



The Human Impact of Terminating Temporary Protected Status for Nepal

RANJANA

I came to the United States in 2014 because it became very difficult for me to continue my profession as a paralegal back home. While I was in the United States the earthquake hit Nepal and completely changed my life's plans. My home is in Okhaldhunga, in a small village. When the earthquake occurred, my two daughters were at home and my husband was at work. My husband, while at work, panicked when the earthquake happened and had to jump out the window of the topmost floor of his building. He wasn't able to return home until that night. Through the entire day, he thought our daughters were dead and my daughters thought he was dead. It was so traumatic. I couldn't contact them for almost three days after the earthquakes since all forms of communication were down. I finally spoke to them on the phone and both of my daughters told me that I should stay and not come back. My family and my in-laws are still staying in temporary shelter, above the livestock and cows in the village. We want to rebuild our home, but the situation is such that the roads are not rebuilt and the flooding has made it worse. Even if we had the money to rebuild, there is no way to take materials back to the village. For my family, I must continue to work here and send money home to make sure that they can survive.

NEEMA

When the 2015 earthquakes hit in Nepal, I fell into a state of panic and shock. I felt so much fear and worry for my family at home, and pain for my country and what was lost in the destruction—culture, history, infrastructure. Thankfully, along with the friends I made at Adhikaar, a community-based organization in New York City, I was involved in the campaign to designate TPS for Nepal in 2015. As a TPS recipient, I have found a way move forward for myself and my family back home. My mother is aging and has many health issues that require expensive and hard-to-access medicine. She depends on me being here to get the health care she needs. I have a new-found confidence and feeling of security.

RAJEN

I came to the United States in December 2014. With TPS, I was able to apply for a Social Security number and began to work with TPS-based work authorization. It has made my life so much easier. Initially, I came to the United States for my wife's medical treatment. While my wife was going through her treatment, the

earthquake hit Nepal and we were not able to go back. Her treatment is ongoing and she has surgery soon. If TPS doesn't get renewed it will have great impact on my family. My wife's treatment is not finished and I don't know how long it will take. The earthquake has destroyed my house and there is nothing left. My family is still living in a temporary house built with bamboo and tin. With TPS I have been working and helping my family recover and rebuild.

RAMITA

When the earthquake hit Nepal one of my houses was destroyed and the other had several cracks which made it so that it is not safe to live in. My son, who is back home, also was injured very badly. As I am here and the sole breadwinner of the family, I am working as a new business owner to support myself but also to finance the rebuilding of my home and community back home. I've been a nail salon technician for many years and just recently opened a salon, which has given me hope for a new future.

ANANDA

With TPS, I was given work authorization which gave me the opportunity to work according to my own skills and also contribute by paying taxes. With the support of TPS, I also went back to back Nepal after 16 years, a huge event for me emotionally. The earthquake damaged my home, and my family also suffered losses—my sister-in-law and their son were victims of the earthquake.

Their whole house collapsed and around 60 individuals in their village lost their lives. My hope is that TPS is renewed so that we may continue to work and live here until everything back home is stable.

BIBEK

When the earthquake hit Nepal my life took an unexpected turn I found myself as the sole source of income for my family. My wife and children were back home and it was very traumatic for them. Now more than ever, they depended on me. With TPS I really turned my life around—I work hard every day, earning enough to build a life here, as well as to save what I can to send home so that my children are able to eat, live a full life and go to school. If TPS is terminated then my children will not be able to go to school. I will have to go back and start everything all over again. I work as a sushi chef at a nice restaurant in Manhattan, the work is good and I am slowly building a new life here. My son is now 7 and my daughter is 4. I left Nepal when my wife was still pregnant with our daughter. I didn't come to the United States with outlandish dreams of getting rich or making it big. I came here with a simple desire, one to create a stable and safe life for myself, my life and two small children. I respect and follow all the laws in this country, and want to continue contributing. My life hangs in a delicate balance, and is dependent on the decision that happens in April.

These stories were collected by Adhikaar.

Names have been changed to protect TPS holders and their families.