected-status.

people were displaced.³⁵ By early 2013, the U.N. reported that at least 70,000 civilians had been slaughtered.³⁶ Horrors of the war have included and continue to include: large-scale civilian massacres; indiscriminate arrests; torture and sexual and gender-based violence at the hands of the Assad regime as well as and other factions; the use of children as human shields; sieges and blockades that have cut millions of people off from water, food, medical and humanitarian aid; airstrikes and the use of barrel bombs (explosives filled with shrapnel); and chemical weapons attacks.³⁷

In the summer of 2014, a new, devastating dynamic unfolded as the Islamic State captured huge swaths of territory in Syria and Iraq, declaring Raqqa, Syria, as the capital of their new state.³⁸ ISIL systematically cut civilians off from any communications with the outside world.³⁹ They lashed, stoned, tortured and beheaded people for “morality” infractions, starved, and denied humanitarian aid to and persecuted and killed people who were believed to be LGBT and others who were condemned as immoral or not belonging to the Islamic State.⁴⁰ The added “third front” of the Islamic State in Syria—along with Assad and the rebellion—brought even more widespread loss and destruction of infrastructure and internal displacement. The refugee crisis grew to immense proportions.⁴¹

In the most recent TPS extension of Aug. 2016, the U.S. government said that by Nov. 2015, there had been at least \$270 billion in damage to Syria’s infrastructure.⁴² Half of Syrian hospitals had been destroyed as well as 2.1 million homes and 7,000 schools.⁴³ The availability of water had decreased by 50 percent, leaving 16 million people in need of water assistance for survival.⁴⁴ The U.S. government described “unprecedented food insecurity,” with at least 6.3 million people in Syria in need of emergency food assistance.⁴⁵ Chemical weapons attacks, widespread and indiscriminate torture of civilians, conscription of child soldiers, air strikes and use of barrel bombs persisted.⁴⁶

35 Fed. Reg. 36223 (June 17, 2013), www.federalregister.gov/documents/2013/06/17/2013-14101/extension-and-redesignation-of-syria-for-temporary-protected-status.

36 *Id.*

37 77 Fed. Reg. 19026 (March 29, 2012), www.federalregister.gov/documents/2012/03/29/2012-7498/designation-of-syrian-arab-republic-for-temporary-protected-status; 78 Fed. Reg. 36223 (June 17, 2013), www.federalregister.gov/documents/2013/06/17/2013-14101/extension-and-redesignation-of-syria-for-temporary-protected-status; 80 Fed. Reg. 245 (Jan. 5, 2015), www.federalregister.gov/documents/2015/01/05/2014-30871/extension-and-redesignation-of-the-syrian-arab-republic-for-temporary-protected-status; 81 Fed. Reg. 50533 (Aug. 1, 2016), www.federalregister.gov/documents/2016/08/01/2016-17933/extension-and-redesignation-of-syria-for-temporary-protected-status.

38 80 Fed. Reg. 245 (Jan. 5, 2015), www.federalregister.gov/documents/2015/01/05/2014-30871/extension-and-redesignation-of-the-syrian-arab-republic-for-temporary-protected-status; Anne Barnard and Hwaida Saad, *Raqqa, ISIS ‘Capital,’ Is Captured, U.S.-Backed Forces Say*, THE NEW YORK TIMES (Oct. 17, 2017), www.nytimes.com/2017/10/17/world/middleeast/isis-syria-raqqa.html.

39 *The Raqqa diaries: life under isis rule*, THE GUARDIAN (Feb. 26, 2017) www.theguardian.com/books/2017/feb/26/the-raqqa-diaries-life-under-isis-rule-samer-mike-thomson-syria; Arwa Damon and Zeynep Bilginsoy, *Amid brazen, deadly attacks, gay Syrians tell of fear of ISIS persecution*, CNN (March 6, 2015), www.cnn.com/2015/03/05/middleeast/isis-lgbt-persecution/index.html.

40 *Id.*

41 81 Fed. Reg. 50533 (Aug. 1, 2016), www.federalregister.gov/documents/2016/08/01/2016-17933/extension-and-redesignation-of-syria-for-temporary-protected-status.

42 81 Fed. Reg. 50533 (Aug. 1, 2016), www.federalregister.gov/documents/2016/08/01/2016-17933/extension-and-redesignation-of-syria-for-temporary-protected-status.

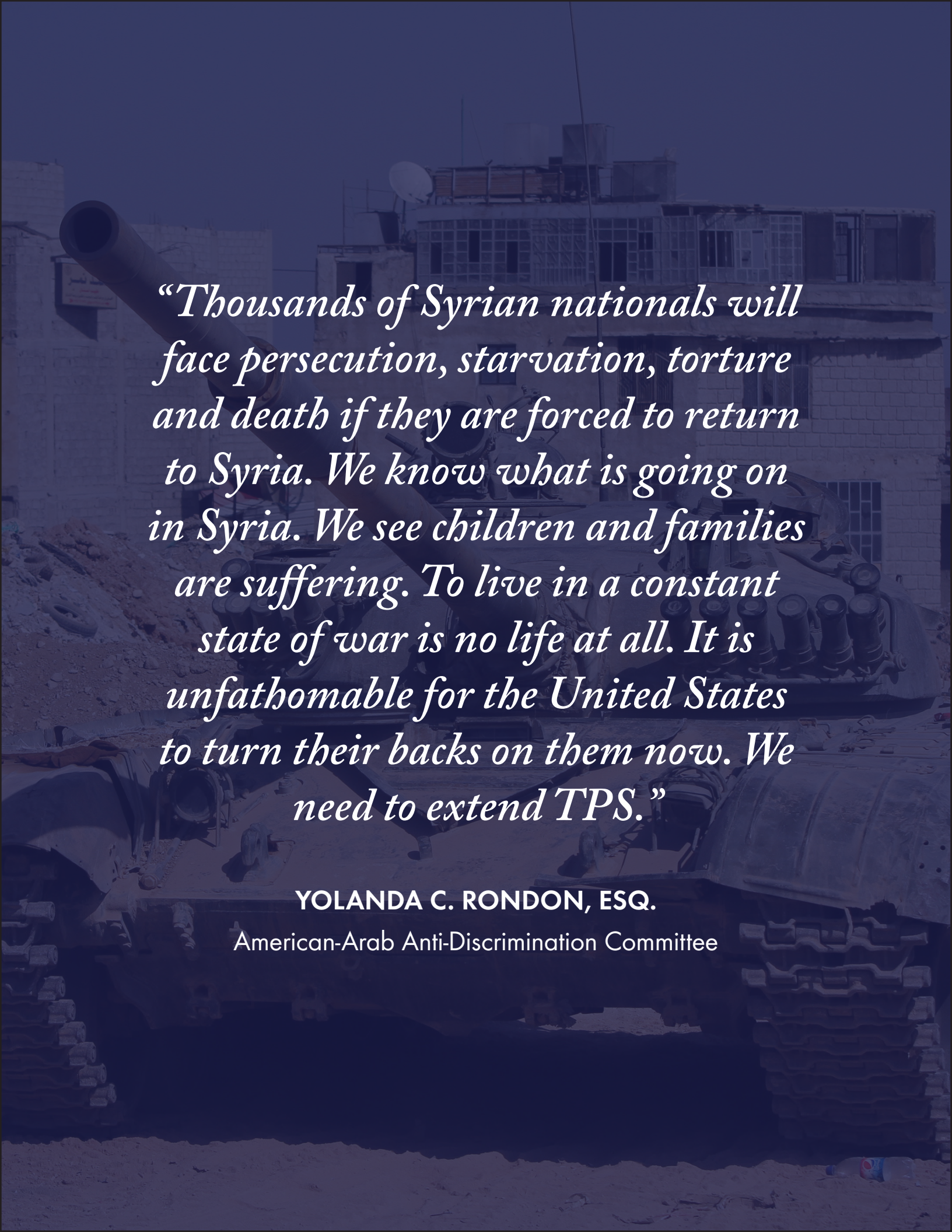
43 *Id.*

44 *Id.*

45 *Id.*

46 *Id.*





“Thousands of Syrian nationals will face persecution, starvation, torture and death if they are forced to return to Syria. We know what is going on in Syria. We see children and families are suffering. To live in a constant state of war is no life at all. It is unfathomable for the United States to turn their backs on them now. We need to extend TPS.”

YOLANDA C. RONDON, ESQ.

American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee

SYRIA IN 2018: CONDITIONS STILL WARRANT AN 18-MONTH EXTENSION

ONGOING ARMED CONFLICT IN SYRIA

The ongoing armed conflict in Syria that prompted the Aug. 1, 2016 extension and redesignation of TPS persists. Requiring the return of Syrian TPS holders to Syria would pose a serious threat to their safety.

In 2017 there was a marked shift in the ongoing combat in Syria as U.S.-backed Syrian Democratic Forces launched an offensive to eliminate ISIL.⁴⁷ By Oct. 2017, the Syrian Democratic Forces declared that they had defeated the Islamic State in Raqqa—the unofficial capital of the Islamic State, which had lost its physical territory in much of the country (as well as in Iraq).⁴⁸ This phase of the war came with huge costs; Raqqa and other cities, towns and villages have been leveled by the battles.⁴⁹ Analysts conclude that although ISIL may be physically defeated in much of Syria—including strategic strongholds—it is not eliminated and should be expected to continue its operations underground, much as it did before the largescale occupations of Iraq and Syria.⁵⁰ As recently as Nov. 2017 U.S. Defense Secretary, James Mattis has said U.S. forces will remain in Syria due to continued risks from ISIL and to work to prevent the rise of “ISIS 2.0.”⁵¹

The defeat of the Islamic State leaves a vacuum as the struggle for political control of Syria reshapes. Although the United States and Syrian Defense Forces have committed to turning Raqqa and liberated areas over to civilian control—which in itself is highly complex, contentious and involves multiple factions—Assad and the original factors remain that led to the civil war before Islamic State

⁴⁷ Mariya Petkova, *What will happen to post-ISIL Raqqa*, AL JAZEERA (Oct. 17, 2017), www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2017/10/sdf-captures-syria-raqqa-city-isil-171013110014050.html.

⁴⁸ Anne Barnard and Hwaida Saad, *Raqqa, ISIS ‘Capital,’ Is Captured, U.S.-Backed Forces Say*, THE NEW YORK TIMES (Oct. 17, 2017), www.nytimes.com/2017/10/17/world/middleeast/isis-syria-raqqa.html.

⁴⁹ *Id.*

⁵⁰ *Id.*

⁵¹ Mark Katkov, *Pentagon Says It’s Staying In Syria, Even Though ISIS Appears Defeated*, NPR (Nov. 17, 2017) www.npr.org/sections/parallels/2017/11/17/564620907/pentagon-says-its-staying-in-syria-even-though-isis-appears-defeated.



A soldier on watch in the city Ma'loula, Syria.

occupation.⁵² Assad's campaign of violence is active and persistent. In 2017, the U.N. documented that the Assad regime carried out seven chemical weapons attacks between March 1 and July 7, with devastating effects on civilians.⁵³ One such attack prompted the Trump administration to conduct airstrikes.⁵⁴

The future of Syria remains unclear. It seems ripe for new waves of violence. The United States has declared its commitment to ending the Assad regime, while Russia and Iran back Assad and his re-takeover of Syria.⁵⁵ Efforts to arrange ceasefires in 2016 and 2017 ultimately failed, with reports of the Syrian government continuing to use airstrikes, killing civilians in December 2017.⁵⁶ Lacking a viable diplomatic or political solution, or any indication that Assad will step aside, Syria remains an ongoing armed conflict and humanitarian crisis zone.

⁵² Mariya Petkova, *What will happen to post-ISIL Raqqa*, AL JAZEERA (Oct. 17, 2017), www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2017/10/sdf-captures-syria-raqqa-city-isil-171013110014050.html.

⁵³ Stephanie Nebehey, *Syrian government forces used chemical weapons more than two dozen times: U.N.*, REUTERS (Sept. 6, 2017), www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-warcrimes/syrian-government-forces-used-chemical-weapons-more-than-two-dozen-times-u-n-idUSKCN1BH18W.

⁵⁴ *Id.*

⁵⁵ Mark Katkov, *Pentagon Says It's Staying In Syria, Even Though ISIS Appears Defeated*, NPR (Nov. 17, 2017), www.npr.org/sections/parallels/2017/11/17/564620907/pentagon-says-its-staying-in-syria-even-though-isis-appears-defeated; Johnathan Landay, *No role for Assad in Syria's future: Tillerson*, REUTERS (Oct. 26, 2017), www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-tillerson/no-role-for-assad-in-syrias-future-tillerson-idUSKBN1CV2GY.

⁵⁶ Rym Momtaz, *Inside the failed Syria cease fire*, ABC NEWS (Sept. 21, 2016), www.abcnews.go.com/International/inside-failed-syria-cease-fire/story?id=42261635; Mohammed Adow, *Syria: Ceasefire fails to stop devastating airstrikes*, AL JAZEERA (Dec. 3, 2017), www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/12/syria-ceasefire-fails-stop-devastating-airstrikes-171203165712877.html.

EXTRAORDINARY AND TEMPORARY CONDITIONS PERSIST

In addition to the ongoing armed conflict in Syria, extraordinary and temporary conditions remain, making the safe return of Syrian nationals an impossibility at this time and warranting an 18-month extension of TPS.

Catastrophic loss of infrastructure and functioning economy

Seven years of devastating war and airstrikes have left much of Syria in ruins. There has been more than \$270 billion in damages to the country's infrastructure alone.⁵⁷ The World Bank reports that over a quarter of Syria's homes are gone and half of the country's schools and hospitals have been destroyed.⁵⁸ Such a massive loss of infrastructure is catastrophic for the Syrian society.

Since 2010, Syria's economy has shrunk by more than 70 percent.⁵⁹ The war has cost Syria at least four times the country's GDP.⁶⁰ During the first five years of the conflict, 538,000 jobs disappeared annually.⁶¹ Recent reports say that more than 75 percent of Syrians are currently unable to work or attend school or training due to the conflict.⁶² In addition to the collapse of the Syrian economy as a result of the war, the number of people left to rebuild the country when the war finally ends has been greatly diminished. The set of available skills among the people who may remain will be depleted, due to nearly a decade out of work and the younger generations' lack of access to education.⁶³ At least 45 percent of Syrian children are out of school.⁶⁴ The loss of infrastructure and barriers to education faced by Syrian refugee children in countries of first asylum (who could theoretically one day return to their home country) have created a lost generation.⁶⁵

When the conflict ends in Syria, economic recovery will take many years. Each year the war continues slows the potential recovery time, as more people are killed or flee and more damage is done.⁶⁶ In 2014, the U.N. estimated it would take the Syrian economy at least 30 years to recover from the damage of the first years of the war.⁶⁷

⁵⁷ 81 Fed. Reg. 50533 (Aug. 1, 2016), www.federalregister.gov/documents/2016/08/01/2016-17933/extension-and-redesignation-of-syria-for-temporary-protected-status.

⁵⁸ *Civil war has cost Syrian economy 226 billion dollars, says World Bank*, DAILY SABAH (July 10, 2017), www.dailysabah.com/syrian-crisis/2017/07/10/civil-war-has-cost-syrian-economy-226-billion-dollars-says-world-bank.

⁵⁹ *The World Fact Book: Syria*, CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY, www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/sy.html.

⁶⁰ *The Visible Impacts of the Syrian War May Only be the Tip of the Iceberg*, THE WORLD BANK (July 18, 2017), www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2017/07/18/the-visible-impacts-of-the-syrian-war-may-only-be-the-tip-of-the-iceberg.

⁶¹ *Civil war has cost Syrian economy 226 billion dollars, says World Bank*, DAILY SABAH (July 10, 2017), www.dailysabah.com/syrian-crisis/2017/07/10/civil-war-has-cost-syrian-economy-226-billion-dollars-says-world-bank.

⁶² *Id.*

⁶³ *Id.*

⁶⁴ *Id.*

⁶⁵ Katrina Stano, *Syria's lost generation: Refugee children at work*, AL JAZEERA (Aug. 12, 2017), www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2017/07/syria-lost-generation-refugee-children-work-170704134535613.html.

⁶⁶ *Id.*

⁶⁷ *Socioeconomic and Damage Assessment: UNRWA Microfinance clients in Syria*, UNITED NATIONS DEPARTMENT OF MICROFINANCE (2013), www.unrwa.org/sites/default/files/socioeconomic_and_damage_assessment_report.pdf.

Destruction of health care infrastructure and targeted killings of medical workers

Experts have called the systematic and deliberate destruction of medical facilities and targeted killing of medical workers in Syria “the weaponization of health care.”⁶⁸ Trauma patients, the sick, pregnant women and others are denied medical assistance as a weapon of war.⁶⁹ Medical journals have called Syria the most dangerous place for health care providers, as facilities are bombed (repeatedly in many cases) and workers are murdered.⁷⁰ One major hospital in Hama is estimated to have been bombed 33 times since 2014, including seven times in 2017.⁷¹ In all, at least half of public hospitals and health care centers in the country have been closed.⁷² Many more are only partially operational.⁷³

Two thirds of all health care workers have fled Syria.⁷⁴ There have been at least 814 documented intentional killings of doctors, nurses, pharmacy students and other health workers.⁷⁵ Syrian government forces have been documented as using “double tap” tactics—waging a first wave attack on a site and then attacking again once medical first responders arrive.⁷⁶ In addition to lack of treatment for trauma and the effects of chemical weapons attacks, those suffering from the outbreaks of typhoid, scabies, cholera and tuberculosis⁷⁷ in Syria are left with reduced access to treatment. Siege warfare, a common tactic, has resulted in scores of people having little or no access to medical supplies or necessary medications.⁷⁸

Widespread and indiscriminate use of torture against civilians

Widespread torture and crimes against humanity at the hands of Assad, ISIL and other actors is ongoing and largely unchecked. Studies and interviews with those who survived torture in Syrian prisons show that arrests and torture are arbitrary, with the majority of those tortured having no history of political participation or affiliation.⁷⁹ Survivors reported being rounded up at their homes and workplaces and taken away for no discernable reason.⁸⁰ Torture was not used to try to extract

68 Sarah Boseley, *Syria ‘the most dangerous place on earth for healthcare providers’ – study*, THE GUARDIAN (March 14, 2017), www.theguardian.com/world/2017/mar/15/syria-conflict-study-condemns-weaponisation-of-healthcare.

69 *Id.*

70 *Id.*

71 *Id.*

72 *Health care a casualty of six years of war in the Syrian Arab Republic*, World Health Organization (March 15, 2017) www.who.int/mediacentre/news/releases/2017/syria-six-years/en/

73 *Id.*

74 *Id.*

75 Marc Silver, *How Many Health Workers Have Been Killed in Syria*, NPR (March 15, 2017), www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoda/2017/03/15/520264056/how-many-health-workers-have-been-killed-in-syria

76 81 Fed. Reg. 50533 (Aug. 1, 2016), www.federalregister.gov/documents/2016/08/01/2016-17933/extension-and-redesignation-of-syria-for-temporary-protected-status.

77 *Id.*

78 See e.g., Hashem Ahelbarra, *Assad siege of Syria’s Eastern Ghouta an ‘outrage’ – UN*, AL JAZEERA (Nov. 1, 2017), www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/11/assads-siege-syrias-eastern-ghouta-outrage-171101110216963.html.

79 *Reclaiming Hope, Dignity, and Respect: Syrian and Iraqi Torture Survivors in Jordan*, CENTRE FOR VICTIMS OF TORTURE (2016), www.cvt.org/ReclaimingHopeDignityRespect.

80 *Id.*



A woman walks near a house in the city of Homs that was destroyed in the fighting.

information, but for the sake of torture itself, they said.⁸¹ The intent is to spread fear.⁸² Sexual and gender-based violence is also pervasive.⁸³ Children are not spared.⁸⁴

At least 35 methods of torture have been documented in Syrian prisons.⁸⁵ People are shoved into rubber tires and beaten; women are forced to watch and listen to the rape of other women before being raped themselves; people have holes drilled into their bodies with power drills; their bones and teeth are stomped and broken.⁸⁶ Some are beaten viciously on a daily basis, or have electricity applied to their genitals.⁸⁷ Other tactics include starvation, dehydration, sleep deprivation, withholding access to sanitation and medical care for injuries, being forced to endure extreme temperatures or made to kill other prisoners, including their own family members.⁸⁸

81 *Id.*

82 *Id.*

83 *Id.*

84 *Id.*

85 *At least 13,000 Hanged in Mass Executions at Syrian Prison: Amnesty International*, NBC NEWS (Feb. 7, 2017), www.nbcnews.com/news/world/least-13-000-hanged-syrian-prison-2011-amnesty-international-n717671.

86 *Reclaiming Hope, Dignity, and Respect: Syrian and Iraqi Torture Survivors in Jordan*, CENTRE FOR VICTIMS OF TORTURE (2016), www.cvt.org/ReclaimingHopeDignityRespect.

87 Lizzie Dearden, *Syria war: Doctor reveals horrific torture in prison as Amnesty International estimates 17,723 detainees killed*, INDEPENDENT (Aug. 17, 2016), www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/syria-war-news-latest-doctor-reveals-horrific-torture-in-prison-as-amnesty-international-estimates-a7196171.html; *At 15 I was tortured in Assad's prisons. I escaped but thousands still suffer*, THE GUARDIAN (June 10, 2017), www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2017/jun/26/months-tortured-assad-prisons-syria.

88 *Id.*

Similar torture methods are used by ISIL in its prison system. Survivors reported being shoved into tires and beaten or having gasoline poured on them and set on fire.⁸⁹ Other forms of torture they reported include being hung from ceilings and door frames for days, having their arms and legs tied to boards and bent backwards until their spines snap, electrocution, and being bitten by their captors.⁹⁰ ISIL promotes sexual and gender-based violence as a tool of war.⁹¹ The sale of women as sexual slaves is a major revenue source.⁹² Estimates show the Islamic State may have earned as much as \$38 million in 2017 through its sexual slave trade.⁹³ Although the group has lost significant territory in Syria, its trafficking and slavery routes are reported to be well-protected and strengthening.⁹⁴

It may never be known just how many civilians have been tortured and slaughtered in Syrian government and ISIL prisons and by other factions. A 2017 report shows that in just one government prison, at least 13,000 people have been hanged since the beginning of the war.⁹⁵ Some estimates show that at least 60,000 people have been tortured to death by the Syrian government alone.⁹⁶

Siege warfare and food and water crisis

The U.S. government cites “unprecedented food insecurity,” from lost agricultural production, destroyed infrastructure—including mills and other food production sites—and collapsed markets and systems.”⁹⁷ In September 2017, the U.S. Agency for International Development reported that nine million people in Syria are unable to meet their basic food needs.⁹⁸ The food crisis is exacerbated by siege warfare tactics, including deliberately cutting off humanitarian aid to civilians, practiced by both ISIL⁹⁹ and the Syrian government.¹⁰⁰ In October 2017 the U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights labeled the food crisis and severe malnutrition as a result of such tactics in a suburb of Damascus, “an outrage.”¹⁰¹ This followed new photos and videos of infants and children who were just hours away from starving to

89 Jack Moore, *ISIS torture methods revealed: sitting with severed heads, fuel dousing and the flying carpet*, NEWSWEEK (Aug. 15, 2017), www.newsweek.com/torture-methods-isis-revealed-sitting-severed-heads-fuel-dousing-and-flying-650828.

90 *Id.*

91 Victoria Crow, *Inside my life as an ISIS sex slave*, NEW YORK POST (Oct. 11, 2017), www.nypost.com/2017/10/11/inside-my-life-as-an-isis-sex-slave/.

92 *Id.*

93 *Id.*

94 *Id.*

95 Martin Chulov, *Up to 13,000 secretly hanged in Syrian jail, says Amnesty*, The Guardian (Feb. 7, 2017), www.theguardian.com/world/2017/feb/07/up-to-13000-secretly-hanged-in-syrian-jail-says-amnesty.

96 *Id.*

97 81 Fed. Reg. 50533 (Aug. 1, 2016), www.federalregister.gov/documents/2016/08/01/2016-17933/extension-and-redesignation-of-syria-for-temporary-protected-status.

98 *Food assistance fact sheet: Syria*, USAID (Sept. 21, 2017), www.usaid.gov/syria/food-assistance.

99 Frederick Pleitgen, *Dier Ezzor: Relief in part of Syrian city after 3-year ISIS siege is broken*, CNN (Sept. 16, 2017), www.cnn.com/2017/09/16/middleeast/syria-deir-ezzor-siege-isis/index.html.

100 Hashem Ahelbarra, *Assad siege of Syria's Eastern Ghouta an 'outrage' – UN*, AL JAZEERA (Nov. 1, 2017), www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/11/assads-siege-syrias-eastern-ghouta-outrage-17110110216963.html.

101 *Id.*

death came to light.¹⁰² This was despite an April 2017 agreement that was to allow aid to reach civilians in the area.¹⁰³

In addition to the supply problems for food, medical supplies and medications, access to water has been reduced to less than 50 percent of what it was before the war.¹⁰⁴ Besides a 15-year drought—considered the worst in at least 500 years¹⁰⁵—widespread power outages, sieges, intentional destruction of infrastructure and deliberate contamination of have left civilians without access to water.¹⁰⁶ In 2016, the U.S. government reported that 16 million Syrians were relying on water assistance *to survive*.¹⁰⁷ In 2017, the siege of Damascus by the Syrian government left 5.5 million people without access to drinking water.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰² Associated Press, *Syrian food shortage in besieged area an 'outrage': UN official*, GLOBAL NEWS (Oct. 27, 2017), www.globalnews.ca/news/3828430/syria-food-medical-supplies-shortage/.

¹⁰³ *Id.*

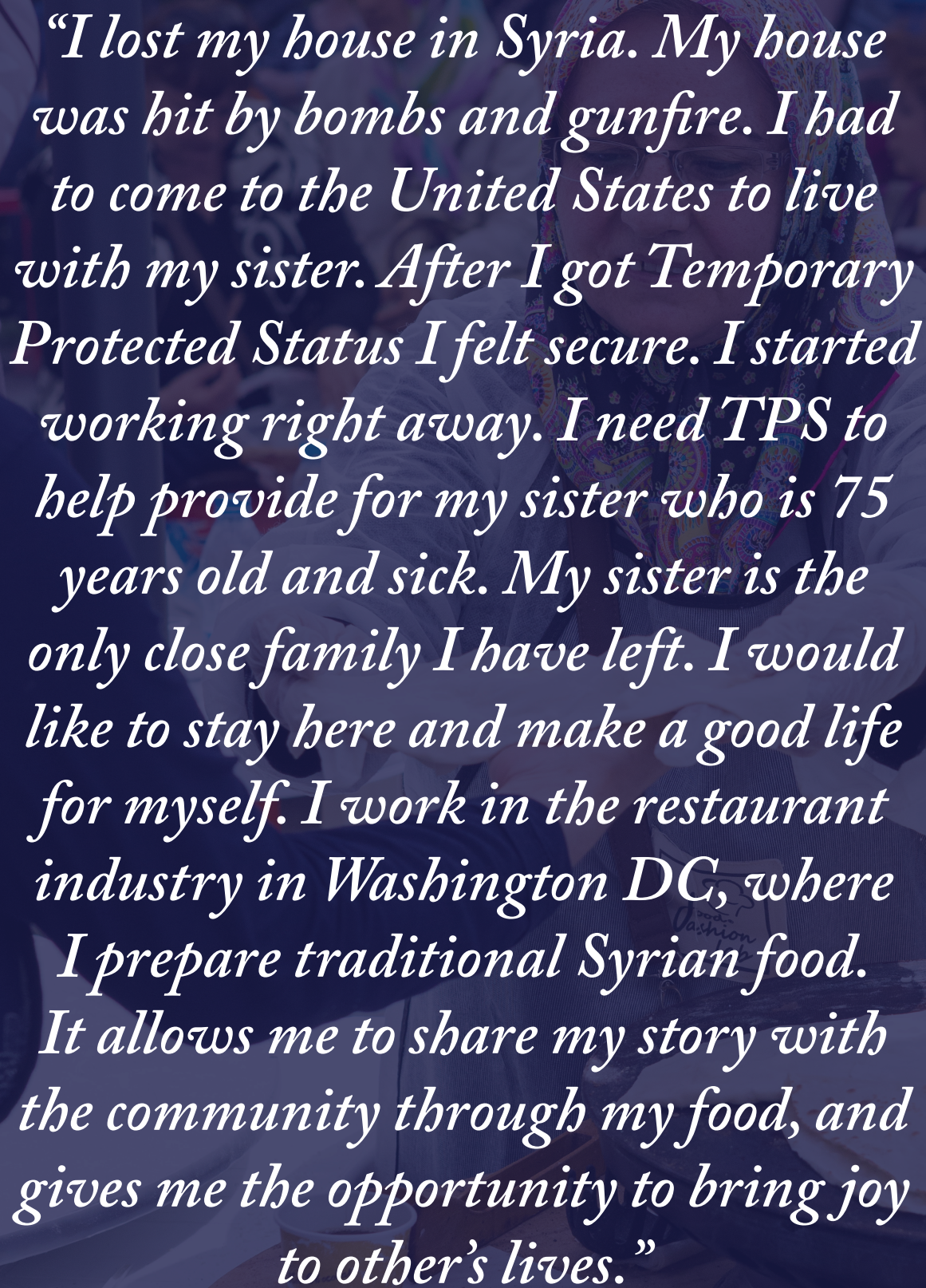
¹⁰⁴ 81 Fed. Reg. 50533 (Aug. 1, 2016), www.federalregister.gov/documents/2016/08/01/2016-17933/extension-and-redesignation-of-syria-for-temporary-protected-status.

¹⁰⁵ Elaisha Stokes, *The Drought That Preceded Syria's Civil War Was Likely the Worst in 900 Years*, VICE NEWS (March 3, 2016), www.news.vice.com/article/the-drought-that-preceded-syrias-civil-war-was-likely-the-worst-in-900-years.

¹⁰⁶ 81 Fed. Reg. 50533 (Aug. 1, 2016), www.federalregister.gov/documents/2016/08/01/2016-17933/extension-and-redesignation-of-syria-for-temporary-protected-status; Diana Darke, *Syria conflict: The biblical river at the heart of a water war*, BBC NEWS (Jan. 8, 2017), www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-38532338.

¹⁰⁷ 81 Fed. Reg. 50533 (Aug. 1, 2016), www.federalregister.gov/documents/2016/08/01/2016-17933/extension-and-redesignation-of-syria-for-temporary-protected-status.

¹⁰⁸ *UN: Syria jets deliberately hit Damascus water supply*, AL JAZEERA (March 14, 2017), www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/03/syria-jets-

A woman wearing a colorful headscarf and a white apron is working in a restaurant. She is standing behind a counter, and there are various items on the counter, including a coffee cup and some papers. The background is slightly blurred, showing other people and the interior of the restaurant.

“I lost my house in Syria. My house was hit by bombs and gunfire. I had to come to the United States to live with my sister. After I got Temporary Protected Status I felt secure. I started working right away. I need TPS to help provide for my sister who is 75 years old and sick. My sister is the only close family I have left. I would like to stay here and make a good life for myself. I work in the restaurant industry in Washington DC, where I prepare traditional Syrian food. It allows me to share my story with the community through my food, and gives me the opportunity to bring joy to other’s lives.”

ANONYMOUS SYRIAN TPS HOLDER

Provided by American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee

IT IS IN U.S. NATIONAL INTERESTS TO PROTECT SYRIAN TPS HOLDERS

For countries such as Syria that are designated for TPS due to extraordinary and temporary conditions—in addition to its designation for ongoing armed conflict¹⁰⁹—the law also requires that it not be against U.S. national interests for nationals of a country to remain in the United States.¹¹⁰ Over the course of TPS for Syria, the U.S. government has repeatedly found that it is not against national interests for Syrian TPS holders to be protected in the United States.¹¹¹ In addition to regularly extending TPS for the maximum 18-month increment,¹¹² the United States has redesignated TPS each time, pushing back the date by which a Syrian national must have been continuously present in the U.S.¹¹³ This allows more recently-arrived Syrians to apply for protection.¹¹⁴

Like all TPS holders, Syrians have the right to work in the United States,¹¹⁵ contributing to the economy, and enriching U.S. communities. Syrian immigrants in general are notable for their high rate of business ownership and for creating American jobs.¹¹⁶ Eleven percent of Syrian immigrants in the

[deliberately-hit-damascus-water-supply-170314110322695.html](https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2016/08/01/2016-17933/extension-and-redesignation-of-syria-for-temporary-protected-status).

¹⁰⁹ 81 Fed. Reg. 50533 (Aug. 1, 2016), www.federalregister.gov/documents/2016/08/01/2016-17933/extension-and-redesignation-of-syria-for-temporary-protected-status.

¹¹⁰ INA §244 (b)(1)(C).

¹¹¹ *Id.*

¹¹² INA §244 (b)(2)(B).

¹¹³ 78 Fed. Reg. 36223 (June 17, 2013), www.federalregister.gov/documents/2013/06/17/2013-14101/extension-and-redesignation-of-syria-for-temporary-protected-status; 80 Fed. Reg. 245 (Jan. 5, 2015), www.federalregister.gov/documents/2015/01/05/2014-30871/extension-and-redesignation-of-the-syrian-arab-republic-for-temporary-protected-status; 81 Fed. Reg. 50533 (Aug. 1, 2016), www.federalregister.gov/documents/2016/08/01/2016-17933/extension-and-redesignation-of-syria-for-temporary-protected-status.

¹¹⁴ *Id.*

¹¹⁵ INA §244 (a)(1)(B).

¹¹⁶ David Dyssegaard Kallick, Cyierra Roldan, and Silva Mathema, *Syrian Immigrants in the United States*, CENTER FOR AMERICAN PROGRESS (Dec. 13, 2016), www.americanprogress.org/issues/immigration/reports/2016/12/13/294851/syrian-immigrants-in-the-united-states-a-receiving-community-for-todays-refugees/.

workforce are business owners, as opposed to 4 percent of all immigrants and 3 percent of native-born U.S. citizens owning businesses.¹¹⁷ Syrians are also known for being highly educated, with 38 percent of the Syrian immigrant population in the U.S. holding at least a four-year college degree.¹¹⁸

Like Syrian refugees, Syrian TPS holders are among the most highly vetted immigrants in the United States. During each registration period—of which there have been four since TPS was originally designated for Syria¹¹⁹—TPS holders undergo background checks and must submit biometrics to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services.¹²⁰ TPS is not available to people who have been convicted of any felony or two or more misdemeanors in the United States, have persecuted others because of their nationality, race, religion, political opinion, or membership in any particular social group, or have engaged in or incited terrorist activity.¹²¹

¹¹⁷ *Id.*

¹¹⁸ *Id.*

¹¹⁹ 77 Fed. Reg. 19026 (March 29, 2012), www.federalregister.gov/documents/2012/03/29/2012-7498/designation-of-syrian-arab-republic-for-temporary-protected-status; 78 Fed. Reg. 36223 (June 17, 2013), www.federalregister.gov/documents/2013/06/17/2013-14101/extension-and-redesignation-of-syria-for-temporary-protected-status; 80 Fed. Reg. 245 (Jan. 5, 2015), www.federalregister.gov/documents/2015/01/05/2014-30871/extension-and-redesignation-of-the-syrian-arab-republic-for-temporary-protected-status; 81 Fed. Reg. 50533 (Aug. 1, 2016), www.federalregister.gov/documents/2016/08/01/2016-17933/extension-and-redesignation-of-syria-for-temporary-protected-status.

¹²⁰ Temporary Protected Status, www.uscis.gov/humanitarian/temporary-protected-status.

¹²¹ *Id.*



Ölçüm: 160 - 180 cm, Boy
Kategori: 70 - 110 cm Göğüs
Kullanım: Can yeleği, bastan geçirilmez, bel
kısak, a'kadan öne geçirilip
kullanılır.
Tahminler: Yastık olarak kullanılmayın.
Yasadışı olarak kullanılmayın.
İçki ve alkol kullanılmayın.
Bazı otomatik kullandığınız sonra
kullanılmayın.
Seri no ile yavaş, hızlıdır.
SERİ NO:

A FUTURE IN THE UNITED STATES, A DEATH SENTENCE IN SYRIA

“It was non-stop bombardments; explosions everywhere. Electricity would be out during large chunks of the day. Prices shot up.” Monzer Shakally, a 21-year-old TPS holder from Syria who lives in Iowa, describes what it was like living in Damascus when he finally decided he couldn’t take it any longer. He was 16.

His father drove him to the border with Lebanon, and he hasn’t been back since. Shakally’s brother, a physician in Minnesota, found a school in Des Moines, Iowa—Dowling Catholic High School—that would sponsor Shakally for a student visa. He switched his status to TPS after he graduated, and then went on to the University of Iowa, where he is now a biology major.

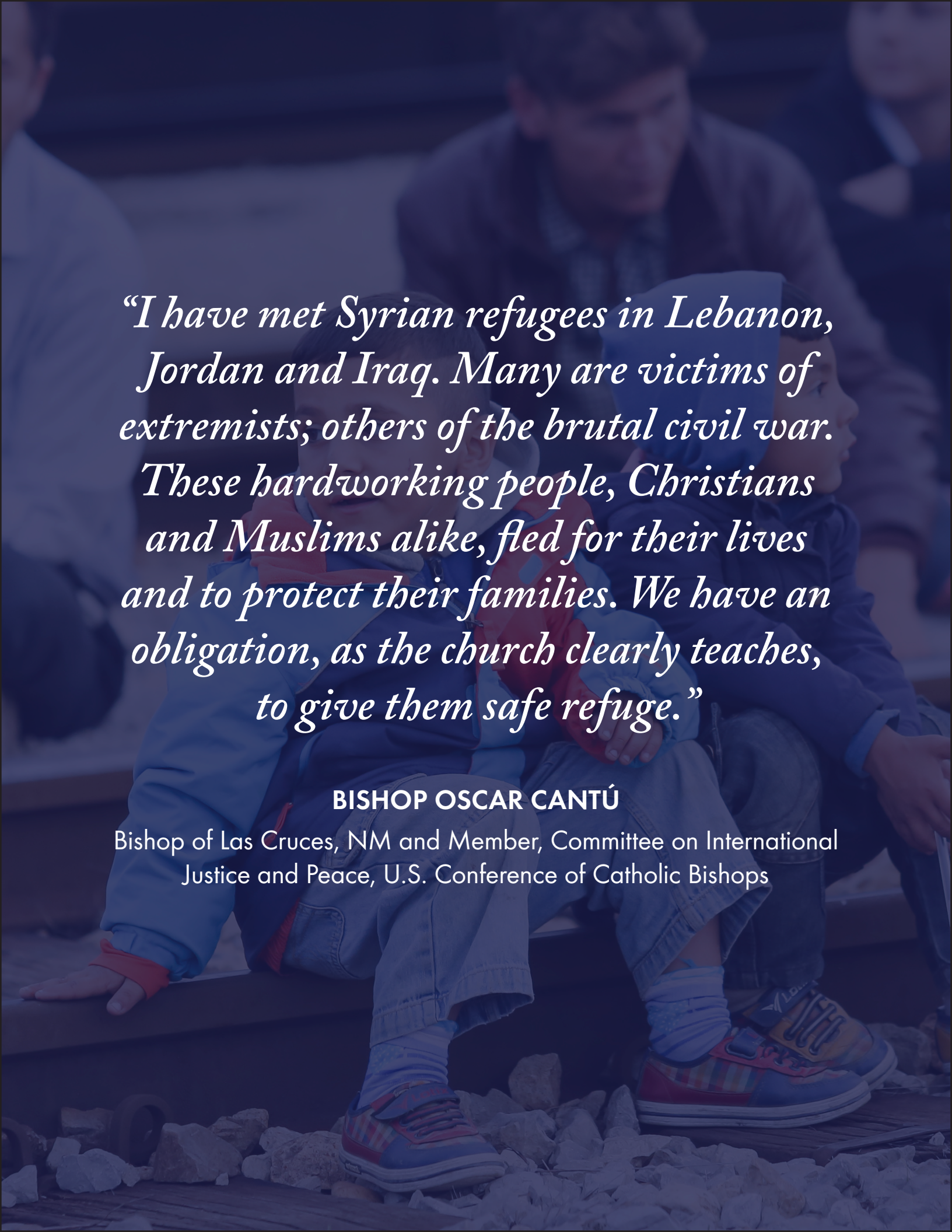
Shakally has been accepted to dentistry school and is due to start in August. He was excited at the prospect of a career as a dentist, but now he knows his future is uncertain: “If you asked any legal expert a few months ago if TPS for Syria was going to be renewed, he would have said yes, but it’s all up in the air now.”

He hasn’t seen his family since he left Syria five years ago, but he tries to check up on them frequently. “The situation has gotten worse,” says Shakally. “The bombardments are still there. Every once in a while a random mortar shell will fall in the middle of a shopping area and will kill a few people. When [my parents] leave their home, they’re not really sure if they are going to be able to go back that night.”

Asked what it would be like to have to go back in case TPS doesn’t get extended, Shakally’s response is unequivocal: “I would be arrested at the border, and most likely be killed.” An activist during his teenage years in Syria, he is wanted by the Assad regime for speaking out against the government.

Some Syrian TPS holders may have other options for legal status. But Shakally has been waiting four years for a resolution of his application for asylum, one of those potential paths. And he can’t apply for a student visa—he needs a passport, but the Syrian government won’t issue documents to someone who is wanted in his home country. “If TPS doesn’t get renewed, [having to return] will be a death sentence for most Syrians in the United States.”





“I have met Syrian refugees in Lebanon, Jordan and Iraq. Many are victims of extremists; others of the brutal civil war. These hardworking people, Christians and Muslims alike, fled for their lives and to protect their families. We have an obligation, as the church clearly teaches, to give them safe refuge.”

BISHOP OSCAR CANTÚ

Bishop of Las Cruces, NM and Member, Committee on International Justice and Peace, U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops

CONCLUSION

In late 2017, the landscape in Syria shifted with the military defeat of the Islamic State from their strategic stronghold in Raqqa and many ISIL fighters being killed, pushed out of the country or forced underground. These battles to defeat ISIL brought about mass death and destruction, which will have a long-lasting impact.

Despite these changes, the Assad government and the civil war, the reasons why Syria was designated for TPS before ISIL, remain. The country will now enter a new dangerous and pivotal phase, as the government continues to wage war to retake the country from opposition forces. In all, Syria remains unstable, destroyed and wholly unsafe for the return of Syrian TPS holders at this time.

Accordingly, the administration must extend TPS for Syria for 18 months and redesignate TPS in order to provide protection to more recently arrived individuals and families. A failure to extend TPS for Syria would be inconsistent with the law and Congressional intent and would be a shocking affront to Catholic values and the pillars of our American society. It would amount to a death sentence for many. For others, their lives will be in limbo. Some who are deported would likely flee Syria again, adding to the numbers of those living in crowded countries of first asylum. Others may take additional risks by seeking out human traffickers to reach countries with more opportunity. The U.S. government must stand with Syrian TPS holders and renew its long-standing commitment to international principles not to return people to the hands of their persecutors or to countries where their lives and freedom would be threatened.

Finally, the administration must call on Congress to act swiftly to create a long-term solution to ensure Syrian TPS holders and their families are permanently protected from the horrifying and catastrophic consequences of the conflict in Syria.

“

The Catholic Legal Immigration Network calls for the extension of TPS for Syria, which was designated for that status due to ongoing armed conflict and other conditions. With its civil war showing no signs of ending, Syria's humanitarian crisis continues unabated as well. As Catholics and as Americans, our responsibility to the Syrian people is clear—we must stand with them and do everything in our power to assist them as they seek safety and protection for their families.

”

JEANNE ATKINSON

Executive Director, The Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc.

ABOUT THE CATHOLIC LEGAL IMMIGRATION NETWORK, INC.

CLINIC provides vital legal resources, guidance, and support to a network of more than 330 legal, community-based and Catholic immigration programs across the country. CLINIC affiliates are in 47 states, with 1,200 attorneys and accredited representatives, who in turn assist hundreds of thousands of vulnerable and low-income immigrants each year. In addition to legal and program capacity building assistance, CLINIC conducts national-level administrative advocacy and provides state and local support to affiliates on the ground combating anti-immigrant legislation.



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