

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.”<sup>1</sup> Similarly, the Torah commands, “You shall have one standard for stranger and citizen alike: for I the LORD am your God.”<sup>2</sup>

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.<sup>3</sup> In 2019, al-Shabaab has carried out attacks nearly every day, killing at least 1,600 people.<sup>4</sup> Civilians in conflict areas endure indiscriminate attacks, including aerial bombardments and improvised explosive devices.<sup>5</sup> People are also subjected to destruction or confiscation of their land and livestock, taxation (which includes forced conscription of children), and extortion.<sup>6</sup> 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.<sup>7</sup> According to the State Department, people should not travel to Somalia due to “crime, terrorism, kidnapping and piracy.”<sup>8</sup> In spring 2019, President Trump extended the declaration of

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<sup>1</sup> Surat Al-Hashr 59:9.

<sup>2</sup> Leviticus 24:22.

<sup>3</sup> *World Report 2018: Somalia*, HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH (2018), [www.hrw.org/world-report/2018/country-chapters/somalia](http://www.hrw.org/world-report/2018/country-chapters/somalia).

<sup>4</sup> Max Bearak, *Twin al-Shabaab attacks in Somalia target U.S. and European Armed Forces*, THE WASHINGTON POST (Sept. 30, 2019), [www.washingtonpost.com/world/africa/twin-al-shabab-attacks-in-somalia-target-us-and-eu-armed-forces/2019/09/30/52505018-e376-11e9-a6e8-8759c5c7f608\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/africa/twin-al-shabab-attacks-in-somalia-target-us-and-eu-armed-forces/2019/09/30/52505018-e376-11e9-a6e8-8759c5c7f608_story.html).

<sup>5</sup> *2019 Humanitarian Needs Overview: Somalia*, UN OFFICE FOR THE COORDINATION OF HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS (Nov. 2018), <https://reliefweb.int/report/somalia/2019-somalia-humanitarian-needs-overview>.

<sup>6</sup> *Id.*

<sup>7</sup> *Somalia security remains a concern, head of UN Mission warns Security Council*, UN NEWS (Aug. 21, 2019) <https://news.un.org/en/story/2019/08/1044651>; *US reopens embassy in Somalia after nearly three decades*, AL JAZEERA (Oct. 3, 2019), [www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/10/reopens-embassy-somalia-decades-191003100027583.html](http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/10/reopens-embassy-somalia-decades-191003100027583.html).

<sup>8</sup> Somalia Travel Advisory, STATE DEPARTMENT, <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/traveladvisories/somalia-travel-advisory.html>.

a state of national emergency in Somalia, citing, among other things, “acts of violence committed against civilians in Somalia.”<sup>9</sup>

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.<sup>10</sup> At least 2.6 million people are displaced in Somalia today, an increase from 2018.<sup>11</sup> 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.<sup>12</sup> 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.<sup>13</sup> In general, the millions of displaced people in Somalia have limited or no access to water or food, healthcare, sanitation or safe housing.<sup>14</sup> Many live at risk of sexual violence and other human rights violations, including arbitrary arrest.<sup>15</sup>

One third of Somalia’s population, approximately 4.2 million people, are in need of humanitarian aid and protection.<sup>16</sup> 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.<sup>17</sup> 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.<sup>18</sup> Approximately 2.3 million people in Somalia do not have access to safe water.<sup>19</sup> Grain harvests are expected to be 50 percent below average in 2019.<sup>20</sup> The Famine Early Warning System finds that 2.1 million people will be facing crisis level food shortages for the remainder of the year.<sup>21</sup> Approximately one million children under age five are projected to suffer acute malnutrition through mid-2020.<sup>22</sup> 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.<sup>23</sup> 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.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> 84 Fed. Reg. 14843 (April 11, 2019), [www.federalregister.gov/documents/2019/04/11/2019-07414/continuation-of-the-national-emergency-with-respect-to-somalia](http://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2019/04/11/2019-07414/continuation-of-the-national-emergency-with-respect-to-somalia).

<sup>10</sup> 83 Fed. Reg. 43695 (Aug. 27, 2018), [www.federalregister.gov/documents/2018/08/27/2018-18444/extension-of-the-designation-of-somalia-for-temporary-protected-status](http://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2018/08/27/2018-18444/extension-of-the-designation-of-somalia-for-temporary-protected-status).

<sup>11</sup> *Somalia security remains a concern, head of UN Mission warns Security Council*, UN NEWS (Aug. 21, 2019)

<https://news.un.org/en/story/2019/08/1044651>; 83 Fed. Reg. 43695 (Aug. 27, 2018), [www.federalregister.gov/documents/2018/08/27/2018-18444/extension-of-the-designation-of-somalia-for-temporary-protected-status](http://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2018/08/27/2018-18444/extension-of-the-designation-of-somalia-for-temporary-protected-status).

<sup>12</sup> *Drought and conflict displace quarter of a million people in Somalia*, NORWEGIAN REFUGEE COUNCIL (Sept. 10, 2019), [www.nrc.no/news/2019/september/drought-and-conflict-displace-quarter-of-a-million-people-in-somalia/](http://www.nrc.no/news/2019/september/drought-and-conflict-displace-quarter-of-a-million-people-in-somalia/).

<sup>13</sup> *2019 Humanitarian Needs Overview: Somalia*, UN OFFICE FOR THE COORDINATION OF HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS (Nov. 2018), <https://reliefweb.int/report/somalia/2019-somalia-humanitarian-needs-overview>.

<sup>14</sup> *CRS in Somalia*, CATHOLIC RELIEF SERVICES, [www.crs.org/our-work-overseas/where-we-work/somalia](http://www.crs.org/our-work-overseas/where-we-work/somalia); *2019 Humanitarian Needs Overview: Somalia*, UN OFFICE FOR THE COORDINATION OF HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS (Nov. 2018), <https://reliefweb.int/report/somalia/2019-somalia-humanitarian-needs-overview>.

<sup>15</sup> *Id.*

<sup>16</sup> *2019 Humanitarian Needs Overview: Somalia*, UN OFFICE FOR THE COORDINATION OF HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS (Nov. 2018), <https://reliefweb.int/report/somalia/2019-somalia-humanitarian-needs-overview>.

<sup>17</sup> *Id.*

<sup>18</sup> *Somalia 2019 Drought Impact Response Plan*, UN OFFICE FOR THE COORDINATION OF HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS (2019), <https://reliefweb.int/report/somalia/somalia-2019-drought-impact-response-plan-dirp>.

<sup>19</sup> *Somalia*, INTERNATIONAL MEDICAL CORPS, <https://internationalmedicalcorps.org/country/somalia/>.

<sup>20</sup> *Somalia 2019 Drought Impact Response Plan*, UN OFFICE FOR THE COORDINATION OF HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS (2019), <https://reliefweb.int/report/somalia/somalia-2019-drought-impact-response-plan-dirp>.

<sup>21</sup> *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>.

<sup>22</sup> *Id.*

<sup>23</sup> *Id.*

<sup>24</sup> *Health Situation Report*, WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION (2018), [www.who.int/emergencies/crises/som/sitreps/en/](http://www.who.int/emergencies/crises/som/sitreps/en/).

Displacement and environmental factors continue to facilitate the spread of disease, including cholera.<sup>25</sup> Rates of maternal and infant mortality in Somalia are among the highest in the world.<sup>26</sup>

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

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.”<sup>30</sup> 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,

### **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

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<sup>25</sup> *Outbreak update – Cholera in Somalia, 04 August 2019*, WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION (Aug. 4, 2019), <https://reliefweb.int/report/somalia/outbreak-update-cholera-somalia-04-august-2019>; *CRS in Somalia*, CATHOLIC RELIEF SERVICES, [www.crs.org/our-work-overseas/where-we-work/somalia](http://www.crs.org/our-work-overseas/where-we-work/somalia).

<sup>26</sup> *Healthcare Access and Health Conditions among Somali Refugees Prior to Arrival in U.S.*, CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION (Aug. 9, 2018), [www.cdc.gov/immigrantrefugeehealth/profiles/somali/healthcareAccess.html](http://www.cdc.gov/immigrantrefugeehealth/profiles/somali/healthcareAccess.html).

<sup>27</sup> *Somalia’s path to recovery*, BROOKINGS INSTITUTE (Oct. 2, 2019), [www.brookings.edu/blog/future-development/2019/10/02/somalias-path-to-stability/](http://www.brookings.edu/blog/future-development/2019/10/02/somalias-path-to-stability/).

<sup>28</sup> *2019 Humanitarian Needs Overview: Somalia*, UN OFFICE FOR THE COORDINATION OF HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS (Nov. 2018), <https://reliefweb.int/report/somalia/2019-somalia-humanitarian-needs-overview>.

<sup>29</sup> *Somalia’s path to recovery*, BROOKINGS INSTITUTE (Oct. 2, 2019), [www.brookings.edu/blog/future-development/2019/10/02/somalias-path-to-stability/](http://www.brookings.edu/blog/future-development/2019/10/02/somalias-path-to-stability/).

<sup>30</sup> 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