December 13, 2019

Acting Secretary Chad Wolf
Department of Homeland Security
3801 Nebraska Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20016

RE: REQUEST FOR 18-MONTH EXTENSION AND REDESIGNATION OF TEMPORARY PROTECTED STATUS FOR SOMALIA

Dear Acting Secretary Wolf:

We, the 140 undersigned faith-based organizations and faith leaders from across traditions, call on you to extend for 18 months and redesignate Temporary Protected Status, or TPS, for Somalia in order to protect the 500 current Somali TPS holders and their families as well as those who would benefit from redesignation. Our request is rooted in morality, humanity, and the teachings of our faiths: we must welcome, protect, and offer hospitality to those in need. The Quran teaches: “They love those who emigrated to them and find not any desire in their hearts of what the emigrants were given, but rather give them preference over themselves, even though they are in privation. Whoever is protected from the greediness of his own soul, then those will be successful.” 1 Similarly, the Torah commands, “You shall have one standard for stranger and citizen alike: for I the LORD am your God.” 2

Like the foundations of our faiths, offering help, safety, and security to those seeking refuge is the underpinning of our society. These are the American values that led Congress to create TPS. A failure to provide the maximum protection for Somalis in the United States now would go against the cherished principles that define our country.

An 18-month extension and redesignation of TPS for Somalia is warranted as the conditions that existed for the 2018 extension of TPS for Somalia remain, and, in some cases, have worsened. Layers of conflict involving intra-clan and intra-security forces, al-Shabaab, Somali government forces and international actors continue to impact civilians. 3 In 2019, al-Shabaab has carried out attacks nearly every day, killing at least 1,600 people. 4 Civilians in conflict areas endure indiscriminate attacks, including aerial bombardments and improvised explosive devices. 5 People are also subjected to destruction or confiscation of their land and livestock, taxation (which includes forced conscription of children), and extortion. 6 While there have been some very recent improvements in political stability and security in a few regions of the country, the head of the United Nations Mission in Somalia warns that serious concerns remain. 7 According to the State Department, people should not travel to Somalia due to “crime, terrorism, kidnapping and piracy.” 8 In spring 2019, President Trump extended the declaration of

1 Surat Al-Hashr 59:9.
2 Leviticus 24:22.
6 Id.
a state of national emergency in Somalia, citing, among other things, “acts of violence committed against civilians in Somalia.”

Armed conflict, forced evictions and the effects of climate change, including both flooding and extreme drought—which have both worsened the violence and led to catastrophic food shortages—continue to drive mass displacement. At least 2.6 million people are displaced in Somalia today, an increase from 2018. According to the Norwegian Refugee Council, nearly a quarter of a million people were displaced in the first six months of 2019 alone, with more than 100,000 people newly displaced due to drought. Forced evictions—related to property owners taking advantage of already vulnerable people and other factors—are on the rise. There were nearly 40,000 more forced evictions in 2018 than 2017, amounting to approximately five percent of total displacements. In general, the millions of displaced people in Somalia have limited or no access to water or food, healthcare, sanitation or safe housing. Many live at risk of sexual violence and other human rights violations, including arbitrary arrest.

One third of Somalia’s population, approximately 4.2 million people, are in need of humanitarian aid and protection. At least 2 million are living in areas where delivering aid is difficult if not impossible due to active conflict and other factors, such as lack of infrastructure. From April to June 2019, Somalia received below average rainfall, which, building on drought conditions in 2017 and 2018, is severely affecting food crops, livestock, and access to clean water. Approximately 2.3 million people in Somalia do not have access to safe water. Grain harvests are expected to be 50 percent below average in 2019. The Famine Early Warning System finds that 2.1 million people will be facing crisis level food shortages for the remainder of the year. Approximately one million children under age five are projected to suffer acute malnutrition through mid-2020. While average to above average rainfall is projected for October to December, which may alleviate some of the suffering, experts also warn of potential flooding, which can also destroy food sources. Lack of access to medical care also persists. In 2018, the World Health Organization estimated that 5.4 million people in Somalia needed health care.

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15 Id.
17 Id.
21 In the aftermath of drought, up to 2.1 million people face Crisis (IPC Phase 3) or worse outcomes, FAMINE EARLY WARNING SYSTEM (August 2019), http://fews.net/east-africa/somalia/food-security-outlook-update/september-2019.
22 Id.
23 Id.
Displacement and environmental factors continue to facilitate the spread of disease, including cholera.\textsuperscript{25} Rates of maternal and infant mortality in Somalia are among the highest in the world.\textsuperscript{26}

The humanitarian crisis in Somalia also continues to be characterized by a lack of private and public infrastructure and collapsed economy.\textsuperscript{27} Infrastructure in Somalia is targeted in conflict and displaced people are forced into unplanned settlements.\textsuperscript{28} Sixty-nine percent of people in Somalia are living in poverty, the sixth worst poverty rate in the world.\textsuperscript{29}

Earlier this year, Pope Francis reminded us, “A person’s dignity does not depend on them being a citizen, a migrant, or a refugee. Saving the life of someone fleeing war and poverty is an act of humanity.”\textsuperscript{30} In line with our belief and understanding of humanity as a common family, called to support and protect one another, we urge you to grant the maximum protection possible through 18-month extension and redesignation.

Sincerely,

\textbf{Faith Organizations (53)}

ADL (Anti-Defamation League)
African American Ministers In Action
American Friends Service Committee
Benedictine Sisters of Baltimore
Buddhist Action Coalition
Catholic Charities Archdiocese of Boston
Catholic Charities of Central & Northern Missouri/Refugee & Immigration Services
Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Washington
Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc.
Christian Reformed Church Office of Social Justice
Church World Service
Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd, U.S. Provinces
Congregation of Sisters of St. Agnes
Council on American-Islamic Relations
Council on American-Islamic Relations, New York (CAIR-NY)
Crossing Borders Dubuque
Daughters of Charity - USA
Disciples Refugee & Immigration Ministries
East Bay Sanctuary Covenant
Faith in Public Life
Franciscan Action Network


\textsuperscript{27} Somalia’s path to recovery, BROOKINGS INSTITUTE (Oct. 2, 2019), www.brookings.edu/blog/future-development/2019/10/02/somalias-path-to-stability/.


\textsuperscript{29} Somalia’s path to recovery, BROOKINGS INSTITUTE (Oct. 2, 2019), www.brookings.edu/blog/future-development/2019/10/02/somalias-path-to-stability/.

\textsuperscript{30} See https://twitter.com/Pontifex/status/1009400469314138112.
Friends Committee on National Legislation (Quakers)
Gainesville Interfaith Alliance for Immigrant Justice
Georgia Interfaith Public Policy Center
HIAS
Interfaith Welcome Coalition
Jesuit Social Research Institute
Justice for Muslims Collective
Justice, Peace and Reconciliation Commission, Priests of the Sacred Heart, US Province
Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service
Muslim Public Affairs Council
National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd
National Council of Churches
National Council of Jewish Women
NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice
New Sanctuary Movement of Philadelphia
Our Lady Queen of Peace
Province of St. Joseph of the Capuchin Order
Sisters of Charity of Nazareth Congregational Leadership
Sisters of Charity of Nazareth Western Province Leadership
Sisters of Mercy of the Americas - Institute Justice Team
Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, Indiana
Sisters of St. Dominic of Blauvelt, New York
Sisters of St. Francis
Sisters of St. Francis of the Neumann Communities
Sojourners
St. Francis Community Services
The Interfaith LGBTI Clergy Association
Together Colorado
Tri-State Franciscan Solidarity Table
Unitarian Universalist Service Committee
United University Church
Western NC Sanctuary Movement

**Faith Leaders (87)**

Br. Michael Potvin-Frost
Coordinator, Peace and Social Justice Committee, Karen Jackson
Dr. Donald N. Nichols
Dr. Grace Dyrness
Dr. Sister Mary Shaw
Dr. Timothy Helton
Earth and Social Justice Pastor, Doug Nelson
Elder Glenda Pawsey
Father Rick LaBrecque
Fr. Jim Hoffman OFM
Fr. Joseph Monahan
Immigration and Refugee Committee, Anne Diaw
Jim Myres, OFS
Lay Leader JL Angell
Minister to Migrants Larry Trent
Pastor Anne Hall
Pastor Carolyn Dipboye
Pastor Richard Fry
Pastoral Minister Maureen Sheehan
Rabbi Deborah Bronstein
Rabbi Dr. David Fox Sandmel
Rabbi Michael Feinberg
Rabbi Michael Rothbaum
Rev. Angie Boissevain
Rev. David Morton
Rev. Deacon Leeann Culbreath
Rev. Deniray Mueller
Rev. Diane Mettam
Rev. Dr. Allison Tanner
Rev. Dr. Leo Bistak
Rev. Dr. Lyle J. Dykstra
Rev. Dr. Paul Ziese
Rev. Dr. Randy Orso
Rev. Dr. Sharon Stanley-Rea
Rev. Dr. Sunny Kang
Rev. Emmanuel Orendain
Rev. Frank Bergen
Rev. Jim Conn
Rev. John Fernandes
Rev. Joseph Easley
Rev. Kay Woike
Rev. Kirsten Linford
Rev. Laura Speiran
Rev. Lydia Ferrante-Roseberry
Rev. Mark Lancaster
Rev. Mark Lukens
Rev. Paul Hagedorn
Rev. Robert Langseth
Reverend Michael Coburn
Reverend Patricia Mitchell
Sister Brigid Lawlor
Sister Brigid Mary Hart
Sister C Jean Hayen, BVM
Sister Carol Boschert
Sister Carole Freking
Sister Dee Peppard, BVM.
Sister Elizabeth Fuhr
Sister Emily TeKolste
Sister Joan Agro, O.P.
Sister Kathleen Carr
Sister Laetitia Bordes
Sister Mary Ann Penner
Sister Mary Cart
Sister Mary Dostal
Sister Mary Healey
Sister Mary Kay Mahowald
Sister Mary Synkewecz
Sister MaryEllen Meckley
Sister Nancy McCarthy
Sister Nancy McCarthy
Sister Nancy Miller
Sister Pat Reinhart
Sister Sally Duffy, SC
Sister Virginia Heldorfer
Sr. Barbara Battista
Sr. Carol Spiegel
Sr. Catherine Fedewa
Sr. Karem J. Hartman, SFP
Sr. Karen Conover
Sr. LaDonna Manternach
Sr. Marie Corr
Sr. Mary Bartosh
Sr. Mary Bradish
Sr. Teri Hadro, BVM
The Rev. Cecil Prescod
The Rev. Christine Payden-Travers
The Venerable Catherine Cooke