Temporary Protected Status

Advocacy Toolkit

“[I]f we want security, let us give security; if we want life, let us give life; if we want opportunities, let us provide opportunities. The yardstick we use for others will be the yardstick which time will use for us.”

-Pope Francis, 2015 Address to Congress

Fall 2017
Table of Contents

Advocating for Temporary Protected Status ............................................................................... 3
Temporary Protected Status Backgrounder (English) ................................................................. 4-5
TPS By Country .......................................................................................................................... 6
TPS Talking Points ................................................................................................................... 7
TPS By State ............................................................................................................................. 8
Ways to Take Action ................................................................................................................ 9-12

Photo credit: Jose A. Iglesias, Miami Herald
Advocating for Temporary Protected Status

Temporary Protected Status (TPS) allows individuals to remain and work lawfully in the U.S. during a period in which it is deemed unsafe for nationals of that country to return home due to natural disaster, armed conflict, or other extraordinary conditions. Currently, there are an estimated 320,000 individuals living in the U.S. with TPS. These are individuals with U.S. citizen children, mortgages, and careers in the U.S. Some have been here for over twenty years.

Starting this fall, the Administration will have to make decisions whether to extend TPS for a number of countries, including Honduras, Haiti, and El Salvador. The next few months will be key in terms of advocating for an extension of TPS for the remaining countries.

We believe our nation has a moral responsibility to provide continued temporary protection until TPS holders’ return and reintegration can be safely accomplished. TPS recipients are part of our country, our communities and our Church. They worship in our local churches, they own homes, businesses and contribute a great deal to our economy. They have become an integral part of fabric of our community.

As Catholics, we uphold justice, the common good and human dignity of every person. We are also responding to the call of Pope Francis who calls all Catholics to act in solidarity with the refugees, migrants and all those who seek shelter and safety from the ravages of violence, environmental disasters, hunger and despair.

We urge you to voice your support to maintain this critical humanitarian protection that allows individuals to live in safety and dignity while their countries of origin work to achieve stability and security. We hope you will find this toolkit helpful in your advocacy efforts around TPS.

Photo Credit: Frederic J. Brown/AFP/Getty Images
Temporary Protected Status Backgrounder

What is TPS?
Temporary Protected Status (TPS) was established by Congress through the Immigration Act of 1990. TPS is intended to protect foreign nationals in the United States from being returned to their home countries if the home country became unsafe to return to during the time in which the individuals were in the U.S. Under the law,¹ the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) may designate a foreign country for TPS in three scenarios:

1. Ongoing armed conflict (such as a civil war);
2. An environmental disaster (such as earthquake or hurricane) or an epidemic²; or
3. Other extraordinary and temporary conditions that prevent people from safely returning home to the country.

Does TPS Lead to Citizenship?
No. TPS does not provide a path to citizenship. Instead, it provides the right to be in the United States legally and legal work employment authorization which gives the TPS recipient the ability to pursue legal employment opportunities.

How Long Does TPS Last?
A country’s TPS designation can last from six months, at a minimum, to a maximum of 18 months, with the option to extend prior to the expiration of the designation period.

Who Decides Whether to Extend TPS?
The DHS Secretary is responsible for making the decision to extend a country’s TPS designation. The Secretary does so with input from appropriate agencies such as the State Department and the Department of Justice. TPS designation extensions can be similarly made for a period of six, 12, or 18 months.

Who Currently Has TPS?
There are ten countries currently designated for TPS and approximately 320,000 individuals in the United States with TPS. The vast majority of TPS recipients are from El Salvador, Honduras, and Haiti; there are approximately 195,000 Salvadorans, approximately 57,000 Hondurans, and approximately 50,000 Haitians who have TPS.

When Must the Decision to Extend TPS Be Made for El Salvador, Haiti and Honduras?
The current TPS designation for El Salvador is to expire on March 9, 2018,³ which means that the DHS Secretary must make a decision to extend or cancel the designation by January 8, 2018 to comply with statute’s notice requirements. Honduras’s TPS designation extends through January 5, 2018,⁴ which means that the DHS Secretary must make a decision to extend or cancel the designation by November 6, 2017.

² For this category only, the country of origin must also request the TPS designation.
2017. TPS for Haiti will run through January 22, 2018 and the DHS Secretary must make a decision to extend or cancel the designation by November 23, 2017.

Is There a Legislative Solution?
Yes, potentially. Congress could enact legislation that would codify protection for TPS recipients. However, it is unlikely that potential legislation will be able to pass both chambers of Congress and become law prior to the upcoming extension deadlines (November 2017 - January 2018).

What Will Happen If TPS Is Not Renewed and No Legislative Solution Is Reached?
In each country situation, if TPS is not extended, it means that current TPS recipients will be asked to prepare their travel documents and then return to their home countries. When choosing to cancel a country’s TPS designation, the Secretary of Homeland Security may provide a period of up to six months to make preparations for return, however, this is not required by law. After the designated time, if individuals remain in the U.S. without another form of relief, they will be considered undocumented, no longer allowed to legally work, and potentially targeted for removal.

What Will the Impact Be If TPS Designations Are Not Extended?
In addition to returning many individuals to unsafe or unstable conditions, failing to extend these countries’ TPS designations will tear numerous families apart. Some TPS recipients have been living in this country for over 15 years, and over 270,000 U.S. citizen children have been born to TPS recipients. Additionally, the home countries will be negatively affected as they will have to prepare for the return of large numbers of their nationals and face the end of remittances that TPS holders provide. Such remittances are invaluable to the economic prosperity of the home country. For example, in 2015, remittances to Haiti from the U.S. exceeded $1.3 billion, roughly 15% of Haiti’s GDP.

How Does TPS Relate to Catholic Social Teaching?
The Church defends each person’s right to live with dignity and the ability to provide for their families. As part of the pursuit of a dignified life and support for family, Church teaching recognizes the right to migrate and also the right not to migrate. TPS is a humanitarian provision that protects people from circumstances beyond their control and ensures that they will not be returned to hazardous and possibly deadly circumstances. It enables them to live safely in the U.S. at a time when they cannot do so in their country and ensures that recipients can live productive lives with their families absent fear.

You can find a printable version of the above backgrounder here.

This backgrounder is also available in –

- Spanish by clicking here
- French by clicking here

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TPS Decision Dates by Country

The chart below shows the ten countries that have been designated for TPS and when their status is set to expire. Due to statutory notice requirements, the Administration must make a decision to extend or terminate TPS for these countries 60 days in advance. The box in red below shows the relevant decision date for each country.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Expiration Date</th>
<th>Decision Date</th>
<th>Original Designation</th>
<th>Redesignations (if any)</th>
<th>Type of Designation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Honduras</td>
<td>57,000</td>
<td>Jan. 5, 2018</td>
<td>Nov. 6, 2017</td>
<td>Jan. 5, 1999</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>(B) environmental disaster and inability, temporarily, to accept returns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nicaragua</td>
<td>2,550</td>
<td>Jan. 5, 2018</td>
<td>Nov. 6, 2017</td>
<td>Jan. 5, 1999</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>(B) environmental disaster and inability, temporarily, to accept returns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haiti</td>
<td>50,000</td>
<td>Jan. 22, 2018</td>
<td>Nov. 23, 2017</td>
<td>Jan. 21, 2010</td>
<td>July 23, 2011</td>
<td>(C) extraordinary and temporary conditions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>El Salvador</td>
<td>195,000</td>
<td>Mar. 9, 2018</td>
<td>Jan. 8, 2018</td>
<td>Mar. 9, 2001</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>(B) environmental disaster and inability, temporarily, to accept returns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syria</td>
<td>5,800</td>
<td>Mar. 31, 2018</td>
<td>Jan. 30, 2018</td>
<td>Mar. 29, 2012</td>
<td>June 17, 2013; January 5, 2015; and Aug. 1, 2016</td>
<td>(A) ongoing armed conflict AND (C) extraordinary and temporary conditions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nepal</td>
<td>8,950</td>
<td>June 24, 2018</td>
<td>Apr. 25, 2018</td>
<td>June 24, 2015</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>(A) earthquake and inability, temporarily, to accept returns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yemen</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>Sept. 3, 2018</td>
<td>July 5, 2018</td>
<td>Sept. 3, 2015</td>
<td>Jan. 4, 2017</td>
<td>(A) ongoing armed conflict AND (C) extraordinary and temporary conditions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sudan</td>
<td>450</td>
<td>Termination effective Nov. 2, 2018</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Nov. 4, 1997</td>
<td>Nov. 9, 1999; Nov. 2, 2004; and May 3, 2013</td>
<td>(A) ongoing armed conflict AND (C) extraordinary and temporary conditions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Sudan</td>
<td>75,200</td>
<td>May 2, 2019</td>
<td>Mar. 3, 2019</td>
<td>Nov. 3, 2011</td>
<td>Sept. 2, 2014 and Jan. 25, 2016</td>
<td>(A) ongoing armed conflict AND (C) extraordinary and temporary conditions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2 INA 244(b)(3) requires that DHS make a decision 60 days prior to the expiration date and “timely” publish such determination in the Federal Register.
Talking Points on TPS

- Temporary Protected Status (TPS) is a humanitarian provision allows individuals to remain and work lawfully in the U.S. during a period in which is deemed unsafe for people to return to their home country. TPS ensures that recipients can live and work legally in the United States with their families absent fear of deportation.

- There are over 320,000 individuals in the U.S. with TPS, with the vast majority of recipients from El Salvador, Honduras, and Haiti. These are hardworking and long-standing members of our parishes and communities, with some individuals having been in the U.S. for over 15 years.

- Many TPS recipients have U.S. citizen children and have established careers here. When we talk about potential termination of TPS, we’re talking about pulling people from their jobs and homes and ultimately about separating families.

- TPS is important to us as Catholics as it is a vital family issue. Approximately 270,000 U.S. Citizen Children will face being separated from their families if TPS is not extended. We want to ensure that families can stay together and that they have a chance to succeed. Separating families apart and sending people to exploitative situations in the countries where they have never been to or where they have not lived in for nearly 20 years is against basic principles of human dignity, mercy and dignity.

- As Bishop Vásquez, Chairman of the USCCB Committee on Migration and Bishop of Austin, Texas, has stated, “extending TPS serves an important humanitarian role by providing for the safety, well-being, and stability” of recipients.

- Pope Francis, in his recently released Twenty Pastoral Action Points Responding to Migrants and Refugees has stated: “The collective or arbitrary expulsion of migrants should be avoided . . . Migrants and refugees should never be returned to a country deemed unsafe. The application of this principle should be based on the effective level of safety afforded each individual, rather than a summary evaluation of a country’s general state of security.”
TPS Recipients by State

The chart below shows key states where TPS recipients from El Salvador, Honduras, and Haiti live. These statistics were produced by the Center for Migration Studies (CMS). To read the full CMS report, please visit: [http://cmsny.org/publications/jmhs-tps-elsalvador-honduras-haiti/](http://cmsny.org/publications/jmhs-tps-elsalvador-honduras-haiti/)

**Table 4. Estimates of the TPS Population from El Salvador, Honduras, and Haiti, for States That Had 5,000 or More TPS Beneficiaries**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>US total</th>
<th>El Salvador (1)</th>
<th>Honduras (2)</th>
<th>Haiti (3)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>California</td>
<td>195,000</td>
<td>57,000</td>
<td>50,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida</td>
<td>49,100</td>
<td>5,900</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>5,700</td>
<td>7,800</td>
<td>32,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maryland</td>
<td>19,800</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Massachusetts</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nevada</td>
<td>5,700</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Jersey</td>
<td>6,800</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York</td>
<td>16,200</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Carolina</td>
<td>5,900</td>
<td>6,200</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texas</td>
<td>36,300</td>
<td>8,500</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virginia</td>
<td>21,500</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Center for Migration Studies.*
TAKE ACTION!

What Can I Do?

1. Write A Letter to The Administration Requesting an Extension of TPS
2. Write A Letter to Your Members of Congress Requesting an Extension of TPS
3. Share Stories
4. Learn More
5. Pray for TPS Recipients and Their Families

Writing a Letter to the Administration

Writing a letter to the Administration is a great way to voice your support for TPS recipients and their families. Please find a sample letter below.

Sample Letter:

[Date]

President Donald Trump  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Ave.  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Acting Secretary Elaine Duke  
U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
Washington, D.C. 20528

Dear President Trump and Acting Secretary Duke,

We write you as concerned Catholics in regard to the future of the families who are currently living in the United States with Temporary Protected Status (TPS). We urge you to ensure that TPS continues to be utilized as a critical humanitarian provision to protect individuals from being returned to unsafe conditions due to natural and man-made disasters in their countries of origin. Specifically, we urge you to provide an 18-month extension of TPS for Haiti, Honduras, Nicaragua, and El Salvador.

As you know, TPS was established by Congress through the Immigration Act of 1990. It is intended to protect foreign nationals in the United States from being returned to their home countries if that country became unsafe to return to during the time in which the individuals were in the U.S. The vast majority of TPS recipients in the U.S. are from Honduras, Haiti, Nicaragua, and El Salvador, but these countries’ designations are set to expire starting in January 2018.
The Catholic Church provides programs through Catholic Relief Services in Central America and Haiti, as well as in other areas around the world. Through this work, we know firsthand the progress that fragile countries like Haiti have made since their initial TPS designation, as well as the challenges that remain and must be addressed prior to returning TPS recipients. A decision to end TPS for such countries would be disruptive to their progress and would undermine the stability and security these countries are working to achieve.

While each TPS case is different, we firmly believe that Haiti, Honduras, Nicaragua and El Salvador merit an extension. Honduras and El Salvador do not have the ability to adequately address the return of their nationals at this time given internal security issues. And while some progress has been made in Haiti, this progress is slow and has recently been impeded by Hurricane Matthew, Hurricane Irma, and the ongoing cholera epidemic.

As Catholics, we work to welcome all people into our communities and note the many contributions that TPS recipients have provided to our parishes, communities, and country. It is vital that we not turn our back on these families but instead continue to treat them with dignity. Until these three countries can safely welcome back their nationals, TPS should be extended.

Respectfully,

[Signature]

CC: Attorney General Jeff Sessions
   Secretary of State Rex Tillerson
   Dina Powell, Deputy National Security Adviser, National Security Council

Contact Your Members of Congress

Now is the time to urge Members of Congress to find a legislative solution to (1) urge them to advocate with the Administration to extend TPS and (2) to urge them to support legislation that protects TPS recipients in the event that the Administration terminates their status. You can quickly and easily contact your lawmaker by using our Justice for Immigrants (JFI) action alert or you can adapt the text below to meet the specific needs of your parish and community.

Sample Action Alert:

Dear Senators and Representative,

As a concerned Catholic, I write you to ask that you advocate with the Administration and encourage President Trump and Acting Department of Homeland Security Elaine Duke to renew TPS designations for 18 months for the countries of El Salvador, Honduras, Haiti and Nicaragua. Additionally, I urge you to sponsor bipartisan legislation in Congress within the next two months that will preserve the ability of TPS recipients to continue living and working
legally in the U.S. if they have lived here lawfully for many years, would face extreme hardship if deported, or are otherwise eligible for permanent residence.

Family unity is an issue of great importance to the Catholic faithful. Unfortunately, we know that if TPS is terminated, numerous families will be torn apart. We see and serve many families around the country that have TPS members. We know that this issue affects immigrant children and U.S. citizen children alike. In fact, if TPS is terminated, approximately 270,000 U.S. citizen children will face being separated from their families. If families stay together, these children will be forced to leave our country behind and with it their bright future in the U.S.

As your constituent, I hope that you will take leadership on this issue and consider the importance of TPS for families and for communities. I urge you to work with immediacy to find a legislative solution for families with TPS members.

Sincerely,
Your name

Share Stories

Help us put a face to this important issue! If you are a TPS holder or you have members of your community with TPS who are willing to share their story, please contact us at jfi@uscdb.org. Sharing personal stories of impacted individuals and families is key to our ongoing advocacy efforts on TPS.
Learn More

We encourage you to learn more about TPS and what the U.S. bishops are doing to support an extension of TPS for affected individuals.

- Visit our JFI resource page on TPS: https://justiceforimmigrants.org/what-we-are-working-on/immigration/tps
- Read the Executive Summary of our Delegation Trip Report to El Salvador and Honduras

LOVING FATHER,
we pray that you provide your divine protection to all migrants, particularly those who are driven from their homes due to war or violence, who are uprooted due to environmental degradation and climate change, or whose material poverty pushes them to find opportunities elsewhere. Show us how we might reach out to these vulnerable populations and help them to begin a new life in a new home. Open our hearts, so that we may provide hospitality for all who come in search of refuge. Give us the courage to welcome every stranger, as Christ in our midst. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen.

PADRE AMOROSO,
Oramos para que les brindes tu divina protección a todos los migrantes, en especial a aquellos que deben dejar sus hogares debido a la guerra o la violencia, a los que son desarraigados a causa de la degradación ambiental y del cambio climático o cuya pobreza material los empuja a buscar oportunidades en otro lugar. Muéstranos la manera de acercarnos a estas poblaciones vulnerables y ayudarles a empezar una nueva vida en un nuevo hogar. Abre nuestro corazón para que podamos ofrecerle hospitalidad a todo aquel que viene en busca de un refugio. Concédenos la valentía para acoger a todo extranjero como si fuera Cristo en medio de nosotros.

Te lo pedimos por Cristo, Nuestro Señor, quien vive y reina contigo, en unidad del Espíritu Santo, un solo Dios, por los siglos de los siglos. Amén.