

August 17, 2023,

President Joseph R. Biden
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Alejandro Mayorkas
Secretary of Homeland Security
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
301 7th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20528

Antony Blinken
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20520

RE: Request for 18-Month Extension and Redesignation of TPS for South Sudan

Dear President Biden, Secretary Mayorkas, and Secretary Blinken,

The below 132 organizations request an 18-month extension and redesignation of Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for South Sudan. South Sudan's TPS designation is set to expire on November 3, 2023, but life-threatening conditions have continued to make safe return impossible. The detrimental effects of climate change, civilian casualty, inadequate access to healthcare, and abject poverty present an unlivable condition that qualifies South Sudan for extension and redesignation. An extension and redesignation of TPS status is amply vital for the protection of South Sudanese individuals who currently hold TPS as well as those who have arrived in the United States since the last redesignation in 2022. Additionally, an extension and redesignation of TPS will result in the protection and security of human life in line with the democratic principles the United States was built upon.

By statute, the Secretary of Homeland Security must decide whether to extend and redesignate TPS for South Sudan by September 4, 2023. The Secretary is authorized to redesignate a country for TPS and extend a TPS designation simultaneously.¹ We call for a redesignation and extension, publication of a Federal Register Notice, at least a 180-day registration period for both current TPS holders and those who would benefit under redesignation, and launch of a public education campaign to inform the impacted community by that date.

I. Temporary Protected Status

¹ U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, *Extension and Redesignation of South Sudan for Temporary Protected Status*. 81 Fed. Reg. 4051, 4052, Federal Register, 2016, <https://www.federalregister.gov/d/2016-01388/p-43>.

TPS allows people from a designated country to remain in the United States while conditions in their home country make safe return impossible. The Secretary of Homeland Security can designate a country for TPS if the country is experiencing ongoing armed conflict, natural disaster, or other extraordinary and temporary conditions. TPS allows its beneficiaries to stay in the United States during the designation period and to receive work permits. It is a life-saving protection, including for those who are ineligible for or who have been denied asylum but would be in danger if returned to their home country.

II. Conditions Affecting South Sudan's Citizens

South Sudan has continued to be stricken with violent conflict. The UN mission to South Sudan reported that “cattle-related inter-communal conflict and land disputes with ethnic undertones resulted in 579 civilian casualties between 1 December 2022 and 15 February 2023 and continued to undermine the peace process.”² Civilians are increasingly gaining access to arms and ammunition increasing the deadly impact of clashes.³ Women and children are left vulnerable to these attacks. Over 129 children, 30% under 15 years old, have been recruited by armed groups to contribute to the violence. Child soldiers may serve as combatants, cooks, and bodyguards and are needlessly put in danger. A 2022 Human Rights Council report alleges that men and boys are intentionally and systematically targeted for killings, actions which are officiated through government-aligned forces.⁴ Women and girls face gender-based violence during violent clashes. This has created a gendered division in the demographics of asylum seekers. According to the nonprofit USA for the UN Refugee Agency, “80% of the South Sudanese refugee population are women and children.”⁵

South Sudan's population is not only affected by armed conflict, their failing infrastructures around healthcare, food access, and sanitation are a leading cause for displacement. USAID reports that only 41% of the population have access to drinking water and 11% have access to sanitation facilities.⁶ In the wake of COVID-19, the importance of healthcare access has been revealed to be detrimental to maintaining a healthy population. Infections such as malaria, HIV/AIDS, COVID-19, Ebola, polio, and cholera are leading causes of death.

South Sudan faces a dual crisis of drought and flooding, making food access scarce. World Food Programme states, “Four consecutive years of record flooding has led to the widespread

² South Sudan, Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect, May 23, 2023, <https://www.globalr2p.org/countries/south-sudan/>.

³Id.

⁴ *State of Impunity: the persistence of violence and human rights violations in South Sudan*, Human Rights Council, April 3, 2023, https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/hrbodies/hrcouncil/sessions-regular/session52/A_HRC_52_CRP.3.pdf.

⁵ Protection Cluster South Sudan: Conflict and Food Insecurity, UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Protection Cluster, May 22, 2023, <https://reliefweb.int/report/south-sudan/protection-cluster-south-sudan-conflict-and-food-insecurity-may-20>.

⁶ Global Health: South Sudan, <https://www.usaid.gov/south-sudan/global-health#:~:text=Malaria%20is%20a%20major%20cause,seriou>.

displacement, the destruction of livelihoods and the loss of arable land-contributing to rising hunger.”⁷ Land contamination has increased food scarcity, as 16 million square miles have explosive, hazardous contamination. The 16 million square miles stretch over nine cities, all of which are affected by food insecurity.⁸ It is estimated that 76% of the population will require humanitarian assistance in 2023.⁹ That is 9.4 million people who are impacted by the volatile nature of South Sudan’s political and environmental climate.

The war in neighboring Sudan leaves conditions in South Sudan uncertain. Refugees who had fled north into Sudan are forced to return to South Sudan, which has struggled to resettle them.¹⁰ The war in Sudan not only has a human toll on South Sudan but may even result in an economic toll. The government in South Sudan has relied on oil as a means of propping up the economy. Oil makes up 90% of the revenue, and 70% of their GDP, but exports are split 50% between both states.¹¹ By proxy, South Sudan’s future is dependent on the stability of Sudan.

In continuing the National Emergency with Respect to South Sudan, the Biden administration recognized the severity of the situation and its potential implications on insecurity in the region and globally.¹² These threats result from ongoing armed conflict, instability, and violence, which endanger the lives of the South Sudanese population. An extension and redesignation align with the national security and foreign policy interests of the United States.

III. Conclusion

We are calling on you to extend for 18 months and redesignate TPS for South Sudan, to publish a timely Federal Register Notice, provide at least a 180-day registration period, and to launch a culturally relevant public information campaign to notify the impacted community of the decision and any actions they must take by the decision’s announcement. Please contact Diana Konaté at diana@africans.us, or Ramya Reddy at ramya@masadc.com with any questions or to arrange for stakeholder engagement. Thank you.

⁷ World Food Programme (WFP). "South Sudan Emergency." Accessed August 7, 2023. <https://www.wfp.org/emergencies/south-sudan-emergency>.

⁸ Protection Cluster South Sudan: Conflict and Food Insecurity, UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Protection Cluster, May 22, 2023, <https://reliefweb.int/report/south-sudan/protection-cluster-south-sudan-conflict-and-food-insecurity-may-20>

⁹ U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). "South Sudan - Humanitarian Assistance." Accessed August 7, 2023. <https://www.usaid.gov/humanitarian-assistance/south-sudan>.

¹⁰ PBS NewsHour. "Fleeing Sudan's Deadly Conflict, Thousands of Exhausted South Sudanese Refugees Return Home." Accessed August 7, 2023. <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/world/fleeing-sudans-deadly-conflict-thousands-of-exhausted-south-sudanese-refugees-return-home>.

¹¹ Al Jazeera. "Clouds Gather Over South Sudan as Battles Rage Next Door." May 12, 2023. Accessed August 7, 2023. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/5/12/clouds-gather-over-south-sudan-as-battles-rage-next-door>.

¹² The White House. "Press Release: Notice on the Continuation of the National Emergency with Respect to South Sudan." March 29, 2023. Accessed August 7, 2023. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/presidential-actions/2023/03/29/press-release-notice-on-the-continuation-of-the-national-emergency-with-respect-to-south-sudan>.

Sincerely,

International

American Friends Service Committee (AFSC)
Asian Children's Education Fellowship
Center for Victims of Torture
Church World Service
Coptic Solidarity
Human Rights First
International Refugee Assistance Project (IRAP)
IRF Roundtable Africa Working Group
Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns
Prayer Pioneers
Service Employees International Union (SEIU)
Sisters of St. Francis of the Providence of God
The Campaign for Hong Kong
Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC)
Widows and Orphans

National

African Communities Together
Association of Concerned Africa Scholars
Asylum Seeker Advocacy Project (ASAP)
Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc. (CLINIC)
Center for Gender & Refugee Studies
Center for Popular Democracy Action
Church of Scientology National Affairs Office
Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights (CHIRLA)
Communities United for Status & Protection (CUSP)
Dominican Sisters of Sparkill
Fundación Blanca Nieve Sierra
Haitian Bridge Alliance
Illinois Venezuelan Alliance
Immigrant Guide
Immigration Hub
Justice Action Center
MPower Change
Muslim Advocates
National Employment Law Project
National Immigration Law Center (NILC)
National Network for Arab American Communities
National Partnership for New Americans
National TPS Alliance

NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice
Nigerian Center
Northeastern University School of Law Immigrant Justice Clinic
Our Lady of Victory Missionary Sisters
Oxfam America
Presente.org
Refugee Council USA
Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia
Sisters of St. Francis, Iowa
Social Workers for Immigration Justice and Human Rights
U.S. Federation of the Sisters of St. Joseph
UndocuBlack Network
Unitarian Universalists for Social Justice
US-Africa Bridge Building Project
Bread for the World
Domestic Workers Alliance
League of United Latin American Citizens
National Korean American Service & Education Consortium

State and Local

Adhikaar
African Advocacy Network
Al Otro Lado
Alianza Sacramento
Arab American Association of New York
Ayuda
Casa de Venezuela Greater Philadelphia
Catholic Charities of Southwest Kansas
Central American Resource Center- Los Angeles
Church Women United in New York State
Connecticut Shoreline Indivisible
Central American Resource Center- Houston
Diocesan Migrant and Refugee Services Inc.
Family Action Network Movement
First Congregational Church of San Jose
Florence Immigrant & Refugee Rights Project
Greater Cleveland Immigrant Support Network
Immigrant Defenders Law Center
Immigrant Legal Advocacy Project
InterReligious Task Force on Central America
Iowa Migrant Movement for Justice
Just Neighbors Ministry
Long Island Immigration Clinic
Mission Graduates

Motivation Motivates

New York Immigration Coalition

Sisters of St. Dominic of Blauvelt, New York

Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet, Los Angeles

Somali Family Service of San Diego

St John's Presbyterian Church of Berkeley

Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Hidalgo County Texas

United African Organization

University of San Francisco Immigration & Deportation Defense Clinic

Venezuelans and Immigrants Aid (VIA)

WESPAC Foundation, Inc.

Westchester Jewish Coalition for Immigration (WJCI)

Wind of the Spirit Immigrant Resource Center

ACLU People Power - Fairfax

ACLU Virginia

American Jewish Committee

CASA De Virginia

Centreville Immigration Forum

Coalition of Asian Pacific Americans of Virginia

Congregation Action Network

Cornerstone

Dream Project

Dreamers Mothers in Action (DMIA)

Edu Futuro

EMGAGE

Fuego Coalition

Hamkae Korean Community Center

Hispanic Organization of Leadership and Action

Jewish Community Relations Council

Korean American Association of Northern Virginia

Latina Institute for Reproductive Justice, Virginia

Legal Aid Justice Center

Multicultural Community Center

Neighbor's Keeper

New Virginia Majority Education Fund

Progress Virginia

Sacred Heart Catholic Community Center

SEIU 512

SEIU32BJ

Shirlington Employment and Education Center

Sin Barreras

Tenants and Workers United

The Commonwealth Institute for Fiscal Analysis

Unitarian Universalist for Social Justice

United Food and Commercial Workers Local 400

Virginia Civic Engagement Table
Virginia Coalition for Immigrant Rights
Virginia Coalition of Latino Organizations
Virginia Immigration Intercollegiate Alliance
Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy
Virginia League of Planned Parenthood
Virginia Organizing