Feb. 12, 2019

Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen
Department of Homeland Security
3801 Nebraska Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20016

RE: Interfaith request for 18-month extension and redesignation of Temporary Protected Status for South Sudan

Dear Secretary Nielsen:

We the 211 undersigned leaders of diverse faith communities and 97 faith-based organizations call on you to extend for 18 months and redesignate Temporary Protected Status, or TPS, for South Sudan. Our request is rooted in the morals and values of our faiths: we welcome, protect, and offer hospitality to those in need and believe that the United States must maintain its long-standing commitment to helping those seeking refuge. As the situation in South Sudan has deteriorated into one of the world’s largest humanitarian disasters—marked by targeting of civilians, mass gender- and sexual-based violence, and starvation1—the maximum protection possible under the TPS law is unequivocally demanded.

South Sudan was originally designated for TPS in 2011 shortly after the country gained independence from Sudan and new waves of violence were breaking out.2 In addition to ongoing armed conflict, the country was facing extraordinary and temporary conditions, including widespread food and water shortages.3 When designating TPS for South Sudan, the then-Department of Homeland Security Secretary described mass displacement, lack of adequate humanitarian aid, and economic crisis.4 Since the original designation, as the war and humanitarian emergency in South Sudan has expanded, the country has received 18-month extensions and redesignations at every decision5 until the most recent Sept. 2017 decision, when it received an 18-month extension without redesignation.6

Today, with ongoing violence, pervasive sexual and gender-based violence used as a weapon of war, mass hunger and starvation, and lack of clean water, healthcare, and sanitation, we urge you to extend TPS for 18 months and redesignate in order to provide life-saving protection to those who have more recently escaped the conflict. According to a Sept. 2018 study by the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, approximately 400,000 people in South Sudan have lost their lives since 2013 – half from the conflict itself and half from disease, starvation, and other reasons related to protracted war.7 During that same amount of time, at least 4 million people have been displaced.8 The horrors of the conflict led the United Nations Security Council to make the rare move of authorizing UN peacekeepers

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3 Id.
4 Id.
8 Id.
and other UN security personnel to use force in order to protect civilian lives. Although a new peace agreement was signed in 2018, experts believe that like the past failed peace deals, it is flawed and unlikely to stop the violence and human suffering.

The conflict in South Sudan continues to be marked by widespread sexual- and gender-based violence. Doctors Without Borders reports abhorrent attacks occurring in recent months at the end of 2018, post peace-deal. In an incident in Nov. 2018, 125 women and girls as young as ten years old were raped, whipped, and clubbed over a period of ten days while they were trying to seek food aid. In addition to this incident, there have been numerous reports of violations of the peace deal and continued conflict, with the first reports coming within a matter of hours after the peace deal was signed. In Sept. and Oct. 2018, Human Rights Watch documented rebel and governmental attacks, including a rebel attack on a military convoy escorting approximately 200 internally displaced persons. In Dec. 2018, new outbreaks of violence were reported including an attack against ceasefire monitors themselves.

Since the onset of the war, children have suffered particular harm. An estimated 100,000 children have been recruited as child soldiers, abused, and exploited; tens of thousands have been left orphaned or separated from their families.

In addition to armed conflict in South Sudan, an 18-month extension and redesignation of TPS is needed to protect people from the ongoing humanitarian crisis. The people of South Sudan continue to suffer severe food shortages. In Sept. 2018, 59 percent of the population, over 6 million people were facing crisis-level food shortage or worse, including 1.7 million facing emergency and nearly 50,000 facing catastrophe or famine, according to the Famine Early Warning System Network. Although conditions are expected to improve following the 2018 harvest, “extreme levels of acute food security are expected to continue throughout the projection period [through May 2019] and some households will likely be in Catastrophe” or famine. Water, sanitation and hygiene also continue to be major issues in South Sudan. According to the 2018 South Sudan Humanitarian Needs Overview from the UN Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, approximately 32 percent of the population does not have access to clean water and are drinking from contaminated sources. Over 5 million people are in need of health assistance in the South Sudan.

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11. Id.
12. Id.
13. Id.
18. Id.
20. Id.
21. Id.
As people of faith, we remain steadfast in our commitment to stand on the side of morality and welcome those in need. We call on our country to do the same. South Sudanese TPS holders are our brothers and sisters. Their families live and work in our communities, and their children have grown up in the United States. Safe return to South Sudan is impossible at this time for TPS holders and those that might qualify for TPS if it were redesignated. Accordingly, we call on you to grant the maximum protection possible through 18-month extension and redesignation.

Sincerely,

Faith organizations

Adorers of the Blood of Christ, US Region
African Faith and Justice Network
American Friends of the Episcopal Church of the Sudans
American Friends Service Committee
Anti-Defamation League
Benedictine Sisters of Baltimore
Cabrini Immigrant Services of NYC, Inc.
Caminando Juntos of the Presentation Sisters
Catholic Charities Archdiocese of Boston
Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Washington
Catholic Charities, Diocese of Joliet
Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc.
Catholic Multicultural Center
Centro Comunitario CEUS
Church World Service
Comboni Missionary Sisters
Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd, US Provinces
Congregation of Sisters of St. Agnes
Crossing Borders - Dubuque
Disciples Refugee and Immigration Ministries, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
Dominican Sisters of Sparkill
Ecumenical Poverty Initiative
Franciscan Action Network
Franciscan Sisters of Allegany, New York
Franciscan Sisters of the Poor, US Area
Franciscans for Justice
Friends in Solidarity, Inc.
Greater New York Labor Religion Coalition
Grey Nuns of the Sacred Heart
HIAS
Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters, USA-JPIC
IHM Community
IHM Sisters - Leadership Council
Illinois Conference United Church of Christ
Immigrant and Refugee Committee, Sisters of the Most Precious Blood, O'Fallon, MO
Immigrant Hope - Brooklyn NY
Immigration Support Services Network
Interfaith Council of Sonoma County
Iowa Justice For Our Neighbors
Jesuit Social Research Institute
Jewish Council for Public Affairs
Journey of Faith
Justice For Our Neighbors East Texas
Justice, Peace and Reconciliation Commission, Priests of the Sacred Heart, US Province
Leadership Conference of Women Religious
Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service
Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns
Mary's Place Refugee Outreach
Micah Institute
Moral Movement Maine
Multicultural Family Center
National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd
National Council of Jewish Women
NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice
New Mexico Interfaith Power and Light
Office of Peace, Justice, and Ecological Integrity, Sisters of Charity of Saint Elizabeth
Office of Social Justice at the Christian Reformed Church in North America
Office of Social Justice, Christian Reformed Church in North America
Our Lady of Victory Missionary Sisters
Our Lady Queen of Peace Catholic Church
Pax Christi Florida
Pax Christi USA
Pennsylvania Council of Churches
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
Project IRENE
Refugee & Immigration Services
Sisters of Bon Secours, USA
Sisters of Charity of Nazareth Congregational Leadership
Sisters of Charity of Nazareth Western Province Leadership
Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary
Sisters of Mercy of the Americas - Institute Justice Team
Sisters of Mercy West Midwest Community
Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur USA
Sisters of Saint Francis JPIC Commissioners
Sisters of Saint Joseph of Chestnut Hill, Philadelphia, PA
Sisters of St. Dominic of Blauvelt, New York
Sisters of St. Francis, Clinton, Iowa
Sisters of St. Joseph
Sisters of St. Joseph of Baden, PA
Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet
Sisters of St. Joseph of Orange
Sisters, Home Visitors of Mary
Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary
Sojourners
St. Elizabeth Parish
St. John United Church of Christ
The Episcopal Church
The United Methodist Church
Union for Reform Judaism
Unitarian Universalist Service Committee
United Church of Christ Justice and Witness Ministries
United Methodist Church
United Methodist Women
US Federation of Sisters of St Joseph
VIVAT International
Women's Alliance for Theology, Ethics, and Ritual (WATER)
World Relief

**Faith leaders**

Acting Associate Conference Minister Alexander Vishio, Central Atlantic Conference - United Church of Christ
Br. Michael Potvin-Frost, OFH, Order of Franciscan Hermits
Bro. Brian McLauchlin, Divine Word Missionaries
Bro. Mark Schroeder, O.F.M., Franciscans for Justice
Chaplain Mary Craven, CSJA
Cochair Immigration Action Committee SND Covington Province Janet Ferguson, Associate Sisters of Notre Dame
Deacon Craig Clark, The Church of the Good Shepherd
Deacon Leo Bitak, St. Malachi, Cleveland
Deacon Moderator Susan Minor, Faith Presbyterian Church
Deacon Roberto Vazquez, St. John Chrysostom Church
Deacon Steven Beumer, St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church
Director Imam Ali Siddiqui, Muslim Institute - Interfaith Studies & Understanding
Dr. Belle McMaster, Monticello Presbyterian Church
Dr. Joan Sattler Joan Sattler, St. Matthew/Notre Dame of MD University
Dr. Joy Lapp, Professor of Religion, Iowa Wesleyan University
Dr. Ken Olson, MCS Mission Interpreters
Dr. Lenore Dowling, Immaculate Heart Community
Elder Linda Koch, Maryland Presbyterian
Elder Maria Studer, FPC Levittown NY
Elder Marta Rodriguez, Presbyterian Church USA
Elder Susan Tarr, The Church of the Covenant (PCUSA)
Elder Tomi Nagai-Rothe, Berkeley Friends Church
Executive Director Jessica Root, House of Mercy (Catholic 501c3)
Fr. Frederick LaBrecque, Catholic Diocese of Charleston
Fr. Jim Hoffman OFM, Franciscan Friars
Fr. John Celichowski, OFM Cap., St. Clare of Montefalco Parish
Fr. Joseph Monahan, Franciscans, Third Order Regular
Francesca Wigle, TSSF Francesca Wigle, Third Order, Society of St. Francis
Geraldine Kennah, Sisters of Saint Joseph of Carondelet
MN Refugee Delegate (RC) Fatuma Elmi, Lutheran Social Service
Mr. Jerry Rivers, Church of Christ
Mr. Joe Tassone, Marin Catholic
Mr. Jonathan Boyne, Universalist
Mr. Kent Ferris, Diocese of Davenport
Mr. Michael Carsten OFS, Secular Franciscan Order
Mr. Tom Cordaro, Pax Christi Illinois
Mrs. Mary Morris, Jerusalem United Methodist Church
Ms. Linda Murphy, St. Matthew
Ms. Maureen Shannon-Chapple, InsightLA
Ms. Andrea Paret, Peace with Justice Coordinator, Great Plains Conference of The United Methodist Church
Ms. Cathryn Try, Blauvelt
Ms. Diane Dicranian, Midcoast Friends Meeting
Ms. Madonna Thelen, Dominican
Ms. Mary Kozmik, St. Paul’s Monastery
Ms. Maureen Shannon-Chapple, InsightLA
Ms. Rebecca Garver, West End Mennonite Fellowship
Ms. Rosemary Horn, St. Anne’s Episcopal Church
Ms. Rowena Nylund, Shandon Presbyterian PCUSA
Ms. Suzanne Hesh, Episcopal
Ms. Wendy Vasquez, Trinity Las Americas United Methodist Church
Pastor Anne Hall, Lutheran Church in the San Juans
Pastoral Minister Maureen Donofrio, Sister of St. Joseph of Carondelet
Rabbi David Wirtschafter, Temple Adath Israel
Rabbi Deborah Bronstein, Congregation Har HaShem
Rabbi Dr. Herbert Brockman, Congregation Mishkan Israel
Rabbi Elyse Wechterman, Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association
Rabbi Erica Asch, Temple Beth El
Rabbi Joshus Chasan, Ohavi Zedek Synagogue
Rabbi Judith Edelstein, Ansche Chesed
Rabbi Michael Feinberg, Greater New York Labor-Religion Coalition
Rabbi Michael Rothbaum, Congregation Beth Elohim
Rabbi Nancy Kasten, Emanu-El Dallas
Rabbi Salem Pearce, T’ruah: The Rabbinic Call for Human Rights
Rabbi Sonya Starr, Columbia Jewish Congregation
Rev. Allan Wysocki, St. Paul Lutheran
Rev. Allen Ewing-Merrill Allen Ewing-Merrill, HopeGateWay United Methodist Church
Rev. and Ms. Jim and Barbara Dale, First United Methodist Church
Rev. Angie Boissevain, Floating Zendo
Rev. Anita Warner, Advent Lutheran Church
Rev. Bonnie Kline Smeltzer, University Baptist & Brethren Church
Rev. Bruce Cheever, Fox Point Lutheran Church
Rev. Charles Cloughen, Cathedral of the Incarnation
Rev. Crystal Karr, Vista Grande United Church of Christ
Rev. Daniel Velez, Saint Gabriel's Episcopal Church
Rev. David Morton, Chapel Hill United Methodist
Rev. David Wesley Brown, Retired UMC Elder
Rev. Dennis Coon, United Methodist
Rev. Diane Mettam, United Methodist Church
Rev. Dr. Allison Tanenr, Lakeshore Avenue Baptist Church
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Rev. Dr. James Gertmenian, United Church of Christ
Rev. Dr. John Sivalon, Maryknoll
Rev. Dr. Lyle J. Dykstra, Retired PCUSA Pastor
Rev. Dr. Nancy T. Fox, National Presbyterian Church
Rev. Dr. Nathan Busker, Ponds Reformed Church
Rev. Dr. Neil Cazares-Thomas, Cathedral of Hope United Church of Christ
Rev. Dr. Sharon Stanley-Rea, Director, Disciples Refugee & Immigration Ministries
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Rev. Dr. Theresa Mason, Great Plains Annual Conference United Methodist Church
Rev. Eliot Moss, Episcopal Diocese of Western Massachusetts
Rev. Frank Bergen, Episcopal Church of St. Matthew
Rev. Glenn Danz, United Church of Christ
Rev. Greg Davidson Laszakovits, Elizabethtown Church of the Brethren
Rev. Horace Huse, Lakewood Church of the Brethren
Rev. James Conn, United Methodist Church
Rev. James Hug, Society of Jesus
Rev. Jennifer Brooks, First Unitarian Church of Des Moines
Rev. Joel Gison, Micah Institute
Rev. John Converset, Comboni Missionaries
Rev. John Fernandes, Roman Catholic
Rev. John Long, First Presbyterian Church, Buffalo
Rev. John Ward-Diorio, St. Paul's United Church of Christ
Rev. Kay Woike, Church of the Nativity UCC
Rev. Laura Speiran, Clarkston United Methodist
Rev. LeDayne McLeese Polaski, BPFNA ~ Bautistas por la Paz
Rev. Lysette Perez, United Methodist Church of the Rockaways
Rev. Mark Lancaster, Generous Heart Sangha
Rev. Martha Bays, Retired UCC
Rev. Martha Sexton, St. Mark Presbyterian
Rev. Mary Jo Bradshaw, Downey Memorial Christian Church
Rev. Mary Kay Sauter, Plymouth Congregational Church
Rev. Mary Kay Sauter, Retired United Church of Christ
Rev. Megan Morrow, Nebraska Synod, ELCA
Rev. Melanie Oommen, First Congregational United Church of Christ
Rev. Merle Showers, University United Methodist Church
Rev. Michael Neuroth, United Church of Christ
Rev. Pat Jones, Living Water
Rev. Patrick Gahagen, Journey of Faith (ELCA)
Rev. Paul Hagedorn, ELCA
Rev. Priscilla Dreyman, Hope Gate Way United Methodist Church
Rev. Reggie Smith Melissa Stek, Office of Social Justice, Christian Reformed Church in North America
Rev. Samuel Johnson, Hope Gate Way
Rev. Sandra Strauss, Pennsylvania Council of Churches
Rev. Scott Arbeiter, World Relief
Rev. Stacey Siebrasse, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Rev. Stephen Zukas, St. Edward The Confessor Parish
Rev. Suzanne F. Isaacs Suzanne Isaacs, Rio Texas Conference of the United Methodist Church
Rev. Ted Howard, St. John's Episcopal Church
Rev. Todd Peterson, Lakeview United Church of Christ
Rev. Dr. Donna T. Morton, United Methodist
Reverend Carla Dietz, First Congregational Church of Greenwich
Reverend Raymond Finch, Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers
Sister Anna Marie Reha, School Sister of Notre Dame
Sister Anne Foley, Sparkill, Dominican
Sister Benita Coffey, OSB, Chicago Benedictines for Peace
Sister Bernadine Karge, Dominican Sister of Sinsinawa, WI
Sister Betty Cawley, Sisters of St. Joseph of Boston
Sister Carmella Campione, Congregation of St. Joseph
Sister Cecelia Lavan, Dominican Sisters of Blauvelt
Sister Cecile Roeger, Dominican Sisters of Houston
Sister Cecilia La Pietra, Dominican Congregation of Our Lady of the Rosary
Sister Christine Garcia, School Sisters of Notre Dame
Sister Denise Curry, Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur
Sister Diane Smith, Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet
Sister Doreen Glynn, Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet, Albany Province
Sister Dorothy Schlaeger, Sisters of St. Francis of Perpetual Adoration
Sister Durstyne Farnan, Adrian Dominican Sisters
Sister Eileen Davey, Holy Union Sisters
Sister Eileen McCann, CSJ, Congregation of St. Joseph
Sister Frances Wetzel, Dominican Sister of Adrian
Sister Honora Kinney, Sisters of Saint Joseph, Albany Province
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Sister Jacqueline Glessner, SSND
Sister Jean Keating, Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet
Sister Jeannine DeClue, Sparkill, Dominican
Sister Judith Garson, Society of the Sacred Heart
Sister Karen Gaube, Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet
Sister Kathleen Bryant, Religious Sisters of Charity
Sister Kathleen Erickson, Sisters of Mercy
Sister Kathleen Hebbeler, Dominican Sister of Hope
Sister Kathleen McGonigle, Sisters of St. Joseph
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Sister Linda Stilling, School Sisters of Notre Dame
Sister Lucy Nigh, School Sisters of Notre Dame
Sister Marge Clark, Sisters of Charity, BVM
Sister Maria Louise Edwards, Felician Sisters of North America
Sister Marjorie White, Sisters of St. Joseph, TOSF
Sister Mary Ann Bredice, Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary
Sister Mary Ann Penner, IHM Sisters
Sister Mary Carr, Dominican from Adrian
Sister Mary Ellen Lacy, Daughters of Charity
Sister Mary Flick, CSJ, Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet, St. Louis Province
Sister Mary Jo Tallman, Sisters of St. Joseph
Sister Mary Mahowald, Franciscan Sisters
Sister Mary McMahon, Grey Nuns of the Sacred Heart
Sister Monica Nortz, Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet
Sister Nancy Murray, Adrian Dominican Sisters
Sister Patricia Chappell, Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur
Sister Patricia Heath, Holy Union Sisters
Sister Patricia Pora, Sisters of Mercy of the Americas
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Sr. Joan Vlaun, Amityville Dominican
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Sr. Rosemary Russell, Sisters of the Most Precious Blood
Sr. Veronica Roche, Sisters of St. Joseph
Sr. Veronique Wiedower, Sisters of the Holy Cross
SSJ Sister Colleen Dauerbach, Sisters of Saint Joseph of Chestnut Hill, Philadelphia, PA
The Rev. Christine Payden-Travers, retired Episcopal priest
The Rev. Elizabeth Maxwell, Church of the Ascension
The Rev. JoAnne Bennett, Episcopal
The Rev. Kara Wagner Sherer, St. John's Episcopal Church
The Rev. Martha Sims, Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church
The Rev. Mary Anne Osborn, Christ Episcopal Church
The Rev'd Stephen Holton, Christ Church, New Haven
The Venerable Catherine Cooke, Cathedral Church of St. Paul
United States Katherine Donnelly, Dominican Sisters, Sparkill