



THE SECRETARY OF STATE
WASHINGTON

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2016 JUN 13 AM 10:52

June 16, 2016

The Honorable
Jeh Charles Johnson
Secretary of Homeland Security
Washington, DC 20528

Dear Mr. Secretary:

I recommend that you do not extend the designations of Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone upon their expiration on November 21, 2016, as the extraordinary and temporary conditions related to the designations no longer exist.

Beginning in 2014, Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone experienced an epidemic of Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) that created extraordinary and temporary conditions which prevented nationals (and persons having no nationality who last habitually resided in these countries) from returning in safety from the United States to those countries. These conditions included high transmission rates over large geographic areas, overwhelmed health care systems, and containment measures that could have resulted in food shortages. The totality of these conditions led DHS to designate TPS for Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone November 21, 2014, for a period of 18 months, until May 21, 2016. On March 22, 2016, DHS extended the TPS designation until November 21, 2016.

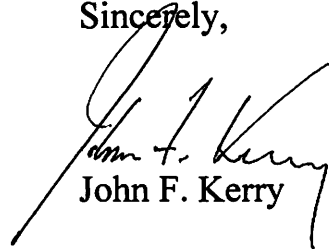
The World Health Organization (WHO) first declared Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Guinea free of Ebola transmission May 9, November 7, and December 29, 2015, respectively. The virus resurfaced a few times in all three countries in 2016, but each time, the governments of each country responded rapidly and according to international response protocols, and successfully managed to contain the virus to the initial contact group. It is anticipated that any further flare-ups of the virus will be handled in the same manner.

On March 29, 2016, WHO declared that the Ebola situation in West Africa no longer constitutes a Public Health Emergency of International Concern, and emphasized that there should be no restrictions on travel and trade with Guinea,

Liberia, and Sierra Leone. While it is clear that the virus can persist in some survivors and can be transmitted in that circumstance, the likelihood of additional cases will fall steadily over the coming months. Moreover, all three affected countries have rapid-response teams in place to detect, isolate, and treat any new Ebola cases and prevent the kind of epidemic that occurred in 2014-2015. Health care systems in the three affected countries are no longer overwhelmed by EVD and are beginning to rebuild. Airline, business, and agricultural activities have largely resumed.

Based on a review of the situation in these countries related to the extraordinary and temporary conditions that existed due to the EVD outbreak at the time of the designations of TPS, we believe the current country conditions no longer prevent nationals, or persons without nationality who last habitually resided in these countries, from returning to their respective countries safely. Enclosed is the Department's assessment of country conditions as they relate to the statutory requirements of TPS. Based on that assessment, I recommend that you do not extend TPS for Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone upon the expiration of the designations November 21, 2016.

Sincerely,



John F. Kerry

Enclosure:

As stated.

Department of State Assessment Regarding
Temporary Protected Status (TPS)
For Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone

I. Statutory Basis for TPS Designation

Have the conditions under which the foreign state was designated for TPS ceased to exist?

Yes. Beginning in 2014, Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone experienced an epidemic of Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) that created extraordinary and temporary conditions which prevented nationals (and persons having no nationality who last habitually resided in those countries) present in the United States from returning to those countries in safety. The extraordinary and temporary conditions included high EVD transmission rates in wide-spread geographic areas; overwhelmed health care systems, which resulted in individuals refraining from seeking care and prevented individuals from getting treatment for preventable or treatable conditions; and containment measures, such as cancellation of airline flights, international trade restrictions, and local quarantines, that could have resulted in food shortages. The totality of these conditions led to the designation of TPS for Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone November 21, 2014.

An extraordinary international response brought the EVD crisis substantially under control. The World Health Organization (WHO) first declared Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Guinea free of Ebola transmission May 9, November 7, and December 29, 2015, respectively. The virus resurfaced a few times in all three countries in 2016, but each time, the governments of each country responded rapidly and according to international response protocols, and successfully managed to contain the virus to the initial contact group. It is anticipated that any further flare-ups of the virus will be handled in the same manner.

On March 29, 2016, the WHO declared that the Ebola situation in West Africa no longer constitutes a Public Health Emergency of International Concern, and the temporary recommendations adopted in response were terminated. The WHO emphasized that there should be no restrictions on

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travel and trade with Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone, and that any such measures should be lifted immediately.

Although new clusters of EVD cases continue to occur as expected, including a recent cluster in Guinea, all clusters to date have been detected and rapidly contained. Guinea's final Ebola patient, a 70-year-old man, tested negative for the virus a second time April 19, 2016, and began a 42-day countdown to a renewed "Ebola free" status. A country is considered Ebola-free after two 21-day incubation periods have passed since the last known case tested negative for a second time. Under WHO guidelines, that milestone initiates an additional 75-day period of enhanced surveillance.

While it is clear that the virus can persist in some bodily fluids for months after recovery, and can be transmitted sexually in that circumstance, the likelihood of additional cases will fall steadily over the coming months. Moreover, the three countries have rapid-response teams in place to detect, isolate, and treat any new Ebola cases, as well as prevent the kind of spread that occurred in 2014-2015. In addition, trials of the VSV-EBOV Ebola vaccine continue after initial indications that the vaccine is safe and effective. Contacts and contacts-of-contacts associated with cases in Guinea and Sierra Leone are routinely traced by case workers and offered the vaccine.

Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone have strong capacities in place to isolate the last known chains of transmission. The three governments and aid donors are repurposing EVD equipment for other health care needs.

Health care systems are no longer overwhelmed by the EVD outbreak and are beginning to rebuild. Airline, business, and agricultural activities have substantially resumed.

The conditions under which Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone were designated for TPS, and which prevented respective nationals from returning in safety (high transmission rates, overwhelmed healthcare systems and containment measures which threatened food shortages) have essentially ceased to exist.

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A. Armed conflict

1. Is Guinea, Liberia, or Sierra Leone currently involved in an ongoing, internal armed conflict?

No.

- a. If so, due to such conflict, would the return of nationals of the foreign state to that state (or to the part of the state) pose a serious threat to their personal safety?

N/A.

B. Environmental Disaster

1. Has Guinea, Liberia, or Sierra Leone recently experienced an earthquake, flood, drought, epidemic, or other environmental disaster in the state?

See Response to Part I.C.

- a. If so, did this result in a substantial, but temporary, disruption of living conditions in the areas affected?

See Response to Part I.C.

2. Are the foreign states unable, temporarily, to handle adequately the return to the state of aliens who are nationals of the states?

See Response to Part I.C.

3. Have the foreign states officially requested TPS for its nationals in the United States?

See Response to Part I.C.

C. Extraordinary and Temporary Conditions

1. Have the foreign states experienced extraordinary and temporary conditions that prevent aliens who are nationals of the states from returning to the state in safety?

No. Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone all experienced an epidemic of EVD, which at the time of the TPS designation in November 2014 numbered more than 13,200 cases with close to 5,000 deaths. The combination of the rapidly multiplying, and geographically widespread transmission of EVD overwhelmed the rudimentary healthcare systems in place. The uncontrolled epidemic, along with containment measures taken by the respective governments and restrictions on trade and travel by other countries, at the time did constitute extraordinary and temporary conditions that prevented nationals from returning to their respective countries in safety.

Efforts to fight the disease, however, have been largely successful. The Governments of Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone, with massive assistance from the United States and others in the international community, have largely contained the epidemic, which began in Guinea in December 2013 and spread to Liberia and Sierra Leone. As noted above, on March 29, 2016, the WHO declared that the Ebola situation in West Africa no longer constitutes a Public Health Emergency of International Concern and the temporary recommendations adopted in response were terminated. Moreover, health systems are no longer overwhelmed by EVD and are beginning to rebuild. The three governments and neighboring countries ended measures that could have threatened food security.

In Guinea, the government has put in place response and containment measures to detect the movement of symptomatic persons. The government also conducts in-home monitoring of those who have been exposed to the virus. Guineans return daily from travel abroad, and airlines are operating almost at capacity. Travelers are routinely screened at ports of entry. While there remains a small risk of EVD transmission, medical centers are not overwhelmed and there are no parts of the country that are “no go” because of the disease. Normal business activity and national life have largely resumed.

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In Liberia, the government and citizens at the grassroots level led a successful effort to end new EVD infections. The U.S.-led infusion of international assistance played a key role, but success would have been impossible without Liberians quickly changing social customs and modifying behaviors that helped to spread the virus.

Collaboration continues among the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, USAID, the Government of Liberia, and others, including government, international organization, and NGOs, on case investigation, contact tracing, infection prevention and control, as well as training for health care personnel to build and maintain EVD lab testing capacity. Officials believe the healthcare system will come out of the EVD crisis stronger and better positioned to respond to emergencies, particularly those posed by infectious diseases. Commerce and imports have jumped significantly, and government services have returned to pre-Ebola levels.

In Sierra Leone, the EVD epidemic started in May 2014 and peaked between October and December 2014. The government and international partners mounted an effective response that dramatically decreased the number of new EVD cases from a high of 500 per week in late 2014 to between 8 to 12 cases in June 2015, and to single digits in August 2015. On March 17, 2016, the WHO again declared Sierra Leone to be Ebola free, stating 42 days (two incubation cycles of the virus) had passed since the last person confirmed to have Ebola virus disease in the country tested negative for a second time. The WHO stressed, however, that Sierra Leone, as well as Liberia and Guinea, are still at risk of Ebola flare-ups, largely due to virus persistence in some survivors, and must remain on high alert and ready to respond. The government and international partners continue to monitor infection control and prevention measures at hospitals. Schools are open and business hours have been extended to help jump-start economic activity.

2. Would permitting nationals of the foreign states to remain temporarily in the United States be contrary to the national interest of the United States?

No.

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II. Discretionary Factors

What, if any, additional information relevant to this decision should be brought to the attention of DHS?

Consular officers from Embassies Monrovia and Freetown believe that TPS incentivized travelers to stay in the United States or to leave their children behind in U.S. schools. With respect to Sierra Leone, this includes travelers who accepted international visitor programs at the expense of the U.S. government and have yet to return to utilize their training in their communities and institutions. This flight of human capital may adversely affect the Governments of Liberia and Sierra Leone's medium- and long-term development goals. The return of educated and skilled nationals would in turn strengthen the country. Similarly, Embassy Conakry believes that extending TPS would not aid Guinea's economic recovery. The economy is slowly regaining strength after the blow delivered by the EVD outbreak and low commodities prices of the past several years.

III. Recommendation

Based on the factors enumerated above, the Department of State recommends DHS not extend TPS for Guinea, Liberia, and/or Sierra Leone when the designations expire November 21, 2016.

From: SMART Archive
Sent: 5/13/2016 7:44:26 AM
To: SMART Core
Subject: Liberia: Embassy's Response to Temporary Protected Status Designation

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MRN: 16 MONROVIA 394
Date/DTG: May 13, 2016 / 131142Z MAY 16
From: AMEMBASSY MONROVIA
Action: WASHDC, SECSTATE ROUTINE
E.O.: 13526
TAGS: PREL, PHUM, PREF, SMIG, CMGT, LR
Captions: SENSITIVE
Reference: A) [16 STATE 51828](#)
B) [15 MONROVIA 600](#)
Pass Line: PRM/PIM
Subject: Liberia: Embassy's Response to Temporary Protected Status Designation

1. (SBU) Per ref A request, Embassy Monrovia provides the following response regarding Temporary Protected Status (TPS) in Liberia:

A. Is Guinea, Liberia, or Sierra Leone currently involved in an ongoing, internal armed conflict?

No, Liberia is not currently involved in an ongoing, internal armed conflict.

B. Would the return of Guinean, Liberian, or Sierra Leonean nationals respectively to Guinea, Liberia, or Sierra Leone (or to parts of each country) pose a serious threat to their personal safety?

No.

C. Has Guinea, Liberia, or Sierra Leone recently experienced an earthquake, flood, drought, epidemic, or other environmental disaster? If so, did this result in a substantial, but temporary, disruption of living conditions in the area affected?

In the past year, Liberia has not experienced any significant natural disaster.

The Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) epidemic of 2014 and 2015 disrupted access to medical care and education, stigmatized affected communities and individuals, discouraged traditional burial rites, and stressed already limited government capacity and funding. The World Health Organization (WHO) first declared Liberia

Ebola-free on May 9, 2015. The virus has resurfaced a few times since then, but each time the Government of Liberia (GOL) has successfully managed to contain the virus to the initial contact group.

D. Is the state of Guinea, Liberia, or Sierra Leone unable, temporarily, to handle adequately the return of its respective nationals?

The state of Liberia is able to adequately handle the return of its nationals. Daily commerce in Liberia has resumed, the healthcare system has come out of the EVD crisis stronger and better positioned to respond to emergencies--particularly those posed by infectious diseases--commerce and imports have jumped significantly, and government services have returned to pre-Ebola levels.

E. Has the government of Guinea, Liberia, or Sierra Leone officially requested a TPS designation based on an environmental disaster or any other factors? Has the government raised the issue of extending TPS with Post, and if so, how and when?

Aside from expressing gratitude in March for the most recent extension, Embassy Monrovia has not been approached by the GOL on the TPS issue.

F. In addition to armed conflict and/or environmental disasters, has Guinea, Liberia, or Sierra Leone experienced other extraordinary and temporary conditions that prevent Guinean, Liberian, or Sierra Leonean nationals respectively from returning in safety?

Apart from the EVD epidemic of 2014-2015, no other extraordinary conditions are affecting Liberia. Since the end of its civil war in 2003, Liberia has achieved thirteen years of peace and stability -- including two free and fair presidential elections in 2005 and 2011, and free and fair Senate elections in December 2014.

G. Would permitting Guinean, Liberian, or Sierra Leonean nationals to remain temporarily in the United States be contrary to U.S. national interest?

In the process of adjudicating visa applications after TPS was granted to Liberian nationals in November of 2014, Embassy Consular Officers have noted that TPS has incentivized otherwise legitimate travelers to stay in the United States or to leave their children behind in U.S. schools. With the extension of TPS in March, this trend has continued.

With a dearth of well-educated Liberians in country, this flight of human capital may adversely affect the GOL's medium- and long-term development goals. Embassy officers believe that TPS has only benefited the families of well-heeled and educated Liberians, as Liberians most vulnerable to crisis situations generally do not have the means to travel to the United States.

H. Is there an estimate of how many Guinean, Liberian, or Sierra Leonean nationals have fled their respective countries because of ongoing armed conflicts, environmental disasters, or other extraordinary and temporary conditions in the country in the past year?

As noted in response C, in the past year, Liberia has not experienced any extraordinary natural or manmade disasters. The limited number of active Ebola cases in the past year, in the Embassy's estimation, has encouraged, at most, a few

hundred Liberians to flee the country.

- I. What, if any, additional information relevant to this decision should be raised?
While Liberia remains one of the world's poorest countries and Liberians face many challenges daily, including few government services, widespread poverty, and high unemployment, there are no extraordinary circumstances affecting this country that would merit a TPS designation. Echoing last year's TPS cable response (ref B), Embassy believes that Liberia needs as many skilled Liberians, including those who have been educated and have worked in the United States under TPS, to return home and help rebuild the country.

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| Signature: | Paskman |
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| Drafted By: | MONROVIA:Padilla, Benny A |
| Cleared By: | Consular:Sorensen, Jay M Pol-Econ:Chamberlain, Joseph L. Pol-Econ:Sokoloff, Alexander W |
| Approved By: | EXEC:Paskman, Sheila R |
| Released By: | MONROVIA:Padilla, Benny A |
| Info: | CDR USAFRICOM STUTTGART GE ROUTINE ; ECOWAS COLLECTIVE ROUTINE |
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| SBU - ROUTINE |
| Conakry 276 |

**SUBJECT: Guinea: TEMPORARY PROTECTED STATUS: REQUEST FOR INFORMATION
ON COUNTRY CONDITIONS**

**REF: 16 STATE 51828
15 CONAKRY 590**

1. (SBU) Based on the definition of Temporary Protected Status (TPS), which provides temporary relief from removal to eligible aliens in the United States who are temporarily unable to safely return to their home country because of ongoing armed conflict, an environmental disaster, or other extraordinary and temporary conditions, Embassy Conakry reiterates its position expressed in 15 Conakry 590 (reftel) that TPS should be lifted for Guinea.

2. (SBU) Guinea- Specific Country Conditions Assessment:

- Is Guinea currently involved in an ongoing, internal armed conflict?

No

- Would the return of Guinean nationals to Guinea (or to parts of the country) pose a serious threat to their personal safety?

No

- Has Guinea, Liberia, or Sierra Leone recently experienced an earthquake, flood, drought, epidemic, or other environmental disaster? If so, did this result in a substantial, but temporary, disruption of living conditions in the area affected?

Yes, the 2014-2015 Ebola epidemic. Note that on 29 March, 2016 the WHO declared the Ebola situation in West Africa no longer constitutes a Public Health Emergency of International Concern and the temporary recommendations adopted in response were terminated. Subsequent to a flare-up of the disease that hit both Guinea and Liberia in early 2016, all patients have now been discharged; Guinea's final Ebola patient, a 70-year-old man, tested negative for the virus a second time on 19 April, and Guinea began its 42-day countdown on that day, and will be able to declare the flare-up over on 31 May if there are no additional cases.

- Is the state of Guinea, Leone unable, temporarily, to handle adequately the return of its respective nationals?

No. Guineans return daily from travel abroad, and airlines are operating at near-capacity. Travelers are screened at the port of exit.

- Has the government of Guinea officially requested a TPS designation based on an environmental disaster or any other factors? Has the government raised the issue of extending TPS with Post, and if so, how and when?

No. The government here has never raised TPS with any Embassy official.

- In addition to armed conflict and/or environmental disasters, has Guinea experienced other extraordinary and temporary conditions that prevent Guinean nationals respectively from returning in safety?

No

- Would permitting Guinean, Liberian, or Sierra Leonean nationals to remain temporarily in the United States be contrary to U.S. national interest?

Extending TPS would not aid Guinea's economic recovery, which is a top USG goal.

- Is there an estimate of how many Guinean, Liberian, or Sierra Leonean nationals have fled their respective countries because of ongoing armed conflicts, environmental disasters, or other extraordinary and temporary conditions in the country in the past year?

No

- What, if any, additional information relevant to this decision should be raised?

Daily life and commerce continue in Guinea. The economy is slowly regaining strength after the blow delivered by Ebola and low commodities prices of the past several years.

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DRAFTED BY: CONAKRY:Massinga, Ervin J
APPROVED BY: Executive:Hankins, Dennis B
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Regis E,Public Diplomacy:Moehs, Teta M,DoS:Martel, Lise D,Fagen
Robert

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| SBU - ROUTINE |
| Freetown 332 |

SUBJECT: Sierra Leone: Response to Temporary Protected Status Request for Information on Country Conditions

REF: 16 STATE 51828

(SBU) Per reftel request, Embassy Freetown provides the following response regarding Temporary Protected Status (TPS) in Sierra Leone:

A. Is Guinea, Liberia, or Sierra Leone currently involved in an ongoing, internal armed conflict?

No, Sierra Leone is not currently involved in an ongoing, internal armed conflict.

B. Would the return of Guinean, Liberian, or Sierra Leonean nationals respectively to Guinea, Liberia, or Sierra Leone (or to parts of each country) pose a serious threat to their personal safety?

No.

C. Has Guinea, Liberia, or Sierra Leone recently experienced an earthquake, flood, drought, epidemic, or other environmental disaster? If so, did this result in a substantial, but temporary, disruption of living conditions in the area affected?

Last September, Freetown experienced heavier than normal rains and some low lying communities experienced flooding which led to the temporary displacement of an estimated 10,000 citizens.

The Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) epidemic of 2014 and 2015 disrupted access to medical care and education, stigmatized affected communities and individuals, discouraged traditional burial rites, and stressed already limited government capacity and funding. The World Health Organization (WHO) declared Sierra Leone Ebola-free on November 7, 2015. The virus resurfaced in January but the Government of Sierra Leone (GOSL) responded rapidly and according to international response protocols and successfully managed to contain the virus to the initial contact group. It is anticipated that further flare-ups of the virus will be handled in the same manner.

D. Is the state of Guinea, Liberia, or Sierra Leone unable, temporarily, to handle adequately the return of its respective nationals?

The state of Sierra Leone is able to adequately handle the return of its nationals. Economic development initiatives are underway, the healthcare system has come out of the EVD crisis stronger and better positioned to respond to emergencies--particularly those posed by infectious diseases. President Koroma's post-Ebola recovery plan is in full swing with additional focus on further strengthening the health care system.

Many Sierra Leoneans from the diaspora have already started returning to Sierra Leone reviving businesses and rebuilding families.

E. Has the government of Guinea, Liberia, or Sierra Leone officially requested a TPS designation based on an environmental disaster or any other factors? Has the government raised the issue of extending TPS with Post, and if so, how and when?

The Government of Sierra Leone has not requested a TPS designation nor has it requested an extension of the current TPS designation.

E. In addition to armed conflict and/or environmental disasters, has Guinea, Liberia, or Sierra Leone experienced other extraordinary and temporary conditions that prevent Guinean, Liberian, or Sierra Leonean nationals respectively from returning in safety?

Apart from the EVD epidemic of 2014-2015, no other extraordinary conditions are affecting Sierra Leone.

G. Would permitting Guinean, Liberian, or Sierra Leonean nationals to remain temporarily in the United States be contrary to U.S. national interest?

As is noted by our colleagues in neighboring Liberia, Embassy Consular Officers in Freetown have also noted that TPS has incentivized otherwise legitimate travelers to stay in the United States or to leave their children behind in U.S. schools. With the extension of TPS in March, this trend has continued. In Sierra Leone, this includes travelers who accepted international visitor programs at USG expense and have yet to return to utilize their training in their communities and institutions.

This flight of human capital adversely affects the GOSL's medium- and long-term development goals damaging economic development and the stabilization of democratic and civil society, a particular vulnerability as Sierra Leone prepares for elections in 2018.

H. Is there an estimate of how many Guinean, Liberian, or Sierra

Leonean nationals have fled their respective countries because of ongoing armed conflicts, environmental disasters, or other extraordinary and temporary conditions in the country in the past year?

The only extraordinary or temporary condition in Sierra Leone was the Ebola outbreak which was contained in 2015.

I. What, if any, additional information relevant to this decision should be raised?

While Sierra Leone remains one of the world's poorest countries and Sierra Leoneans face many challenges daily, including few government services, widespread poverty, and high unemployment, there are no extraordinary circumstances affecting this country that would merit a TPS designation.

The Embassy believes that now is a critical time for Sierra Leoneans who have enjoyed TPS status to return and contribute to the hard work necessary to rebuild their homeland.

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DRAFTED BY: FREETOWN:Meininger, Laurie J.
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ECON:Risner, Scott A.,CDC:Hersey, Sara,USAID:Cheema, Jatinder

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E.O. 13526: N/A
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Secretary

U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Washington, DC 20528



**Homeland
Security**

June 30, 2016

The Honorable John F. Kerry
Secretary of State
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary ~~Kerry~~: **John**

Thank you for your June 16, 2016 letter.

I appreciate the time and effort that went into researching and preparing the Department of State's assessment of country conditions in support of your recommendation that I do not extend the Temporary Protected Status designations of Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone. I will take your recommendation and assessment into consideration as a part of my periodic review of whether these three countries continue to meet the designation criteria for Temporary Protected Status.

My consultation with the Department of State remains a valuable component of the Temporary Protected Status designation and review process.

Sincerely,

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

Jeh Charles Johnson