

design and development of an integrated, automated entry and exit system. The Task Force will be discussing, in detail, issues related to United States national security, border security and existing and proposed information technology systems. The discussion will include recommendations on data collection and use, facility and infrastructure issues and information and technology issues. None of this information has been previously disclosed publicly.

**Public participation:** The meeting is closed to the public, however the Task Force will accept written comments from the public for discussion. Only written comments receive on or before September 16, 2003, will be considered for discussion at the meeting. Written comments may be faxed or e-mailed to the contact persons indicated below.

**Contact person:** Michael Defensor or Deborah Hemmes, Department of Homeland Security, 425 I Street, NW., Room 7257, Washington, DC 20536; telephone (202) 305-9863; fax: (202) 305-9871; e-mail: [michael.defensor@dhs.gov](mailto:michael.defensor@dhs.gov) or [deborah.hemmes@dhs.gov](mailto:deborah.hemmes@dhs.gov).

Dated: August 25, 2003.

**Asa Hutchinson,**

*Under Secretary for Border Transportation and Security.*

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## DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

### Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services

[CIS No. 2292-03]

RIN 1650-AB06

### Extension of the Designation of Burundi Under Temporary Protected Status Program

**AGENCY:** Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services, Homeland Security.

**ACTION:** Notice.

**SUMMARY:** The designation of Burundi under the Temporary Protected Status (TPS) Program will expire on November 2, 2003. This notice extends the Secretary of Homeland Security's designation of Burundi for 12 months until November 2, 2004, and sets forth procedures necessary for nationals of Burundi (or aliens having no nationality who last habitually resided in Burundi) with TPS to re-register and to apply for an extension of their employment authorization documentation for the

additional 12-month period. Re-registration is limited to persons who registered no later than November 3, 1998 under the initial designation and also timely re-registered under each subsequent extension of the designation, or who registered under the re-designation no later than November 2, 2000 and also timely re-registered under the extension of the re-designation. Certain nationals of Burundi (or aliens having no nationality who last habitually resided in Burundi) who previously have not applied for TPS may be eligible to apply under the late initial registration provisions.

**EFFECTIVE DATES:** The extension of Burundi's TPS designation is effective November 2, 2003, and will remain in effect until November 2, 2004. The 60-day re-registration period begins September 3, 2003 and will remain in effect until November 3, 2003.

#### FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Jonathan Mills, Residence and Status Services, Office of Programs and Regulations, Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services, Department of Homeland Security, 425 "I" Street, NW., Room 3040, Washington, DC 20536, telephone (202) 514-4754.

#### SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

### What Authority Does the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security Have To Extend the Designation of Burundi Under the TPS Program?

On March 1, 2003, the functions of the Immigration and Naturalization Service (Service) transferred from the Department of Justice to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) pursuant to the Homeland Security Act of 2002, Pub. L. 107-296. The responsibilities for administering the TPS program held by the Service were transferred to the Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services (BCIS).

Under section 244 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (Act), 8 U.S.C. 1254a, the Secretary of DHS, after consultation with appropriate agencies of the Government, is authorized to designate a foreign state or (part thereof) for TPS. The Secretary of DHS may then grant TPS to eligible nationals of that foreign state (or aliens having no nationality who last habitually resided in that state).

Section 244(b)(3)(A) of the Act requires the Secretary of DHS to review, at least 60 days before the end of the TPS designation or any extension thereof, the conditions in a foreign state designated under the TPS program to determine whether the conditions for a TPS designation continue to be met and, if so, the length of an extension of TPS.

8 U.S.C. 1254a(b)(3)(A). If the Secretary of DHS determines that the foreign state no longer meets the conditions for TPS designation, he shall terminate the designation, as provided in section 244(b)(3)(B) of the Act. 8 U.S.C. 1254a(b)(3)(B). Finally, if the Secretary of DHS does not determine that a foreign state (or part thereof) no longer meets the conditions for designation at least 60 days before the designation or extension is due to expire, section 244(b)(3)(C) of the Act provides for an automatic extension of TPS for an additional period of 6 months (or, in the discretion of the Secretary of DHS, a period of 12 or 18 months). 8 U.S.C. 1254a(b)(3)(C).

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

On November 4, 1997, the Attorney General published a notice in the **Federal Register** designating Burundi under the TPS program based upon ongoing armed conflict occurring within the country. 62 FR 59735. The Attorney General extended this TPS designation annually and re-designated Burundi by publishing a notice on November 9, 1999, determining in each instance that the conditions warranting such designation continued to be met. 64 FR 61123.

Since the date of the last extension, the Departments of Homeland Security and State have continued to review conditions in Burundi. It is determined that a 12-month extension is warranted due to ongoing armed conflict within Burundi that would pose a serious threat to the personal safety of returning nationals of Burundi (or aliens having no nationality who last habitually resided in Burundi). 8 U.S.C. 1254a(b)(1)(A).

The BCIS Resource Information Center (RIC) notes that, although there have been important advances in the Burundi peace process, fighting between the government and rebel forces has intensified. RIC Report (June 26, 2003). Both sides are still committing serious human rights violations. *Id.* The humanitarian situation remains dire. *Id.*

Burundi has seen some progress. *Id.* The transitional government of Burundi and two of the three main rebel forces signed ceasefire agreements in December 2002. *Id.* In addition, there has been some headway in implementing the Burundian peace accords. *Id.* Cooperation between the major Hutu and Tutsi political parties has improved, laws have been enacted to address past human rights violations and prevent future abuses, and civil service and provincial administration