



November 16, 2022

The Honorable Alejandro Mayorkas
Secretary of Homeland Security
Department of Homeland Security
Washington, D.C. 20528

The Honorable Antony Blinken
Secretary of State
Department of State
Washington, D.C. 20520

Re: U.S. Catholic Groups Request the Extension and Redesignation of Temporary Protected Status for Haiti, Somalia, and Yemen, and Redesignation of Venezuela

Dear Secretary Mayorkas and Secretary Blinken:

We write on behalf of Catholic Charities USA (CCUSA), the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' (USCCB) Committee on Migration, Catholic Relief Services (CRS), and the Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc. (CLINIC) to express gratitude for the recent designation of Ethiopia for Temporary Protected Status (TPS), as well as the extension and redesignation of Burma. We also wish to extend our deep appreciation for the Administration's decision to extend TPS for those countries whose designations were at issue in the *Ramos v. Nielson* and *Bhattari v. Nielson* cases. This decision reflects the ongoing conditions in those countries, which warrant continued protections for their nationals in the United States. As Haiti, Somalia, and Yemen continue to experience extraordinary and temporary conditions that prevent nationals from safely returning to their homelands, we ask that the Administration continue to make robust use of TPS by extending and redesignating these countries for TPS. We also remain committed to our [prior request](#) for a redesignation of Venezuela for TPS, in addition to the July 2022 extension.

The Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), in consultation with the Secretary of State and others, may designate a country for TPS if conditions in the country meet statutory requirements for such designation, including ongoing armed conflict, natural disasters, or other extraordinary and temporary conditions that temporarily prevent safe return.¹

The Administration last designated Haiti for TPS due to "security concerns, social unrest, an increase in human rights abuses, crippling poverty, and lack of basic resources, which [were] exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic."² CRS provides humanitarian and development assistance across the country and can attest to worsening conditions. Fuel shortages to operate generators and road blockades by gangs create significant barriers for aid workers to provide basic services. The UN reports of a cholera outbreak

¹ 8 U.S.C. 1254a(b)(1); § 244(b)(1) of the Immigration and Nationality Act.

² "Secretary Mayorkas Designates Haiti for Temporary Protected Status for 18 months," Department of Homeland Security press release, May 22, 2021, <https://bit.ly/3O3x1YJ>.

in the nation with 1,700 suspected cases, half of which affect children younger than 14-years-old.³ Conditions in Haiti have become so dire that the UN described it as the country's "worst human rights and humanitarian situation in decades."⁴ The UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) recently issued a plea to nation states to suspend the deportation of Haitians to the country and to provide "temporary protection, humanitarian admission or other legal stay arrangements until the security situation in Haiti permits safe returns."⁵ A group of senators recently called upon the Administration to redesignate the country for TPS amid the deteriorating conditions.⁶ We believe that the alarming humanitarian situation in Haiti morally obligates and federal law supports that the United States extend the current designation and redesignates Haiti for an additional 18 months.

We are also mindful of the approaching expiration of TPS for Yemen and urge you to extend and redesignate the country. Yemen confronts a triple threat of armed conflict, the impact of climate change, and health emergencies. The country has now entered its seventh year of civil war, resulting in the displacement of over four million people and 23.4 million people requiring some form of humanitarian aid.⁷ Violence and human rights abuses against civilians, including women and children, continue in the country amid a UN-backed truce agreement.⁸ Additionally, the country is experiencing unprecedented periods of flood and drought due to climate change, displacing tens of thousands of people and disrupting sustainable agricultural practices, which a majority of the population have relied upon for sustenance and livelihood for generations.⁹ Given these realities, we urge you to extend Yemen's current designation and redesignate the country for TPS prior to the 60-day statutory review deadline of January 2, 2023.

Similarly, as the TPS review deadline for Somalia approaches, we urge you to consider untenable conditions in the country that make safe return impossible. The security situation in the country remains concerning, specifically the recurring deadly attacks against civilians by armed groups. Bombings in Mogadishu last month killed 100 civilians and wounded around 300 people.¹⁰ Days later, a suicide bombing, also in the nation's capital, killed five people outside of a military camp with casualties that included both civilians and new recruits.¹¹ In addition to the violence, famine and drought have worsened the humanitarian crisis in the country, resulting in the internal displacement of about a million people.¹² National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan, in a statement in September, expressed grave concern for the country, describing the situation as "the worst drought in the Horn of Africa in 70 years."¹³ Thousands of children between 6- and 59-months-old suffer from acute malnutrition.¹⁴ While the United States is among the nations that have provided foreign aid to address the crisis, stability in the country will likely take several months to be restored. Therefore, we request an extension and redesignation for Somalia for an additional 18 months.

³ "Cholera outbreak in Haiti hits over 1,700 suspected cases – half of them children," UNICEF press release, Oct. 24, 2022, <https://uni.cf/3NSWGo8>.

⁴ "UNHCR calls on States to refrain from forced returns of Haitians," UNHCR press release, Nov. 3, 2022, <https://bit.ly/3WI7Y2q>.

⁵ *Id.*

⁶ "Democratic senators call for new TPS protection for Haitians," *Fronteras*, Oct. 31, 2022, <https://bit.ly/3htpVle>.

⁷ "Yemen: One of the world's largest humanitarian crises," UNFPA, Oct. 11, 2022, <https://bit.ly/3Ek9dOg>.

⁸ "Violations and Abuses against Civilians during Yemen's Truce," OCHA Services, Nov. 8, 2022, [Violations and Abuses against Civilians during Yemen's Truce - Yemen | ReliefWeb](https://reliefweb.int/yemen/violations-and-abuses-against-civilians-during-yemen-s-truce).

⁹ "Yemen's future conflicts will be over water," *Aljazeera*, Oct. 14, 2022, [Yemen's future conflicts will be over water | Water | Al Jazeera](https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/10/14/yemens-future-conflicts-will-be-over-water).

¹⁰ "2 car bombs leave scores of casualties at an intersection in Somalia's capital," NPR, Oct. 29, 2022, <https://n.pr/3hsXC6n>.

¹¹ "Five killed in suicide bombings at Somalia military camp," *Aljazeera*, Nov. 6, 2022, <https://bit.ly/3A0u6LI>.

¹² "'Catastrophic' drought displaces one million in Somalia, world asked to 'step up' support," UN News, Aug. 11, 2022, ['Catastrophic' drought displaces one million in Somalia, world asked to 'step up' support | IUN News](https://www.un.org/en/news/story/2022/08/catastrophic-drought-displaces-one-million-in-somalia-world-asked-to-step-up-support).

¹³ "Statement by National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan on Projected Famine in Parts of Somalia this Year," White House press release, Sept. 6, 2022, <https://bit.ly/3FYyeiX>.

¹⁴ "Child malnutrition soars in central Somalia area on verge of famine," *Reuters*, Oct. 13, 2022, <https://reut.rs/3WOUyBO>.

As Catholics, we believe wholeheartedly in protecting the sanctity of every human life. TPS is an important tool provided by Congress to protect human life and to ensure that those who remain in the U.S. under protected status can support themselves and their families and make positive contributions to American communities, consistent with their God-given dignity. Therefore, we urge the Administration to make full use of its TPS authority by extending and redesignating Haiti, Somalia, and Yemen, and providing protection to nationals of other countries warranting new designations.

Thank you for considering our requests and for your work on behalf of the common good.

Respectfully,



Most Reverend Mario E. Dorsonville
Auxiliary Bishop of Washington
Chairman, USCCB Committee on Migration



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