

discretion of the Secretary of DHS, a period of 12 or 18 months) (8 U.S.C. 1254a(b)(3)(C)).

Why Did the Attorney General Designate Honduras for TPS?

On January 5, 1999, the Attorney General designated Honduras under the TPS program for a period of 18 months based on the severe flooding and mudslides caused by Hurricane Mitch (64 FR 524). The fierce storm that swept through the country killed more than 5,000 people, left 440,000 people homeless, and washed away roads, bridges, schools, and hospitals (See BCIS Resource Information Center Report (April 2000)). Following the initial designation, the Departments of Justice (DOJ) and State (DOS) kept a close watch over the progress of reconstruction in Honduras. Given the amount of reconstruction necessary, the Attorney General extended the Honduras TPS designation three times, on May 11, 2000, (65 FR 30438), May 8, 2001, (66 FR 23269), and May 3, 2002 (67 FR 22451). Each decision to extend the TPS designation was made on the determination that the conditions that warranted TPS designation initially continued to exist.

Why Did the Secretary of DHS Decide To Extend the TPS Designation for Honduras?

After the extension of Honduras' TPS designation on May 3, 2002, DHS and DOS have continued to monitor the conditions in that country. Prior to making his decision to extend the Honduras TPS designation, the Secretary of DHS consulted with relevant government agencies to determine whether conditions warranting the TPS designation continue to exist in Honduras. Although there has been significant progress in reconstruction efforts, recent droughts as well as flooding from Hurricane Michelle in 2001 have added to the humanitarian, economic, and social problems initially brought on by Hurricane Mitch in 1998. The slow recovery continues to make the country unable, temporarily, to handle the return of approximately 87,000 nationals with TPS at this time.

This assessment is consistent with the Department of State report finding that although a significant amount of reconstruction has been completed since Hurricane Mitch, Honduras is, "seriously affected by a drought and

Hurricane Michelle in 2001 causing further destruction and emergency conditions' and "much remains to be done" (Department of State Recommendation, March 25, 2003 (DOS Report)). Such repeated environmental catastrophes have interrupted Honduras' ability to recover from Hurricane Mitch and, as a result, the country continues to lack the needed stability and infrastructure to support the return of its nationals. The BCIS Resource Information Center confirms that a prolonged drought as well as flooding from Hurricane Michelle have compromised food security and disrupted reconstruction efforts (RIC Report 2003). Recent reports indicate that 38% of Hondurans suffer from long-term "chronic" malnutrition. *Id.* Furthermore, completion of water and sanitation projects has been delayed; the Government of Honduras reports that over 500 projects have not yet begun (DOS Report).

In addition to the environmental setbacks, Honduras' reconstruction efforts have been hindered by delays in disbursements of aid needed to rebuild. As of June 2002, the European Union had provided less than 10% of its promised funding and less than 30% of all multilateral donations had been received and projects being funded by a number of non-U.S. donors are still underway. *Id.* For example, considerable work to repair damaged buildings and to construct new schools for relocated communities (RIC Report 2003). Furthermore, smaller roads and other transportation infrastructure have, generally, not undergone repair. *Id.* These setbacks, in addition to problems caused by the subsequent flooding and droughts, render Honduras unable to handle adequately the return of its nationals. Consequently, the conditions under which Honduras was designated for TPS still exist.

Based on this review, the Secretary of DHS, after consultation with appropriate Government agencies, finds that the conditions that prompted designation of Honduras under the TPS program continue to be met (8 U.S.C. 1254a(b)(3)(C)). There continues to be a substantial, but temporary, disruption of living conditions in Honduras as the result of an environmental disaster, and Honduras continues to be unable, temporarily, to handle adequately the return of its nationals (8 U.S.C. 1254a(b)(1)(B)(i)-(ii)). On the basis of these findings, the

Secretary of DHS concludes that the TPS designation for Honduras should be extended for an additional 18-month period.

If I Currently Have TPS Through the Honduras TPS Program, Do I Still Re-Register for TPS?

Yes. If you already have received TPS benefits through the Honduras TPS program, your benefits will expire on July 5, 2003. Accordingly, individual TPS beneficiaries must comply with the re-registration requirements described below in order to maintain their TPS benefits through July 5, 2004. TPS benefits include temporary protection against removal from the United States, as well as work authorization, during the TPS designation period and any extension thereof (8 U.S.C. 1254a(a)(1)).

If My Initial Honduras TPS Application Is Pending, Do I Still Re-Register for TPS?

Yes. If your initial TPS application is still pending approval, you must re-register for TPS during the re-registration period in order to be eligible for this extension. See the following re-registration instructions.

If I Am Currently Registered for TPS, How Do I Re-Register for an Extension?

All persons previously granted TPS under the Honduras program who wish to maintain such status must apply for an extension by filing (1) a Form I-821, Application for Temporary Protected Status, without the filing fee; (2) a Form I-765, Application for Employment Authorization; and (3) two identification photographs (1½ inches x 1½ inches). Applications submitted without the required fee and/or photos will be rejected. See the chart below to determine whether you must submit the one hundred and twenty dollar (\$120) filing fee with Form I-765. Applicants for an extension of TPS benefits do not need to be re-fingerprinted and thus need not pay the \$50 fingerprint fee. Children beneficiaries of TPS who have reached the age of fourteen (14) but were not previously fingerprinted must pay the fifty dollar (\$50) fingerprint fee with the application for extension.

Submit the completed forms and applicable fee, if any, to the BCIS service center having jurisdiction over your place of residence during the 60-day re-registration period that begins May 5, 2003 and ends July 7, 2003 (inclusive of such end date).