March 30, 2018

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

RE: REQUEST TO EXTEND TEMPORARY PROTECTED STATUS FOR NEPAL FOR 18 MONTHS

Dear Secretary Nielsen:

On behalf of the 33 undersigned national, state, and local faith-based organizations, as well as 242 faith leaders from across traditions, we respectfully request that you extend Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for Nepal for 18 months. Our call stems from our shared values rooted in our sacred texts to love our neighbor and welcome the stranger, the sojourner among us. As Leviticus 19:33-34 reminds us: “Any immigrant who lives with you must be treated as if they were one of your citizens. You must love them as yourself, because you were immigrants in the land of Egypt; I am the LORD your God.”

The current eighteen-month grant of TPS for approximately 9,000 Nepali TPS holders will expire on June 24, 2018. As we approach the April 25, 2018 deadline to decide whether to extend Nepal’s TPS designation, we call on you to recognize that TPS was created to provide protection to those in the United States when it is unsafe for their return home - precisely the conditions Nepal faces today. To terminate TPS for Nepal would mean turning our backs on the vulnerable Nepalis whom we pledged to protect, and would place considerable burdens on the country as it struggles to recover from natural disaster.

Nepal was designated for TPS on June 24, 2015 after it was struck by a 7.8 magnitude earthquake on April 25, 2015, followed by a series of massive aftershocks. The devastating earthquakes immediately affected more than 8 million people, over a quarter of Nepal’s total population. About 9,000 people died as a result of the earthquake, and 22,000 people were injured. The earthquake caused significant damage or destruction to over 755,000 homes. In 2016, the administration extended Nepal’s TPS designation for 18 months because most homes, schools, health centers, and other buildings had yet to be reconstructed. In addition, Nepal’s recovery from the natural disaster was slowed by serious intervening factors, including bureaucratic issues in dispersing aid and civil unrest, and blockades preventing necessary materials from entering the country. Nepal’s rebuilding efforts were paralyzed for months by political conflicts. The blockades along the southern border also deprived the Nepali people of critical resources such as food, oil, and other aid, putting many at risk of starvation, including three million children under the age of 5.

A dire humanitarian crisis persists in Nepal as a direct result of the earthquake and aftershocks that devastated the country in 2015.

Today, Nepal faces a dire humanitarian situation, especially for those residing in the 14 districts most devastated by the earthquake, as well as those in rural, hard-to-access areas. Destroyed roads and other infrastructure prevents huge portions of the population from accessing adequate food, clean water, medicine, and other basic needs. Indeed, the U.S. government recognized that large-scale reconstruction would likely not be feasible to begin until 2017 in the most recent Federal Register Notice extending TPS for Nepal. In late 2017, a new natural disaster further impeded reconstruction efforts and
humanitarian recovery. From June 2017 to September 2017, the country experienced devastating floods and landslides, affecting a third of the country, over 1.7 million people. Several districts recorded the heaviest rainfall in 60 years, and over 80 percent of land in the southern Terai region (the breadbasket of Nepal) was inundated by floodwaters, impacting the transportation of food and other resources to the rest of the country. The floods delayed ongoing rebuilding efforts and damaged vital infrastructure, including 65,000 homes. Furthermore, 80 schools across 28 districts were destroyed and 710 damaged, while ten health centers were destroyed and 64 partially damaged.

Housing insecurity, economic instability, and reconstruction challenges have forced millions of Nepalis to remain displaced.

Of the 2.8 million people displaced by the 2015 earthquake, it is estimated that 2.6 million remain displaced - or nearly 93% of the original displaced population - still live in temporary shelters, unprotected from the elements and Nepal’s harsh seasons. As of February 2018, the Nepali government reported that only 100,000 houses had been rebuilt. Housing insecurity would only be exacerbated by the return of 9,000 TPS holders. The housing reconstruction program in Nepal is unfinished and profoundly inadequate to address current housing needs and a return of 9,000 Nepali TPS holders and their family members. Reconstruction in the public sector, such as in cultural heritage sites, schools, hospitals, and public buildings, has barely begun. As a result, failure to extend TPS would put approximately 9,000 TPS holders and their families at tremendous risk of housing, food, and water insecurity, as well as facing a lack of access to health care, education, and other services.

The International Labour Organization estimates that the earthquake cost Nepal $7 billion in losses and damages. The earthquake directly resulted in 700,000 Nepalis falling into poverty. If TPS is not extended, Nepal and the region will be further destabilized as the country depends heavily on remittances (money sent home from abroad). Close to 50 percent of Nepalis rely on financial help from relatives abroad to survive. Nepal receives almost 30 percent of its overall GDP from remittances, making Nepal one of the top five nations with such a heavy reliance on remittances.

Our collective moral, religious, and American values call for extending Nepal’s TPS designation for 18 months.

The U.S. has a long history of offering protection to victims of catastrophic events, war, violence, and natural disasters. TPS reflects our nation’s commitment to protecting people from being returned to life-threatening conditions, our compassion, and our dedication to welcome -- values that were manifested in the TPS statute enacted by Congress in 1990. As communities of faith, we seek a just and humane immigration system that upholds the dignity and humanity of all people. Extending TPS for Nepal is a compassionate and just choice for both Americans and Nepali TPS holders. Our moral and legal obligations call on us to uphold our values of hospitality, generosity, and compassion.

Nepal remains unable to welcome the safe return of nearly 9,000 Nepali TPS holders due to the massive size of the catastrophe, its recentness, and intervening factors that have tragically slowed recovery. DHS should be responding to this humanitarian crisis by upholding our promises to the Nepali people and by allowing Nepali TPS holders to remain here in the United States. As members of faith-based organizations across the country, we urge you to join us in standing shoulder-to-shoulder with our Nepali brothers and sisters in need.
We pray you have compassion in your discernment process and extend Nepal’s TPS designation for at least another 18 months. Thank you for your consideration of this request. If you have any questions, please contact Jill Marie Bussey at jbussey@cliniclegal.org or 301-565-4844 or Meredith Owen at mowen@cwsglobal.org.

Sincerely,

Faith Leaders

Brother Jerry Rivers, Church of Christ
Brother Mark Schroeder, O.F.M., Franciscans for Justice
Brother Michael Potvin-Frost, Order of Franciscan Hermits
Cantor Vera Broekhuysen, Temple Emanu-El of Haverhill
Chair of MN Conference Immigration Team UCC Diane Haines, Mayflower United Church of Christ
Chaplain C. Brent Hoy-Bianchi, Renown Regional Medical Center
Chaplain Francesca Wigle, Third Order of Franciscans
College Chaplain Dr. Rick Axtell, Centre College
Deacon Michael Turner, St. Rose of Lima Catholic Church
Deacon Leo Bistak, St. Malachi
Deacon Thomas Mariconda, Regional Deacon Naugatuck Valley
Director Sandy Sorensen, United Church of Christ, Justice and Witness Ministries (Washington Office)
Dr. Bill Mefford, Fig Tree Revolution
Dr. Brian Kaylor, Churchnet
Dr. J. Alfred Smith, Jr., Allen Temple Baptist Church
Dr. Mary Elizabeth Hunt, Women’s Alliance for Theology, Ethics, and Ritual (WATER)
Dr. Russell Jeung, New Hope Covenant Church
Elder Ken Grenz, Valley View
Elder Maria Studer, First Presbyterian Church Levittown, NY
Faith Leader Elaine Johnson, African Methodist Episcopal
Fr. Toting Tronco, Simbayan Ecumenical Fellowship
Fr. Jim Hoffman OFM, OFM Franciscan Friars
Dr. Lois Schroeder, Good Shepherd Lutheran Church
Miss Kate Krogstad, First Evangelical Lutheran Church in Redlands
Mr. Ewins Julien, Upper Room Ministry
Mr. Gerry Lee, Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns
Mr. Rob Abbot, PAX Community
Ms. Charlotte Stone, Southern Hills United Methodist Church
Ms. Jean Stokan, Sisters of Mercy of the Americas - Institute Justice Team
Ms. Linda McKiernan-Allen, West Street Christian
Ms. Louisa Merchant, All Saints’ Episcopal Church
Ms. Mary Kozmik, St. Paul’s Monastery
Pastor Anne Hall, Lutheran Church in the San Juans
Pastor Barry Kreider, Pilgrims Mennonite Church
Pastor Don Benton, Sunrise United Methodist Church
Peace and Social Justice Coordinator Karen Jackson, Christ the Servant Catholic Faith Community
Rabbi Mike Comins, Temple Emanuel, Dallas
Rabbi David Greenstein, Congregation Shomrei Emunah
Rabbi Elizabeth Richman, Jews United for Justice
Rabbi Elliott Tepperman, Bnai Keshet
Rabbi Elyse Wechterman, Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association
Rabbi Eric Solomon, Beth Meyer Synagogue
Rabbi Jessica Shimberg, The Little Minyan Kehillah
Rabbi Megan GoldMarche, Silverstein Base Hillel
Rabbi Michael Feinberg, Greater New York Labor-Religion Coalition
Rabbi Suzanne Singer, Temple Beth El
Rev. Phillip Grigsby, SICM (Schenectady Inner City Ministry)
Rev. Bonnie Kline Smeltzer, University Baptist and Brethren Church
Rev. Brenda Froisland, Bethel Lutheran Church
Rev. Diane Faires, St. Paul's Christian Church
Rev. Dr. Mary Blaufuss, United Church of Christ
Rev. Dru Ferguson, St. Bedes Episcopal Church
Rev. Elaine Schoepf, Seaside United Church of Christ
Rev. Gayle Whittemore, Congregational Church of North Barnstead, United Church of Christ
Rev. Jane Van Zandt, Grace Episcopal, Manchester NH
Rev. Karen Jackson, Project Hospitality
Rev. Katherine Culpepper, First Presbyterian Church
Rev. Laura Martin, Rock Spring UCC
Rev. Marilyn Chilcote, St. John's Presbyterian, Berkeley
Rev. Michael Coburn, Church of the Ascension
Rev. Natalie Chamberlain, First Congregational-UCC, Tulare
Rev. Sandie Richards, First UMC of San Fernando
Rev. Steven Klemz, Zion Lutheran Church
Rev. Willie Allen-Faiella, St. Stephen's Episcopal Church
Rev. Dr. Alan Jones, St. Mark's United Methodist Church, Sacramento
Rev. Emily Lin, Chinese Community United Methodist Church
Rev. Kayla Bonewell, Church of the Open Arms & Cathedral of Hope
Rev. Kent Gilbert, Union Church
Rev. Mark Lancaster, Generous Heart Sangha
Rev. Pamela Werner, St. James Lutheran
Rev. Pat Jones, Living Water
Rev. Paul Elder, St. Aidan's Episcopal Church
Rev. Rebecca Ninke, Brooklyn Lutheran
Rev. Robert Wagener, Green Valley United Methodist Church
Rev. Talitha Arnold, United Church of Santa Fe
Rev. Teresa Jones, Sacred Space
Rev. Will McGarvey, Community Presbyterian Church of Pittsburg, CA
Rev. Adlerette Kebreau, Jesus is Lord Church
Rev. Ailsa Guardiola Gonzalez, First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Tucson, AZ
Rev. Barbara J. Maxwell Barbara Maxwell, Episcopal Diocese of Ohio
Rev. Barbara Martin, Union Congregational United Church of Christ
Rev. Beth O'Malley, Hood College
Rev. Beverley Snedeker, First UCC of Houston
Rev. Carol McVetty, American Baptist Churches, Metro Chicago
Rev. CC Coltrain, Center for Spiritual Living Greater Dayton
Rev. Cecil Prescod, Ainsworth United Church of Christ
Rev. Dawn King, Dixon United Methodist Church
Rev. Dawn Weaks, Connection Christian
Rev. Deacon Nancy Lanman, Central UMC (retired)
Rev. Diane Mettam, United Methodist Church
Rev. Dr. William Olewiler, Fleming Island United Methodist
Rev. Dr. Beth Johnson, Palomar Unitarian Universalist Fellowship
Rev. Dr. David Ames, St. Martin’s Church
Rev. Dr. Dennis Orsen, Emmanuel Lutheran Church
Rev. Dr. Edward Barrett, Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd
Rev. Dr. Jo Anne Lyon, The Wesleyan Church
Rev. Dr. John Dorhauer, United Church of Christ
Rev. Dr. Robert Kaku Gunn, Empty Hand Zen Center
Rev. Dr. Allison Tanner, Lakeshore Avenue Baptist Church
Rev. Dr. Becky Edmiston-Lange, Emerson Unitarian Universalist Church
Rev. Dr. Chuck Currie, Pacific University Center for Peace and Spirituality
Rev. Dr. Cindy Jacobsen, Lutheran Church of the Redeemer
Rev. Dr. David Hindman, Gloucester-Mathews Charge
Rev. Dr. David Schoen, United Church of Christ
Rev. Dr. Earl Trent Jr., Florida Avenue Baptist Church
Rev. Dr. Gary Doupe, First United Methodist Church
Rev. Dr. Janet Wolfe, First Presbyterian, Marshfield WI (retired)
Rev. Dr. Jerome King Del Pino, The United Methodist Church
Rev. Dr. Jessica Anschutz, Cold Spring/South Highland United Methodist Church
Rev. Dr. Katherine Epperly, Disciple Home Missions, Christian Church Disciples of Christ
Rev. Dr. Kathryn Nix, Trinity United Methodist Church
Rev. Dr. Paul Ziese, MacArthur Park Lutheran Church
Rev. Dr. Samuel Speers, Vassar College
Rev. Dr. Suzanne Allen, United Methodist Church
Rev. Dr. Tom Pasmore, Avenue United Methodist Church
Rev. Eliot Moss, Grace Episcopal Church
Rev. Elizabeth Congdon, Old First Church, Middletown, NJ
Rev. Emilia Halstead, First Congregational Church UCC, Concord
Rev. Frederick Morris, North Hills UMC Hispanic Mission
Rev. Gail Kinney, Meriden (NH) Congregational Church, UCC
Rev. Glenda Survance, First Christian Church
Rev. Heather Branton, Community Church of Atascadero
Rev. James Conn, United Methodist
Rev. Jan LaVake, Our Saviors Lutheran, Oshkosh WI
Rev. Jason Bense, Lutheran Church of Our Redeemer
Rev. Jason Lee, Clarkston International Bible Church
Rev. Jennifer Amy-Dressler, The Duluth Congregational Church
Rev. Jessica Vacketta, University Christian Church
Rev. Jim Dale, First United Methodist Church
Rev. Jimmie Hawkins, Office of Public Witness
Rev. John Gregory-Davis, Meridne Congregational Church, UCC
Rev. John Long, First Presbyterian Church
Rev. John McCullough, Church World Service, Inc.
Rev. John Shaffer, Stanwood United Methodist Church
Rev. John Ward-Diorio, St. Paul's United Church of Christ
Rev. Julie Wilson, Calvary United Methodist
Rev. Kara Wagner Sherer, St. John's Episcopal Church
Rev. Kathy Donley, Emmanuel Baptist Church
Rev. Kay Woike, Church of the Nativity UCC
Rev. Kenneth Heintzelman, Shadow Rock United Church of Christ
Rev. Kim Mislin Cran, First Congregational Church UCC
Rev. Kris Bjerke-Ulliman, St. Timothy Lutheran Church
Rev. Laura Folkwein, University Congregational UCC
Rev. Laura Sinche, Baltimore Lutheran Campus Ministry
Rev. LeDayne Polaski, Bautistas por la Paz
Rev. Linda Jones, Barnesville First United Methodist Church
Rev. Lindsay Louise Biddle, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
Rev. Maren Tirabassi, Second Christian Congregational Church, Kittery, Maine
Rev. Marilyn Chilcote, St. John's Presbyterian
Rev. Martha Brimm, Chapel of the Cross
Rev. Martha Sexton, St. Mark Presbyterian
Rev. Mary Garner, St. Paul's Episcopal Church
Rev. Mary Jo Bradshaw, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
Rev. Mary Kay Sauter, Plymouth Congregational Church
Rev. Mary Kay Will, United Methodist Church (retired)
Rev. Mary Lee-Clark, Second Congregational Church, U.C.C.
Rev. Merle Showers, University United Methodist Church
Rev. Michael Mulberry, Billings First Congregational (UCC)
Rev. Ned Wight, Unitarian Universalist Congregation at Shelter Rock
Rev. Patricia Welch, Northgate Free Methodist Church
Rev. Patrick Walker, Susquehanna Conference UMC
Rev. Paul Hagedorn, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Rev. Robin Brooks, Epiphany Lutheran Church
Rev. Ross Carmichael, St. Andrew Lutheran Church
Rev. Sandi John, Pastoral Counseling and Spiritual Direction
Rev. Sandra Strauss, Pennsylvania Council of Churches
Rev. Seth Kaper-Dale, The Reformed Church of Highland Park
Rev. Steve Garnaas-Holmes, St. Matthew's United Methodist Church
Rev. Sue Joiner, First Congregational UCC
Rev. Susan Gregory-Davis, Meridne Congregational Church, UCC
Rev. Taryn Mattice, Protestant Cooperative Ministry at Cornell University
Rev. Thomas Shea, Congregation of Holy Cross
Rev. Tina Lang, First United Methodist
Rev. Tom Hagood, Columbia Presbyterian Church
Rev. Vanessa Cardinale, South Congregational Church
Rev. Wilfredo Benitez, Flushing Interfaith Council
Rev. Yolanda Roger Anthony Mapes, Mighty Companions Ministries
Roshi Joan Halifax, Upaya Zen Center
Secretary, Mystic Area Ecumenical Council Julia Porter, St. Mark's Episcopal Church
Sensei Peter Joyru Harris, Treetop Zen Center
Sister Andrea Koverman, Sisters of Charity of Cincinnati
Sister Cynthia Marie Babyak, Felician Sisters
Sister Joan Quinn, Sisters of IHM
Sister Kate O'Donnell OSF, Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia
Sister Angelica Smialowicz, Felician Sisters of North America
Sister Brigid Lawlor, Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd
Sister Carol Boschert, Sisters of the Most Precious Blood of O'Fallon, MO
Sister Carren Herring, Sisters of Mercy
Sister Ceil Roeger, Dominican Sisters of Houston
Sister Christelle Sawicki, Felician Sisters of North America
Sister Christine Stankiewicz, Felician Sisters
Sister Dorothy Moczygemba, Felician Sisters
Sister Dorothy Pagosa, Sisters of St. Joseph-TOSF
Sister Eilis McCulloh, Sisters of the Humility of Mary
Sister Francine Sousa, Felician Sisters
Sister Janet Luecke, Sisters of St. Francis
Sister Kathleen Bauer, School Sisters of Notre Dame - Central Pacific Province
Sister Laura Jean Spaeth, School Sisters of Notre Dame
Sister Louise Alff, Sisters of St. Francis of the Neumann Communities
Sister Marcelline Koch, Dominican Sisters
Sister Mary Cynthia Ann Machlik, Felician Sisters
Sister Mary Jessica Terek, Felician Sisters
Sister Mary Louis Rustowicz, Felician Sisters
Sister Mary McCauley, Sisters of Charity, BVM
Sister Mary Wendeln C.P.P.S., Sisters of the Precious Blood Dayton, Ohio
Sister Maryann Mueller, Felician Sisters
Sister Maureen Helak, Felician Franciscan Sisters
Sister Nancy Jamroz, Felician Sisters of North America
Sister Rose Therese Nolta, Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters
Sister Rosemarie Goins, Felician Franciscan Sisters of North America
Sister Sara Aldridge, Sisters of St. Francis of Tiffin, OH
Sister Theresa Pietrzak, Felician Sisters
Sister Therese Bangert, Social Justice Coordinator
Social Responsibility Leader Van Thawng, Greater Houston Burmese Christian Fellowship
Sr. Rose Mary Meyer, Sisters of Charity, BVM
Sr. Anna Marie Reha, School Sisters of Notre Dame
Sr. Barbara Juszkiewicz, Felician Sisters
Sr. Christine Garcia, School Sisters of Notre Dame
Sr. Clare Millea, Apostles of the Sacred Heart of Jesus
Sr. LaDonna Manternach, Sisters of Charity, BVM
Sr. Mary Faith Balawejder, Felician Sisters of North America
Teacher Maureen Shannon-Chapple, InsightLA
The Rev. Christine Payden-Travers, retired Episcopal priest
The Rev. Teresa Danieley, Episcopal Diocese of Missouri
The Rev. Anne Vouga, St. Andrew's Episcopal Church
The Rev. Canon Nancy Ross, Saint Mark's Episcopal Cathedral
The Rev. Dr. James Boston, St. George's Episcopal Church
The Rev. Dr. Jonathan Barton, Virginia Council of Churches
The Rev. Dr. Roger Willer, Grace Lutheran Church
The Rev. Elizabeth Maxwell, Church of the Ascension
The Rev. Fr. Peter De Franco, OSB, St. John the Baptist Episcopal Church
The Rev. Jeffrey Spencer, Niles Discovery Church
The Rev. Sarah Nichols, Episcopal Diocese of Los Angeles
The Rev. Susan Quinn Bryan, Honorably Retired, Presbyterian Church USA
The Rev. Susan Stiles, St. Augustine's Episcopal Church
The Rev. Wilma Reichard, Ladera Community Church
The Reverend Johanna Young, St. John's Episcopal Church
The Venerable Catherine Cooke, Cathedral Church of St. Paul
U.S. Director Carol Bremer-Bennett, World Renew
United States Margaret Johnson, Trinity Lutheran
United States Michael Vosler, UCC Petaluma, CA

**Faith Organizations**

Asbury United Methodist Church
Board of Social Action Plymouth Congregational United Church of Christ
Catholic Charities Archdiocese of Boston
Catholic Charities Inc. of Jackson - Migrant Support Center
Catholic Charities of West Tennessee
Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc.
Centro Comunitario CEUS
Church World Service
Community of Sant'Egidio
DC-Maryland Justice for Our Neighbors
Disciples Refugee & Immigration Ministries
East Texas Justice For Our Neighbors
Franciscan Action Network
Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters, USA - JPIC
Immigrant Family Support Network
Jesuit Refugee Service/USA
Jesuit Social Research Institute
Leadership Conference of Women Religious
Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service
Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns
National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd
National Council of Jewish Women
National Justice for Our Neighbors
New Hampshire Conference United Church of Christ Immigrant and Refugee Support Group
Office of Social Justice, Christian Reformed Church in North America
Oregon Interfaith Movement for Immigrant Justice
Pax Christi Illinois
PICO National Network
Schenectady Inner City Ministry
Sisters of Charity of Nazareth Congregational Leadership
Sisters of Mercy of the Americas - Institute Justice Team
Sisters of Saint Francis of Perpetual Adoration
Unitarian Universalist Mass Action Network