



THE CITY OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
NEW YORK, NY 10007

August 5, 2016

The Honorable Jeh Johnson
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Washington, D.C. 20528

The Honorable John Kerry
U.S. Department of State
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Secretaries Johnson and Kerry:

On behalf of the thousands of New Yorkers affected by the recent devastating earthquakes in Ecuador, I urge you to designate Ecuador for Temporary Protected Status. Doing so would protect up to 45,000 Ecuadorian New Yorkers from the dangerous conditions at home by allowing them to remain here lawfully until it is safe to return.

The multiple earthquakes that struck Ecuador this April have left more than 650 people dead and 16,000 injured. In addition, the massive infrastructural damage has left people struggling to find food, water, and basic services. A recent assessment by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs estimates that approximately 20,000 people are still homeless.

In the aftermath of this tragedy, the United States can play a crucial role by extending TPS to Ecuador. By allowing the thousands of impacted Ecuadorians to stay in the country temporarily while their home is in the midst of turmoil, the U.S. could continue to be a leader in humanitarian policy. Grantees would be able to work lawfully in the U.S. and be able to aid family members back in Ecuador who are still greatly impacted by the earthquake. TPS was intended to respond to this type of natural disaster, and it would be in the best interest of the City of New York and the thousands of Ecuadorians here and in Ecuador to designate Ecuador for TPS.

Immediately after the earthquakes, I called upon the Department of Homeland Security to extend TPS to Ecuador in the wake of this great tragedy. Today, I renew my appeal and urge you to extend TPS to Ecuador as the country continues the process of rebuilding. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Bill de Blasio".

Bill de Blasio
Mayor

BDB:ea



Homeland
Security

September 2, 2016

The Honorable Bill de Blasio
Mayor of New York City
New York, New York 10007

Dear Mayor de Blasio: **Bill**

Thank you for your August 23, 2016 letter.

We are deeply saddened by the effects of the severe earthquake that struck Ecuador in April, and we share your concern for all those affected. As you might know, discretionary authority to designate a country for Temporary Protected Status (TPS) is based upon specific statutory criteria. U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) is the Department of Homeland Security Component principally responsible for advising the Secretary on TPS issues and implementing the program.

To designate a country for TPS, I must find, after consultation with appropriate U.S. Government agencies, one or more of the following: (1) there is an ongoing armed conflict within the country that would pose a serious threat to the personal safety of the country's nationals if they were returned; (2) there has been an environmental disaster resulting in a substantial, but temporary, disruption of the living conditions in the area affected, the country is temporarily unable to handle adequately the return of its nationals, and the country has officially requested TPS designation; or (3) there exist extraordinary and temporary conditions in the country that prevent nationals from returning in safety, and I do not find that permitting the country's nationals to remain temporarily in the United States would be contrary to the national interest of the United States. *See* Immigration and Nationality Act § 244(b)(1).

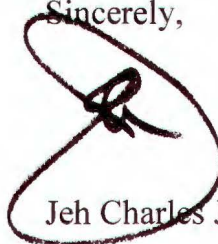
The Department is monitoring the evolving conditions and the recovery process in Ecuador to determine whether a discretionary TPS designation under the statute might be warranted. I expect to be presented with a recommendation shortly. Please be aware that USCIS offers other immigration relief measures to eligible Ecuadorian nationals who have been affected by the earthquake. The USCIS website provides the following advice regarding such measures that may be available upon request:

- Change or extension of nonimmigrant status if you are currently in the United States, even if the request is filed after your authorized period of admission has expired;
- Re-parole, if you were previously granted parole by USCIS;
- Expedited processing of requests for advance parole documents;
- Expedited adjudication of requests for off-campus employment authorization for F-1 students experiencing severe economic hardship;
- Expedited adjudication of employment authorization applications, where appropriate;
- Consideration of fee waivers due to an inability to pay;
- Assistance if you received a Request for Evidence or a Notice of Intent to Deny, but were unable to appear for an interview, submit evidence, or respond in a timely manner because of the natural disaster; and
- Replacement of lost or damaged immigration or travel documents issued by USCIS, such as a Permanent Resident Card (Green Card).

USCIS issued a news alert on April 26, 2016, highlighting the immigration relief measures listed above for individuals affected by the severe earthquake in Ecuador. The full news alert is available at www.uscis.gov/news/alerts/immigration-relief-those-affected-severe-earthquakes.

Thank you again for your letter and your interest in this important matter. Should you wish to discuss this matter further, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be "Jeh Charles Johnson", enclosed within a large, loopy oval shape.

Jeh Charles Johnson