



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

May 17, 2016

Tina Matsuoka  
Executive Director  
National Asian Pacific American Bar Association  
1612 K Street, NW, Suite 510  
Washington, DC 20006

Dear Ms. Matsuoka:

Thank you for your April 7, 2016 letter. The Secretary asked that I respond on his behalf.

We appreciate your interest in the Temporary Protected Status (TPS) designations of Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone. The discretionary authority to designate a country for TPS or to extend an existing designation is based upon specific statutory criteria and is vested in the Secretary of Homeland Security. *See* Immigration and Nationality Act § 244(b)(1), (b)(3). 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.

Secretary Johnson initially designated Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone for TPS on November 21, 2014, due to an epidemic of Ebola Virus Disease in West Africa that prevented nationals of Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone who were in the United States from safely returning to the designated countries. The 18-month designations were set to expire on May 21, 2016, but after reviewing the conditions in each country, on March 22, 2016, Secretary Johnson announced a 6-month extension of all three designations. The extensions are effective from May 22, 2016 through November 21, 2016. Although there have been significant improvements in the conditions in the three countries since their November 2014 TPS designations, the lingering effects of the Ebola Virus Disease epidemic and continued recovery challenges supported the extension.

The 6-month extensions allow beneficiaries under the Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone TPS designations to extend their TPS and work authorization through November 21, 2016. Current TPS beneficiaries seeking to extend their TPS must re-register by May 23, 2016. They may also apply for a new Employment Authorization Document, which will be valid through November 21, 2016. More information about the extension, including guidance on the re-registration process, employment authorization, and eligibility requirements, is available online at [www.uscis.gov/tps](http://www.uscis.gov/tps). Additionally, the Federal Register

Ms. Tina Matsuoka  
Page 2

notices published on March 22, 2016 (Guinea – 81 FR 15339, Liberia – 81 FR 15328, and Sierra Leone - 81 FR 15334), provide more details about the extensions. For your convenience, copies of the Federal Register notices are enclosed.

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

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "León Rodríguez", written in a cursive style.

León Rodríguez  
Director

Enclosure