July 11, 2018

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

RE: Request for 18 month extension and redesignation of TPS for Somalia

Dear Secretary Nielsen:

We the 65 undersigned leaders of diverse faith communities and 44 faith-based organizations respectfully urge you to extend for 18 months and redesignate Temporary Protected Status, or TPS, for Somalia. Our request is rooted in the morals and values of our faiths: we welcome, protect and offer hospitality to those in need. Moses, Jesus, and Muhammad were all refugees at one point, needing to rely on the kindness of others. The Bible says “you shall not wrong nor oppress a stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.” (Exodus 22:20). The Quran speaks about helping those who are oppressed and in need, including refugees. “Was not the Earth of God spacious enough for you to flee for refuge?” (Quran 4:97). Somali 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. As people of faith, we remain steadfast in our commitment to lift up the marginalized, especially in the case of Somali TPS holders.

Somalia was one of the original countries designated for TPS after it was established through the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1990. Since the original designation, disrupted and dangerous living conditions in Somalia have persisted including war and acts of terror, inter- and intra-clan fighting, and famine. In the last extension of TPS for Somalia, the U.S. government characterized the country’s condition as “a complex protracted emergency that is one of the worst humanitarian crises in the world.” Accordingly, because safe return has been impossible, TPS for Somalia has continually been extended, as permissible under the law. Both Republican and Democratic administrations have granted these extensions.

A failure to extend and redesignate TPS for Somalia at this time would fly in the face of our cherished interfaith values and morality, putting the lives of brothers and sisters and their families at risk. At the time of the last TPS extension in 2017, the government found that approximately 5 million people were in need of humanitarian assistance with 1.1 million people internally displaced. Since that extension, the situation in Somalia has only deteriorated; ongoing armed conflict and extraordinary and temporary conditions remain.

Today, there continues to be ongoing armed conflict in Somalia between Somali government forces, militia, African Union troops, and other foreign fighters against al-Shabaab, which dominates huge

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3 Id.
4 Id.
6 Id.
swaths of territory. There are over 1.5 million people currently internally displaced in Somalia and nearly 900,000 refugees in the nearby region. The United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia reported 1,228 civilian casualties between January and September 2017, as a result of the conflict. In October 2017, al-Shabaab carried out a horrific terrorist attack in the capital, Mogadishu, killing 500 people; in February 2018, car bombs killed 40 more. The U.S. has an active military presence in Somalia to combat al-Shabaab with one American killed and four injured in an attack as recently as June 2018. Furthermore, in its most recent humanitarian situation recent report on Somalia from March 2018, UNICEF, “verified 317 grave violations affecting 302 children mostly through abduction, killing, and child recruitment and use by armed forces and groups.”

In March 2018, the UN Security Council expressed “grave concern at the worsening humanitarian crisis and renewed risk of famine in Somalia.” Overall, an estimated 2.7 million people in Somalia are currently facing acute food insecurity, with an additional 2.7 million people experiencing stressed levels of food insecurity. In March 2018, UNICEF reported a 19 percent increase from the number of children being treated for malnutrition in 2017. Over 300,000 children under the age of five are severely malnourished, including 48,000 who face death if not urgently treated. These situations are elevated due to “ongoing drought, displacement and conflict.” In addition to war, and widespread malnutrition and starvation, lack of access to clean water and healthcare has left nearly 2 million people at risk of death from preventable diseases.

In a country where over 40 percent of the population is in dire need of humanitarian assistance with an overwhelming percentage of displaced persons, safe return to Somalia is impossible at this time. As people of faith, united, we call on you to grant the maximum protection possible under the law—18 month extension and redesignation—as the situation in Somalia demands.

Sincerely,

Faith Organizations

American Friends Service Committee

Anti-Defamation League

Cabrini Immigrant Services of NYC

CAIR-Ohio

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9 Id.
10 Id.
14 Id.
15 Id.
16 Id.
17 Id.
Capuchin Province of St. Joseph
Catholic Charities Archdiocese of Boston
Catholic Charities of Pueblo
Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Washington
Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc.
Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) Refugee & Immigration Ministries
Church World Service
Conference of Superiors of Men
Ecumenical Poverty Initiative
ELCA Multicultural Ministries
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Faith in Public Life
Franciscan Action Network
Franciscan Sisters of the Poor
Franciscan Sisters of the Poor, US Area
Glenmary Home Missioners
Holy Name Province-JPIC Office
Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters, USA-JPIC
Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service
Majlis Ash-Shura (Islamic leadership Council) of Metropolitan New York
Mary's Place Refugee Outreach
Muslim Anti-Racism Collaborative (MuslimARC)
National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd
National Council of Jewish Women
NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice

NHCUCC Immigrant and Refugee Support Group

Northern Valley Catholic Social Service

Our Lady Queen of Peace

Pax Christi Illinois

Pax Christi Metro New York

Province of Saint Joseph of the Capuchin Order

Scalabrini International Migration Network

Sisters of Charity of Nazareth Congregational Leadership

Sisters of Charity of Nazareth Western Province Leadership

Sisters of Charity of New York

Sisters of Mercy of the Americas - Institute Justice Team

Thrive International Programs, Inc.

Unitarian Universalist Service Committee

United Church of Christ

Women's Alliance for Theology, Ethics, and Ritual (WATER)

Faith Leaders

Brother Larry Johnson, Glenmary Home Missioners

Deacon Thomas Mariconda, Regional Deacon-Naugatuck Valley

Dr. Mary Hunt, Women's Alliance for Theology, Ethics, and Ritual (WATER)

Elder Alice Davis, Hanover Presbyterian Church

Elder Maria Studer, FPC Levittown

Father John Duffell, Church of the Blessed Sacrament

Fr. Jacek Orzechowski, Franciscan Friars of the Holy Name of Jesus
Imam Naeem Baig, Dar al-Hijrah Islamic Center
Lay Leader JL Angell, EDCF Church
Mr. Eric Martinez, St. Barnabas The Apostle Catholic Church
Ms. Dawn Sample, St. Theresa Parish
Ms. Vonny Eckman, St. Paul's United Church of Christ
Rabbi Michael Feinberg, Greater New York Labor-Religion Coalition
Rabbi Michael Rothbaum, Congregation Beth Elohim
Rev. Nancy Ross, Saint Mark's Episcopal Cathedral
Rev. Albert Starr, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Rev. Alex Roche, Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Catholic Church
Rev. Charles R. Claycomb, Great Plains Conference, United Methodist Church
Rev. Christine Payden-Travers, Retired Episcopal Priest
Rev. David Jones, Makemie Memorial Presbyterian Church
Rev. Deacon Gail S. Ganter-Toback, St. James' Church- Hyde Park, NY
Rev. Deacon Thomas Mariconda, Regional Deacon- Naugatuck Valley
Rev. Dr. Cheryl Green, Cathedral of Grace-ST. John AMEC
Rev. Dr. Chloe Breyer, The Interfaith Center of New York
Rev. Dr. Donna T. Morton, Fourth Ave. United Methodist Church
Rev. Dr. Douglas L. Griffin, Westminster Presbyterian Church
Rev. Dr. John Long, First Presbyterian Church
Rev. Dr. Lyle J. Dykstra, Retired
Rev. Dr. Paul Ziese, MacArthur Park Lutheran
Rev. Dr. Raymond Rivera, Latina Pastoral Action Center & Sanctuary Church
Rev. Dr. Sharon Stanley-Rea, National City Christian Church
Rev. Elizabeth Doty, New Castle Presbytery
Rev. Elizabeth Maxwell, Church of the Ascension
Rev. Esther Irish, The Baptist Church in Warren
Rev. Francis Gargani, the Redemptorists
Rev. Jason Bense, Lutheran Church of our Redeemer
Rev. Jim Dale and Ms. Barbara Dale, First United Methodist Church
Rev. Jimmie Hawkins, Presbyterian Church (USA)
Rev. Jon Chapman, The Presbyterian Church of Dover
Rev. Jonathan Page, First Congregational Church of Houston
Rev. Kathie Pownall, Concord Presbyterian Church (PCUSA)
Rev. Kay Woike, Nativity United Church of Christ
Rev. Michael Williams, Georgetown Presbyterian Church
Rev. Ross Carmichael, St. Andrew Lutheran Church
Rev. Timothy Woodruff, Presbyterian Church of the Covenant
Rev. Zachary Harmon, St. Christopher’s Episcopal Church
Sister Bernadine Karge, Dominican Sister of Sinsinawa, WI
Sister Carol Boschert, Sisters of the Most Precious Blood of O’Fallon, MO
Sister Carol De Angelo, Sisters of Charity of New York
Sister Jean Masterson, Congregation of St. Joseph
Sister Joan Agro, Sisters of St. Dominic of Blauvelt, NY
Sister Judith Garson, Society of the Sacred Heart
Sister Karen Hartman, Franciscan Sisters of the Poor
Sister Laetitia Bordes, Society of Helpers
Sister Louise Alff, Sisters of St. Francis of the Neumann Communities
Sister Maria Orlandini, Catholic
Sister Mary Brigid Clingman, OP, Dominican Sisters, Grand Rapids
Sister Mary Carr, Dominican Sisters of Adrian
Sister Mary Joyce Moeller, Congregation of Divine Providence
Sister Mary McCauley, Sisters of Charity, BVM
Sister Mary McMahon, Grey Nuns of the Sacred Heart
Sister Patricia Rogucki, Sisters for Christian Community
Sister Rose Therese Nolta, Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters
Sister Sheilamarie Tobbe, Ursuline Sisters of Cleveland
Sr. Elaine Betoncourt, Sisters of St. Joseph