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April 17, 2017

The Honorable John F. Kelly  
Secretary, Department of Homeland Security  
Washington, DC 20528

VIA EMAIL

**RE: Extension of TPS Designation for Haitians**

Dear Secretary Kelly,

We write to urge you to extend the designation of Haiti for Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for an additional 18 months. As you know, Haiti was initially designated for TPS after the 2010 earthquake and then redesignated for TPS in 2011; the most recent [extension](#) of this status is set to expire on July 22, 2017.<sup>1</sup>

As Haitians cannot be safely returned to Haiti at this time, our nation has a moral responsibility to provide continued temporary protection. Haiti has yet to recover from the devastation left in the wake of Hurricane Matthew, which struck in October 2016 and is said to be the nation's largest humanitarian emergency since the 2010 earthquake. The flooding and destruction caused by the hurricane has contributed to a significant increase in cholera and food shortages. [Reports](#) indicate that there was a 40% increase in cholera in the months following the disaster,<sup>2</sup> with 41,421 cholera cases and 447 cholera-related deaths [reported](#) in 2016.<sup>3</sup> In addition, massive crop and livestock loss has impacted the harvest season and is [expected](#) to lead to continued food insecurity in 2017.<sup>4</sup> Unfortunately, the devastation has also left many areas without the ability to provide basic health care to vulnerable individuals. The suffering and destruction that remains in Haiti was most recently illustrated by [reports](#) that 240 individuals who lost their homes and crops during the disaster have been forced to take shelter in a cave near the Jérémie area since the hurricane.<sup>5</sup> It is with great sadness that we know of this dire situation in Haiti that is corroborated by our Catholic partners on the ground who are attempting to provide relief.

Given the current country conditions in Haiti, terminating TPS would be inhumane and untenable. We ask you to show compassion and patience during Haiti's path to recovery. We are concerned

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<sup>1</sup> Extension of the Designation of Haiti for Temporary Protected Status, 80 Fed. Reg. 51,582 (Aug. 25, 2015).

<sup>2</sup> UNITED NATIONS OFFICE FOR THE COORDINATION OF HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS (OCHA), SITUATION REPORT: HAITI – HURRICANE MATTHEW (MARCH 4, 2017), <http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/OCHA%20Situation%20Report%20%2335%20Hurricane%20Matthew%20Haiti%2004%20March%202017.pdf>.

<sup>3</sup> Adrienne Lefevre, *Controlling Cholera in Haiti*, RELIEFWEB (April 4, 2017), <http://reliefweb.int/report/haiti/controlling-cholera-haiti-no-easy-task>.

<sup>4</sup> OCHA, *supra* note 2.

<sup>5</sup> Tim Padgett, *South Florida Aid Group Urges Housing Aid For Haiti After Finding More Cave Dwellers*, WRLN (March 27, 2017), <http://wrln.org/post/south-florida-aid-group-urges-housing-aid-haiti-after-finding-more-cave-dwellers>.

about the Haitian people and believe that one element of ensuring stability is extending the designation of TPS for Haiti.

Haiti is in no position to accommodate the return of the estimated 58,000 Haitians who have received TPS from the United States. Doing so would undoubtedly destabilize the small nation and potentially bring harm to those returned. In addition, terminating TPS would needlessly create a large unauthorized Haitian population in the U.S., lead to family separation, and cause DHS to expend resources and detention bed space on individuals who are already registered with our government and whose safe return is forestalled by dire humanitarian conditions. Furthermore, not extending TPS would strain American communities that have significant Haitian populations.

Accordingly, we urge you to extend the TPS designation, pursuant to [Section 244\(b\) of the Immigration and Nationality Act](#),<sup>6</sup> until individuals' return and reintegration can be safely accomplished. This will allow Haitians to continue to legally work, contribute to our communities in an authorized capacity, and live with dignity. In addition, it would help facilitate Haiti's long-term reconstruction by refraining from returning 58,000 people to a fragile country and, instead, allowing those individuals to continue to send home remittances to help that country rebuild.

For these reasons, extending TPS is both a compassionate and reasonable action. We ask that you grant this extension as soon as possible. We appreciate your consideration of this request, as many of our Dioceses here in the United States have relationships of mission and pastoral care and outreach with many Dioceses in Haiti. Many of our Catholic people have a knowledge of the difficult situation in Haiti and a great care and commitment to outreach to them. The Catholic Church stands ready to support measures to protect the well-being and dignity of Haitian families during Haiti's path to recovery.

Respectfully,



Most Rev. Joe Vasquez  
Chairman, Committee on Migration  
USCCB



Sean Callahan  
President and CEO  
Catholic Relief Services



Sr. Donna Markham, OP, PhD  
President & CEO  
Catholic Charities USA



Most Rev. Kevin Vann  
Chairman, Catholic Legal Immigration Network,  
Inc.

cc: James McCament, Acting Director and Permanent Deputy Director of U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services  
Lee Cissna, Presidential Nominee for Director of U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services