

The Honorable Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen
Department of Homeland Security
3801 Nebraska Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20016

The Honorable Secretary Mike Pompeo
Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20520

June 26, 2018

Dear Secretary Nielsen and Secretary Pompeo:

We, the undersigned national, state and local organizations write to urge you to extend and redesignate Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for Yemen. Given the ongoing armed conflict and widespread humanitarian nightmare devastating the country, we are extremely concerned that a forcible return of nearly 1,200 Yemenis in the United States back to Yemen would be untenable and commensurate to a death sentence.

Yemen first received TPS designation in September 2015 in response to the escalating armed conflict that erupted in 2014. Since the original TPS designation for Yemen and its subsequent extension and redesignation in January 2017, Yemen's armed conflict has only intensified and made Yemen, already the poorest country in the Middle East long before the outbreak of the current war, home to the [world's largest humanitarian crisis](#).

More than 10,000 civilians have been killed as a direct result of the fighting, more than three million more have been displaced, and least 75 percent of a total population of roughly 27.6 million people now rely on some form of humanitarian assistance to survive. The destruction of civilian infrastructure from indiscriminate bombings by all sides have also exacerbated the [world's largest hunger crisis](#), with 8.4 million Yemeni civilians on the brink of starvation, and have facilitated the creation of the largest and fastest-growing cholera outbreak in [modern history](#).

The State Department's January 2018 [travel advisory](#) confirms that "No part of Yemen is safe from violence." Therefore, it would be beyond heartless and cruel to forcibly ship our neighbors, mothers, fathers, and children back to a country that our own government has defined as one of the most dangerous and dire places on the planet. Based on our government's own assessments, Yemenis forcibly returned to their country would face a number of life-threatening scenarios: frequently becoming the target of airstrikes and artillery shelling, including at homes, hospitals, and markets; being at risk of cholera and other life-threatening diseases; or being unable to access the most basic necessities, including food, water, electricity, medical care, or their original homes.

What's more, the United States is actively engaged in this conflict. Since March 2015, the U.S. has provided material assistance to a Saudi Arabia-led regional intervention, in the form of mid-air refueling, targeting intelligence, and weapons transfers. This support facilitates coalition airstrikes that are [the leading cause of civilian casualties](#) in the conflict according to the UN. While the extent to which the United States should support the coalition's intervention is contested in Congress and among the public, the moral responsibility this involvement places upon the U.S. government is not in question. The United States simply cannot contribute to a conflict engendering the world's worst humanitarian crisis and expel those seeking shelter from its grave consequences.

To help meet this objective, the U.S. must not only extend, but also redesignate TPS for Yemen as it is the only way to fully ensure that Yemenis have a safe and legal place of refuge and that families who arrived in the U.S. after July 2017 – who are no less vulnerable to harm if forcibly returned than the families that arrived before – are protected.

We also urge you to consider the broader issue of protection for immigrant communities in the U.S. and at our borders, including ending the cruel and immoral practice of family separation and reconsidering your decisions towards the hundreds of thousands of people from countries like El Salvador, Haiti, Nepal and Honduras whose lives have been uprooted by the abrupt termination of their longstanding TPS designations.

The TPS program exists to save lives by protecting people from being returned to harm and life-threatening situations. A failure to extend and redesignate TPS for Yemen would traumatize and tear livelihoods and families apart, worsen an already horrific crisis of human insecurity and suffering in Yemen, and undermine the U.S.' moral responsibility to the people of Yemen.

As organizations representing tens of millions of Americans from diverse communities across the U.S., we stand firmly in our belief that our country is stronger, safer, and more prosperous when our policies at home and abroad align with our values. We believe that any government with a conscience and policies grounded in American values would extend and redesignate TPS for Yemen without question.

Sincerely,

Action Corps

African Communities Together

Alianza Americas

American Association of Yemeni Students and Professionals

American Family Voices

American Friends Service Committee

American Relief Coalition for Syria (ARCS)

American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee
Arab American Association of New York
Asian Americans Advancing Justice|AAJC
Avaaz
Brooklyn For Peace
Center for International Policy
Center for Victims of Torture
Church World Service
Coalition for Peace Action
CODEPINK
Common Defense
Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR)
CREDO
Daily Kos
Demand Progress Action
Franciscan Action Network
Friends Committee on National Legislation
Friends of the Earth U.S.
Human Rights First
Institute for Policy Studies, New Internationalism Project
J Street
Just Foreign Policy
Knowdrones.com
The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights
MoveOn
MPower Change
Muslim Advocates
National Association of Yemeni Americans
National Council of Jewish Women

National Domestic Workers Alliance
NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice
New York Immigration Coalition
NIAC Action
No Lost Generation (GWU)
OneAmerica
Only Through US
Oxfam America
Peace Action New York State
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
RootsAction.org
September 11th Families for Peaceful Tomorrows
STAND: The Student-Led Movement to End Mass Atrocities
The African Middle Eastern Leadership Project (AMEL)
The Riverside Church in the City of New York
The Yemen Peace Project
U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants
UndocuBlack Network
Unitarian Universalist Service Committee
United For Peace and Justice
United We Dream
War Resisters League
Win Without War
Yemeni American Merchants Association