January 23, 2018

The Honorable Kirstjen Nielsen
Secretary
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
3801 Nebraska Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20528

RE: REQUEST TO RE-DESIGNATE AND EXTEND THE LIFESAVING TPS DESIGNATION FOR SYRIA FOR AT LEAST ANOTHER 18 MONTHS

Dear Secretary Nielsen,

As 231 faith leaders and 64 faith-based organizations from across traditions, we call on you to re-designate Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for Syria to March 31, 2018 and extend the designation for at least another 18 months in order to protect more recently-arrived Syrians from the horrors of war. We are united by our collective American and faith values that we must welcome and protect those made vulnerable by the violence and tragedies caused by the Syrian war. We pray that you show compassion in your discernment process, as we must not turn our backs on those who have lost so much. As Islamic doctrine teaches: “They love those who emigrated to them and find not any desire in their hearts of what the emigrants were given, but rather give them preference over themselves, even though they are in privation. Whoever is protected from the greediness of his own soul, then those will be successful.” (Surat Al-Hashr 59:9)

Terminating TPS for Syria would go against basic principles of human dignity, justice, and mercy. Approximately 5,800 Syrian TPS holders live in the United States today.1 TPS holders are an integral part of the fabric of our community; they are our neighbors, peacefully living their lives, caring for their families, and contributing to the U.S. economy. Failure to extend TPS for Syria would result in the forcible return of thousands of our neighbors to a country that has been decimated by a war that continues to shock the world’s conscience and has produced the largest refugee crisis of our time.

Syria was first designated for TPS in 2012, as the civil war plaguing the nation made country conditions unlivable and unsafe.2 A violent government repression of what began as peaceful demonstrations by the public in 2011 has become one of the most destructive and fatal conflicts in recent history. Over 5.4 million people have fled Syria since the conflict began, and the United Nations estimates that more than 400,000 people have been killed.3 Reports have surfaced documenting the use of chemical weapons against civilians as recently as April, 2017.4 In addition to government-sponsored humanitarian and human rights violations, the Syrian people have also been subjected to violence at the hands of terrorist groups, primarily ISIS.5

The impact of the war on civilians is exacerbated by the inhumane tactics used by many of the warring parties, such as siege warfare, and deliberate deprival of food, medicine and water.6 There have been deliberate attacks on areas predominantly populated by civilians such as hospitals and schools, violating...

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international humanitarian law and leaving no safe places for Syrians.\textsuperscript{7} As you consider whether to re-designate and extend the TPS designation for Syria, we implore you to remember that the TPS program exists to protect people from being returned to harm, such as armed conflict, natural disasters, or other extraordinary and temporary conditions, and the situation in Syria is one of the worst civil wars in decades.

We pray that you heed our call to re-designate TPS for Syria to March 31, 2018 and extend the designation for at least another 18 months. Without an extension, 5,800 Syrians would lose their legal status and face deportation to a nation at war. As people of faith, we are reminded of Leviticus 19:33-34, which tells 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.” We implore you to think about the moral imperative to love our neighbor and welcome the sojourner, particularly those fleeing violence.

Sincerely,

\textbf{Faith Leaders}

Sister Sara Aldridge, Sisters of St. Francis
Rev. Dr. Suzanne Allen, United Methodist
Rev. Dr. Eileen Altman, First Congregational Church of Palo Alto, UCC
Rev. Dr. David Ames, Episcopal
Reverend Eric Anspaugh, Antioch COB
Mary Faith Balawejder, Local Justice and Peace Coordinator, Felician Sisters of North America
Sister Ruth Battaglia, Sisters of St. Agnes Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation Office
Rabbi Renee Bauer, Jewish Social Services of Madison
Rabbi Philip Bazeley, Anshe Emeth Memorial Temple
Rev. Dave Bean, Pioneer United Methodist Church
Georgette F. Bennett PhD, Founder, Multifaith Alliance for Syrian Refugees
Rev. Jason Bense, Lutheran Church of Our Redeemer
Rev. Frank Bergen, Episcopal Church of St. Matthew
Sister Elizabeth Bickar, Sisters of Charity Halifax
Rev. Lindsay Louise Biddle, Presbyterian Church
Rev. Annabel Boissevain, Floating Zendo
Sister Carol Boschert, Sisters of the Most Precious Blood of O'Fallon, MO
Rev. Dr. James Boston, St. George Episcopal Church
Rev. Dr. Chloe Breyer, Interfaith Center of New York
Rev. Dr. Norman Broadbent, United Church of Christ
Rev. Gail Brooks, United Methodist Church
Rev. Arthur Brown, Board of Social Action, Plymouth Congregational UCC
Reverend Cheryl Brumbaugh-Cayford, Church of the Brethren
Sr. Kathleen Bryant, Religious Sisters of Charity
Rev. Ross Carmichael, St. Andrew Lutheran Church - ELCA
Sr. Mary Carr, Dominicans of Adrian
Rev. Mary Carson, St. James Episcopal Church
Sr. Rosalie Carven, Sisters of St. Joseph Brentwood, NY
Rev. Koshin Casey, Member of the Buddhist Peace Fellowship and the North American Buddhist Alliance
Janice Cebula, President, Sisters of St. Francis, Clinton, Iowa
Rev Natalie Chamberlain, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
Dr Arturo Chávez, Mexican American Catholic College
Dr. Joseph Chuman, Ethical Culture
Rev. Charles Claycomb, United Methodist Church - Retired
Sr. Sister Benita Coffey OSB, Promoter of Social Justice, Benedictine Sisters of Chicago
Mrs. Joanne Coghill, First Church in Windsor, UCC

Sr. Melda Comeau, Sister of Charity
Sr. Patricia Connolly, Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul
Sister Patricia Corbett, Congregation of St. Joseph
Pastoral Minister Tom Cordaro, St. Margaret Mary Catholic Church
Sr. Patricia Cormack, Sisters of Mercy of the Holy Cross
Fr. Daniel Corrou, St. Francis Xavier Catholic Parish
Dr. James Croft, Ethical Society of St. Louis
Rev. Dr. Chuck Currie, Pacific University Center for Peace and Spirituality
Sr. Denise Curry, Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur
Fr. Richard Czyzynski, Priests of the Sacred Heart
Sr. Colleen Dauerbach, Sisters of Saint Joseph of Chestnut Hill, Philadelphia
Sr. Carol De Angelo, Sisters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul of New York
Sr. Hortensia Del Villar, Diocese of San Bernardino
Rev. Sophia DeWitt, United Church of Christ
Sister Lisa Marie Di Sabatino, Felician Sisters of North America
Father John P. Duffell, Blessed Sacrament
Sr. JT Dwyer, Daughters of Charity
Rev. Dr. Lyle Dykstra, Presbyterian Church
Rev. Joseph Easley, Indiana Conference, United Methodist Church
Sr. Patricia Eck, Congregation of Bon Secours
Rev. Reuben Eckels, Church World Service
Ms. Vonny Eckman, St. Paul’s United Church of Christ, Mechanicsburg, PA
Rev. Elizabeth Eddy, Good Shepherd Episcopal Church
Rev. Dr. Becky Edmiston-Lange, Emerson Unitarian Universalist Church
Sr. Margaret Elkeman, Ursulines of Cincinnati
Sister Kathleen Erickson, Sisters of Mercy
Rev. Diane Faires, St. Paul’s Christian Church
Rev. David Farrell CSC, Congregation of Holy Cross
Marie Fennewald, Member of the Leadership Team, Sisters of the Most Precious Blood
Sr. Desire Findlay, Felician Sisters
Rev Julie Fleurinor-Moore, Calvary UMC
Rev. Laura Folkwein, University Congregational Church
Rabbi Ruth Gais, Chavurat Lamdeinu
Rev. Dr. Daniel Gangler, The United Methodist Church
Rev. Steve Garnaas-Holmes, St. Matthew’s United Methodist Church
Rev. Alice Geils Nord, New Hope Presbytery/ PC
Rev. Dr. Gordon Gibson, Tennessee Valley Unitarian Universalist Church
Sr. Rosemarie Goins, Felician Franciscan
Rev. Justo Gonzalez II, Ministerios Rios de Agua Viva
Sr. Laura Gormley, SSL
Sr. Mary Edmund Gorski, Sisters of St. Felix of Cantelice (Felician Sister)
Ms. Sarah Granger, St. Andrew Catholic Church
Sr. Muriel Griffin, United Methodist
Rev. Elizabeth Griswold, Parkside Community Church, UCC
Sr. Frances Gritte, Sr. of Charity - Hfx
Rev. Victoria Hadaway, Cherry Valley United Methodist Church
Rev. Paul Hagedorn, ELCA
Rev. Tom Hagood, Columbia Presbyterian Church
Sr. Rita Mary Harwood, Catholic Diocese of Cleveland
Rev. Dale Hempen, United Church of Christ
Rev. Nathan Hill, University Christian Church
Rev. Dr. David Hindman, Clergy, The United Methodist Church
Rev. Charles Hoffacker, Priest Associate, St. John’s Episcopal Church, Beltsville, MD
Fr. Jim Hoffman OFM, Sacred Heart OFM Province
Rev. Patricia Hollinger, MS, LCPC, Church of the Brethren/Quaker
Rev. Joyce Hollyday, Circle of Mercy
Sr. Janet Horstman, Sisters of the Presentation
Rev. James Hug, Catholic
Dr. Mary Hunt, Women's Alliance for Theology, Ethics, and Ritual (WATER)
Sr. Victoria Indyk, Felician Sister
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Rev. Lucretia Jevne, St. Brigid of Kildare Episcopal Church
Rev. Sandi John, Alliance of Baptists
Dr. Margaret Johnson, Ezher Bloom Mosque
Elder Ann Jones, Presbyterian
Sr. Bernadette Kapfer, Felician Sisters
Sr. Bernadine Karge, Dominican Sister of Sinsinawa
Dr. Cheryl Kaufman, Anglican
Pastor Adlerette Kebreau, Jesus is Lord Church
Sr. Marcelline Koch, Dominican Sisters
Mrs. Ida Kokal, St. Andrew United Methodist Church
Sr. Andrea Koverman, Sisters of Charity of Cincinnati
Benedictine Associate Mary Kozmik, St Paul's Monastery
Pastor Barry Kreider, Pilgrims Mennonite Church
Rev. Dan Krutz, Louisiana Interchurch Conference
Sr. Julie Kubasak, Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul
Rev Kathy La Point-Collup, United Methodist
Sr. Joan Lang, Congregation of St. Joseph
Rev. Paul Langston-Daley, UUSC
Diane Lauber Doherty, Lay leader, Church of the Covenant Boston, United Church of Christ and Presbyterian
Rev. R. Vincent Lavieri, United Church of Christ
Layman Don Leach Jr., Non-Denominational
Rev. Dr. Jacqueline Linden-Schade, Preston Meadow Lutheran Church
Rev. Mark Lingle, St. Francis Episcopal Church
Dharma Teacher Kaira Jewel Lingo, Order of Interbeing
Dominica Lo Bianco, Hispanic Leader, Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia
Rev. John Long, Presbyterian Church
Sr. Patricia Lowery, Medical Mission sisters
Rev. Eve MacMaster, Emmanuel Mennonite Church
The Venerable Carole Maddux, Diocese of Atlanta
Rev. Dr. Sue Magidson, Unitarian Universalist Church of Berkeley
Sister Mary Mahowald, Franciscans
Rev. Dr. Linda Maloney, Episcopal Diocese of Vermont
Follower Chelsea Markham Lyle, Non-Denominational
Rev Dr. Marvin Marsh, Central Baptist Church
Sr. Donna McGartland, Sisters of St Francis
Rev. Diane Mettam, United Methodist Church
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Lay Pastor Sandra Miller, Seekers Church
Rev. Akiko Miyake-Stoner, United Japanese Christian Church
Dorothy Moczrygemma, Director of Faith Formation, St. Clare Catholic Church
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Rev. Dr. Donna Morton, United Methodist Church
Rev. Eliot Moss, Episcopal Diocese of Western Massachusetts
Sister Maryann Mueller, Felician Sisters
Dr. Siraj Mufti, Islam
Rev. Michael Mulberry, Billings First Congregational Church (UCC)
Sr. Rose Therese Nolta, Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters
Rev. Bernard Nord, Presbytery of New Hope/PC(U.S.A.)
Sr. Karen Nykkel, Benedictine Sisters of the Sacred Heart
Regional Coordinator Nancy Oetter, Pax Christi Illinois
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Rev. Jonathan Page, First Congregational Church of Houston
Rabbi Andrew Paley, Temple Shalom
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Sr. Michaeleen Pardowsky, Felician Sisters
Andrea Paret, Peace with Justice Coordinator, The Great Plains Conference of The United Methodist Church
Sr. Annelle Paszyna, Felician Sisters
Elder Glenda Pawsey, St. John’s Presbyterian Church, Berkeley
The Rev. Christine Payden-Travers, retired Episcopal priest
Campus Minister Clotilde Pichon, St. Mary’s Catholic Church
Sister Theresa Pietrzak, Felician Sisters
Rev. LeDayne Polaski, BPFNA ~ Bautistas por la Paz
Br. Michael Potvin-Frost, Order of Franciscan Hermits
Sister Joan Quinn, St. Benedict
Rev. Erin Racine, West End United Methodist Church
Sister Rita Ramos, Sisters of the Living Word
Deacon Michael Rich, Park Avenue Congregational Church, United Church of Christ, Arlington, MA
Br. Jerry Rivers, Church of Christ/ NACCE
Sr. Veronica Roche, Sisters of St. Joseph
Sister Ceil Roeger, Dominican Sisters of Houston
Mr. Roberto Rojas, Catholic Church
Rev. Dr. Ruth Rosell, Prairie Baptist Church
Dr. Spiritual Teacher Donald Rothberg, Spirit Rock
Sr. Rosemary Russel, Immigrants and Refugee Committee, Sisters of the Most Precious Blood, O’Fallon, MO
Mr. Rob Rutland-Brown, National Justice for Our Neighbors
Sister Laura Santos, Sisters of the Holy Cross
Rita Schmitz, Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet
Rev. Elaine Schoepf, Seaside UCC
Congregant May Sebel, Temple Emanu-El
Rabbi Gerald Serotta, Chevy Chase
Rabbi Drorah Setel, Temple Emanu-El
Rev. Martha Sexton, Presbyterian (USA)
Rev Tom Sea, Congregation of Holy Cross
Rev. Ruth Sheets, U.C.C
Pastor Tom Sims, 4141 Ministries
Sister Angelica Smialowicz, Felician Sisters of North America
Dr. J. Alfred Smith, Jr., Allen Temple Baptist Church/ PNBC & ABCUSA
Dr. John Sniegocki, Xavier University
Rabbi Eric Solomon, Beth Meyer Synagogue
Sr. Francine Sousa, Felician Sisters
Mr. Gregory Speltz, St. Patrick Church
The Rev. Fr. Bob Spencer, Episcopal (Retired)
Bishop C. Joseph Sprague, United Methodist Church-Council of Bishops
Rev. Colleen Squires, All Souls Community Church of W Michigan
Sister Christine Stankiewicz, Felician/Franciscan Sister
Revd. Tanya Stormo Rasmussen, Congregational Church of Hollis, UCC
Sister Aquinas Szott, Felician Sisters
Reverend Cara Tanis, ELCA
Rev. Dr. Allison Tanner, Lakeshore Avenue Baptist Church
Pastor Becky Taylor, Seeker's Harbor Faith Community - DOC
Reverend Wendy Taylor, THE UNITED CHURCHES, UCC/Presby
Reverend Wendy Taylor, UCC/Presby The United Churches
Sister SheilaMarie Tobbe, Ursuline Sisters of Cleveland  
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Rev. George Tulloch, Church of St. Paul and St. Andrew--United Methodist  
Rev. Rebecca Turner, Christ Church UCC  
Sister Julianne Vagnozzi, Felician Sisters of North America  
Rev Jane Van Zandt, Grace Episcopal Manchester NH  
Rev. Kara Wagner Sherer, St. John's Episcopal Church  
Rev. John Ward-Diorio, St. Paul's United Church of Christ of Mechanicsburg, PA  
Reverend Leslie Watson Malachi, African American Ministers In Action  
Pastor Pamela Werner, St. James, ELCA  
Sr. Veronique Wiedower CSC, Sisters of the Holy Cross  
Rev. Ned Wight, UU Congregation at Shelter Rock  
Sister Susan Wilcox, Sisters of St. Joseph of Brentwood, NY  
Rev. Mary Kay Will, United Methodist Church  
Pastor (CRE) Ruth Willford, Spirit Lake Presbyterian Church (PC/USA)  
Rev. Sharon Williams, Nueva Vida Norristown New Life Mennonite Church  
Patrice Williams, Elizabethtown Church of the Brethren  
Rev. Sherry Williams, Episcopal church  
Rev. Merrilee Wineinger, Edgehill United Methodist Church  
Cantor Shulamit Wise Fairman, Kehilla Synagogue  
Rev. Dr. Bruce Wismar, Pine Shores Presbyterian  
Pastor Ben Woodward-Breckbill, Shalom Mennonite Church, Mennonite Church USA  
Rev. Linda Wygant, Grace Seeds Ministry  
Rev. Allan Wysocki, St. Paul Lutheran  
Ms. Eleanor Yasgur, Buddhist  
Sister Angela Ybarra, Felician Sisters of North America  
Rev. David Young, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America  
The Rev. Johanna Young, St. John's, Walpole  
Rev. Dr. Paul Ziese, MacArthur Park Lutheran Church  
Bro. Anthony Zuba, Capuchin Franciscans  

**Faith-based Organizations**  
Adores of the Blood of Christ  
African American Ministers In Action  
Agencia ALPHA  
Arab American Association of New York  
Bethany Christian Services  
Brandeis Catholic Community  
Catholic Charities Archdiocese of Boston  
Catholic Charities of Central and Northern Missouri  
Catholic Charities of West TN  
Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc.  
Church of the Blessed Sacrament, Manhattan  
Church World Service  
DC-Maryland Justice for Our Neighbors  
Diocesan Migrant & Refugee Services, Inc.  
Dominican Sisters ~ Grand Rapids  
Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon  
Emgage Foundation  
Evangelicals for Middle East Understanding  
Faith in Public Life  
Franciscan Action Network  
Franciscans for Justice  
Friends Committee on National Legislation  
Immigrant Family Support Network - Wichita
Interfaith Movement for Human Integrity
Interfaith Welcome Coalition
Jesuit Refugee Service/USA
Jesuit Social Research Institute
Justice Team of the Congregation of St. Joseph
Justice, Peace and Reconciliation Commission, Priests of the Sacred Heart, US Province
Leadership Conference of Women Religious
Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service
Mount Grace Convent
National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd
National Council of Churches
NHCUCC Immigration Working Group
North American Climate, Conservation and Environment (NACCE)
Office of Social Justice, Christian Reformed Church in North America
Oregon Interfaith Movement for Immigrant Justice - IMIJ
Our Lady Queen of Peace Catholic Church
Partnership for Global Justice
Pax Christi USA, Illinois, Seed Planters
Pilgrim United Church of Christ
Priests of the Sacred Heart
Project IRENE
Scalabrini International Migration Network
School Sisters of Notre Dame - Central Pacific Province
School Sisters of Notre Dame Atlantic-Midwest Province JPIC Office
Sisters of Bon Secours, USA
Sisters of Charity of Nazareth Congregational Leadership
Sisters of Charity of Nazareth Western Province Leadership
Sisters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul of New York
Sisters of Charity, BVM
Sisters of Mercy of the Americas Institute Justice Team
Sisters of Mercy South Central Community
Sisters of Mercy West Midwest Community
Sisters of Saint Joseph of Chestnut Hill, Philadelphia, PA
Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet
Sisters of St. Joseph, TOSF
Sisters of the Holy Family
Sisters of the Most Precious Blood Leadership Team
Sisters of the Presentation of Mary
Thrive International Programs
Unitarian Universalist Service Committee
United Church of Christ, Justice and Witness Ministries