



**TPS-DED
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June 20, 2024

Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
3801 Nebraska Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20016

Director Ur Jaddou
U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services
20 Massachusetts Ave NW
Washington, DC 20001

Deputy Ombudsman Nathan Stiefel
Office of the Citizenship and Immigration Services Ombudsman
20 Massachusetts Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20529

**RE: NEED FOR BETTER ACCESS, EDUCATION AND DISSEMINATION OF
TEMPORARY PROTECTED STATUS (TPS) DESIGNATION NOTICES**

Secretary Mayorkas, Director Jaddou and Deputy Ombudsman Stiefel:

The undersigned 29 local, state, national, and international organizations serving and advocating for Temporary Protected Status (TPS) holders, write to urge you to implement policies to increase and safeguard access to translation of TPS notices and increase outreach and education around TPS. Lack of access to translated notices and insufficient information on TPS prevents individuals from whom the benefits are intended for from applying. Such barriers eat into an already short grant period, leaving applicants at risk of deportation, without permission to work, and at risk of scams, even while qualifying for those benefits. In addition to policy and decision-making around TPS designations, the way that these decisions are disseminated is crucial and has major impacts on the number of people who apply for these blanket protections.

In October, USCIS released filing tips and held an engagement, partly in Spanish, for TPS for Venezuela. The engagement provided an overview of how to create and navigate a USCIS online account, apply for TPS online, check case status, and submit an inquiry. This was the first time a guide dissecting key parts of the application process has been released. Unfortunately, this information has only been disseminated for Venezuela and no other country, so far. Such engagements and resources can help a large number of applicants who have no knowledge about the extension and redesignation of TPS for the country.

I. Dissemination and communication of TPS notices and information

There is an urgent need to improve outreach and education around TPS processes and eligibility documentation requirements to TPS applicants, TPS holders, other state and federal agencies (for example DMV and Social Security) and to employers. There is a large gap between those applying for the TPS and the estimated number of beneficiaries. This gap can only be bridged by increasing dissemination of information, tips, and resources through all possible avenues so it reaches those it intends to benefit.

Many asylum applicants do not apply for TPS due to misinformation and lack of information on the effect of TPS on their asylum application. There [exists a need](#) for the USCIS to ensure that the TPS application is inclusive of information that confirms that TPS beneficiaries can apply for TPS alongside their asylum application as well as any other forms of relief for which they may



be eligible, and clarify that these applications will not affect one another. Providing more information and clarity on the various reliefs available and how each of them can and should be availed would allow for more people in need of TPS to make use of it.

USCIS must work to ensure equity across the board in outreach, and resources for the TPS application process. Resources must be offered in a way that is accessible for all countries. More accessible information will ensure that more eligible individuals apply for TPS and that more members of the community can access TPS. Accessibility may empower TPS applicants to complete their application even without access to proper legal assistance, especially in rural areas or cities with few or no existing community based organizations. For example in 2022 DHS estimated that [26,730](#) individuals in the Ethiopian community would benefit from a redesignation. However, at the end of 2023, it was revealed that [2,283](#) individuals had applied for TPS under the 2022 designation, yet, only [1,904](#) had been approved. This is a prime example of how an increase in access to information and resources could impact more people.

This gap in applications is an issue that needs to be addressed quickly so that those in need of the TPS protection are able to access it. With fixed periods for registration, even shorter periods for re-registration, and the temporary nature of the relief, it is essential that the information is disseminated quickly and percolates to the roots to positively impact those who apply for it and are able to avail the benefits that accompany the TPS status, particularly the ability to receive work authorization.

II. Access to translations

There is also an urgent need for the circulation of translated Federal Register Notices (FRN) and data or resources related to TPS that are culturally appropriate and available in the main languages that are spoken in the TPS-designated country. Following the TPS for Venezuela announcements in 2023, at an engagement with USCIS Director Ur Jaddou, the need for translating the FRNs into various languages was stressed. This is not only a language justice issue; it can tremendously alleviate the high demand for legal service providers and would ensure that pro se TPS applicants are accurately submitting their forms. Making information on TPS available in appropriate languages will help reduce the barrier to access and ensure the dissemination of accurate information. Translated information will also help community relations officers and those who are working on the ground with members of the community from the TPS-designated countries. Such translations will also ensure that applicants applying are better informed and educated about the reliefs available to them, the dates, and processes for the applications.

Reliable, expert and official translations of documents or translation services will bridge the language barrier and also help in easier and faster dissemination of the information on TPS to those who need it most. Information sessions in varying languages appropriate for the TPS designated country, filing tip sheets in multiple languages and answers to FAQs in multiple languages will benefit a lot of applicants and also ensure that more applicants avail this humanitarian relief.



III. Conclusion and Recommendations

We thank you for your engagement on this matter and look forward to working with you to eliminate these obstacles going forward for a more accessible TPS program. We are pleased by the commitment from USCIS in the most recent FY22 progress report to leverage “technology solutions to increase the integrity and efficiency of TPS case processing,” and we look to leadership to fully invest in this commitment.¹ We are thankful for the progress USCIS has made over the past two years to rebuild capacity and address backlog, and we respectfully make the following recommendations to alleviate the harm to TPS applicants as the agency continues to improve:

1. Clearer and more detailed information on TPS applications and how it affects applications for other humanitarian reliefs.
2. More detailed information on redesignation and renewals of TPS application and distinguishing it from previous FRNs.
3. Filing tip sheets and session after all designation/ redesignation of TPS in English and the appropriate country language.
4. Accessible resources in English and all other appropriate languages. This may include tip sheets, FRNs, and FAQs.
5. Better dissemination and education of the TPS program and who each of the designations/ redesignations will benefit.

Please contact Kalyani Menon <kalyanim@masadc.com> at Masa Group with any questions.

Sincerely,

National

African Communities Together (ACT)

Alianza Americas

American Friends Service Committee (AFSC)

Asian Americans Advancing Justice | AAJC

Asylum Seeker Advocacy Project (ASAP)

CASA

Center for Gender & Refugee Studies

Church World Service

Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights (CHIRLA)

Communities United for Status & Protection (CUSP)

Haitian Bridge Alliance

Immigrant Legal Resource Center

¹ USCIS, *Fiscal Year 2022 Progress Report*, DHS, December 2022, https://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/document/reports/OPA_ProgressReport.pdf.



Justice in Motion

MomsRising/MamásConPoder

Multifaith Alliance

National Partnership for New Americans

Nicaraguan American Legal Defense and Education Fund, NALDEF

Presidents' Alliance on Higher Education and Immigration

TPS-DED AAC

Union for Reform Judaism

United We Dream Network

State/Local

Adhikaar for Human Rights and Social Justice

Estrella del Paso (Formerly Diocesan Migrant and Refugee Services Inc)

Faith In Texas

Food Justice DMV

Immigrant Defenders Law Center

Louisiana Organization for Refugees and Immigrants

Nigerian Center

Wind of the Spirit Immigrant Resource Center



**U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
Services**

August 16, 2024

Kalyani Menon
Masa Group
kalyanim@masadc.com

Dear Ms. Menon:

Thank you for your June 20, 2024 letter to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), and the Office of the Citizenship and Immigration Services Ombudsman (CIS Ombudsman). I am responding on behalf of the Department.

We appreciate you sharing suggestions on how to improve Temporary Protected Status (TPS) accessibility and education of TPS programs, and referencing additional languages needed. Generally, following a TPS announcement, USCIS will hold a national stakeholder engagement for each designation with agency subject matter experts who provide an overview of TPS, the benefits of having TPS, and how to register for TPS. At the local level, USCIS community relations specialists conduct TPS engagements within their areas of jurisdiction; however, we appreciate your suggestion for improving our outreach efforts overall to key groups, such as other state and federal government agencies including Departments of Motor Vehicles and the Social Security Administration, as well as employers. USCIS plans to hold more engagements in languages other than English, when feasible. Additionally, USCIS provides timely and robust information about TPS for applicants, beneficiaries, employers, and benefit-granting agencies on our website in both English and Spanish. USCIS also plans to translate country-specific TPS webpages into languages spoken in those countries, including Haitian Creole, Arabic, French, and Ukrainian.

We appreciate you informing us that asylum applicants do not apply for TPS due to misinformation and lack of information on the effect of TPS on their asylum applications. In various engagements, including with Afghan nationals under Operation Allies Welcome, we have informed individuals that TPS is a separate and distinct immigration benefit. Individuals may apply for any other immigration benefit for which they may be eligible without impact to their TPS. We will continue highlighting this information in our ongoing TPS engagements to assure individuals understand that they may apply for as many benefits they are eligible for without impacting other immigration filings submitted to USCIS. We will also publish information about having the ability to file for multiple immigration benefits, if eligible, on our TPS page to increase awareness.

As mentioned above, we will review your suggestions to improve TPS accessibility and our outreach and education efforts and would like to assure you that the appropriate offices in USCIS will meet to begin discussing how to build on our current efforts. USCIS is committed to meeting our language access obligations by providing access to information and services for the public who have limited English proficiency. TPS information is available in Spanish¹ and USCIS has translated several TPS-related materials in numerous languages. These materials are available on our website linked from the TPS page.² USCIS also has materials translated into more than 35 languages and available in our Multilingual Resource Center on our website.³

Thank you again for your letter and interest in this important issue. Please share this response with the other organizations that cosigned your letter. Should you require any additional assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ur M. Jaddou" followed by a long horizontal flourish.

Ur M. Jaddou
Director

¹ See <https://www.uscis.gov/es>.

² See <https://www.uscis.gov/humanitarian/temporary-protected-status>.

³ See <https://www.uscis.gov/tools/multilingual-resource-center>.