

Bright-Davies, Desmond

From: Krause, Scott
Sent: Tuesday, January 30, 2018 11:45 AM
To: ESEC-External Liaison
Subject: FW: Multifaith Alliance Letter Supporting TPS for Syrians
Attachments: MFA_ParticipatingOrganizations_1.3.18_New Logo.pdf

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BY ESEC SEC
2018 JAN 30 PM 1:33

For S1's weekly read folder.

Scott Krause
Executive Secretary
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

From: Brodsky, Marcy
Sent: Tuesday, January 30, 2018 11:39 AM
To: Krause, Scott [REDACTED]
Subject: FW: Multifaith Alliance Letter Supporting TPS for Syrians

From: Georgette Bennett
Sent: Thursday, January 25, 2018 6:09:39 PM
To: Brodsky, Marcy
Subject: Multifaith Alliance Letter Supporting TPS for Syrians

Dear Secretaries Nielsen and Tillerson:

The Multifaith Alliance for Syrian Refugees respectfully urges that you extend Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for 5,800 Syrians for another 18 months. Additionally, we request that you redesignate TPS for Syrians to permit those with expiring visas to apply for TPS. None of these individuals can safely return to the state of war in Syria.

The Multifaith Alliance for Syrian Refugees (MFA), a project of the Tides Center, is a coalition of 90 faith-based and secular organizations. MFA's mission is to mobilize the interfaith response to the Syrian humanitarian crisis; raise funds to alleviate suffering; cultivate partnerships to advance future stability in the region; advocate for sensible and humane refugee policies; and create awareness of the facts, the needs, and the opportunities for positive action.

In March 2012, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) first designated Syria for TPS on the basis of unsafe conditions in that war-torn country. Since then, DHS has three times extended and redesignated TPS for those Syrians in the United States as of August 2016. Across the past sixteen months, MFA has coordinated the delivery of more than \$87 million in humanitarian relief into Syria. We know from our partners on the ground that the hostile and life-threatening conditions continue unabated. The catastrophe in Syria has only escalated, creating the worst humanitarian crisis since World War II.

TPS Syrians have made homes here, and many contribute to the American economy. Failure to extend and re-designate TPS when it expires in March will expose those forced to return to shelling, aerial bombardments (and barrel bombs), warfare, maiming and death. Staggering additional challenges include kidnap, torture, and lack of basic human necessities (food, water, medical care, electricity,

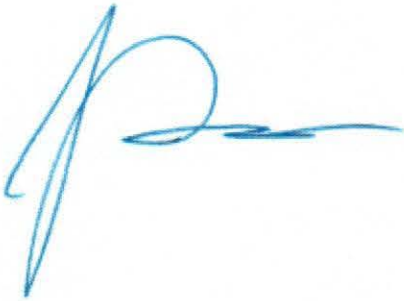
housing). UN Reports now predict another massive exodus of Syrians, which will only exacerbate this humanitarian disaster. Indeed, our own Department of State has recently issued its highest-level warning to American travelers. Its January 10, 2018 advisory confirms: "No part of Syria is safe from violence...." These are obviously the very same conditions that would confront returning Syrians.

In the spirit of the *nonrefoulement* requirement of Article 33 of the 1951 Refugee Convention, which is part of the U.S. Refugee Act, we cannot require Syrians here under TPS, and those with other expiring visas, to return to such a dangerous, chaotic country. The United States cannot maintain its foreign policy prerogatives, its global leadership – or its crucial negotiating power to end this war -- if it disregards the clear fact of continuingly deteriorating conditions in Syria. It is clear that from a statutory perspective that the desperate situation to which Syrians would be forced to return continues to warrant the extension and redesignation of their status.

In addition to the legal and policy grounds cited above, we also urge that you consider the moral imperatives of all great faiths, and assuredly those of MFA's participating organizations: caring for the stranger undergirds the values on which America was founded.

Please extend and redesignate TPS for Syrians.

Thank you.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Georgette F. Bennett', with a stylized, flowing script.

Georgette F. Bennett, PhD

Founder

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Georgette F. Bennett, Ph.D.

Founder

Multifaith Alliance for Syrian Refugees

A project of the Tides Center in cooperation with JDC

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The Multifaith Alliance for Syrian Refugees

Participating Organizations:

The Afya Foundation
Ameinu (Our People)
American Jewish Committee
American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC)
The Angle Project
Anti-Defamation League
Auburn Theological Seminary
B'nai Jeshurun, New York, NY
Bronx Christian Fellowship Church, Bronx, NY
The Brotherhood Synagogue, New York, NY
Buddhist Global Relief
Catholic Relief Services
The Center for Mind-Body Medicine
Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA)
Church of the Advent Hope, New York, NY
Church World Service
Concerned Citizens for Syrian Refugees, Michigan City, IN
Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations
Congregation Beit Simchat Torah, New York, NY
Congregation Beth El, South Orange, NJ
Congregation Kehillath Israel, Brookline, MA
CURE International
The Edgar M. Bronfman Center for Jewish Student Life at NYU
Episcopal Migration Ministries
Episcopal Relief & Development
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Foa & Son
Foundation Orient Bulgaria
Global Ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and United Church of Christ
Greater NYC Families for Syria
Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America
Heart to Heart International
HIAS
Interfaith Center of NY
International Refugee Assistance Project
IsraAID: The Israel Forum for International Humanitarian Aid
Jamaica Muslim Center, Jamaica, NY
Jewish Coalition for Syrian Refugees
The Jewish Collaborative of Orange County, Tustin, CA
Jewish Council for Public Affairs
Jewish Federations of North America
Jewish Funders Network
The Jewish Theological Seminary
Jewish United Fund/Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Chicago
J-Teen Leadership
London School of Economics and Political Science: Faith Centre
Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service
Milstein Center for Interreligious Dialogue
Natan-International Humanitarian Aid



**National Council of Jewish Women
New York Board of Rabbis
New York Legal Assistance Group
North Carolina Hillel: UNC Chapel Hill
NYC Muslim-Jewish Solidarity Committee
Orient for Human Relief
Peace Action New York State
Princeton University Office of Religious Life
Rabbinical Assembly
Rahma Relief Foundation
Reform Judaism (UK)
Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism
The Riverside Church, New York, NY
Rutgers Presbyterian Church, New York, NY
Sadhana: Coalition of Progressive Hindus
Saint Peter's Lutheran Church, New York, NY
Save the Syrian Children
School for Creative Judaism
Shoulder to Shoulder
Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom
Sunnyside Reformed Church, Sunnyside, NY
Syrian American Council
Syrian American Medical Society
Syrian American Rescue Network
Syrian Community Network
Syrian Emergency Task Force
TANENBAUM | Center for Interreligious Understanding
Temple Beth El, Boca Raton, FL
Temple Beth Shalom, Palm Coast, FL
Temple Emanu-El, Closter, NJ
UJA-Federation of New York
Union for Reform Judaism
Union Theological Seminary
Unitarian Universalist United Nations Office
United Sikhs
United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism
Valley Syrian Relief Committee
Vassar College Refugee Solidarity
Ve'ahavta
World Jewish Congress
World Jewish Relief
World ORT
Ziv Medical Center**



U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
Services

April 24, 2018

Dr. Georgette F. Bennett
Founder, Multifaith Alliance
for Syrian Refugees
6 East 43rd Street, Floor 22
New York, New York 10017

Dear Dr. Bennett:

Thank you for your January 25, 2018 email. Secretary Nielsen asked that I respond on her behalf.

I appreciate your interest in the Temporary Protected Status (TPS) designation for Syria. The Secretary of Homeland Security's authority to designate a country for TPS and to extend or terminate a country's existing designation is based upon specific statutory criteria. *See* Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) § 244(b). U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) is principally responsible for advising the Secretary on TPS issues and implementing the program.

At least 60 days before the current expiration date for a TPS designation, the Secretary must review conditions in the foreign country and, after consultation with other appropriate federal agencies, determine whether the statutory conditions for TPS continue to be met. Under the INA, if the Secretary determines that the conditions for designation are no longer met with respect to a country, the Secretary is required to terminate the designation. *See* INA § 244(b)(1),(3).

After carefully considering relevant conditions in Syria and the statutory TPS requirements, Secretary Nielsen decided to extend the TPS designation for Syria for 18 months, through September 30, 2019. Prior to the conclusion of the 18-month extension, the Secretary will review conditions in Syria and, after consultation with other appropriate federal agencies, determine whether another extension or a termination is warranted, in full compliance with the INA. Additional information on the extension of TPS for Syria can be found in Secretary Nielsen's January 31, 2018 announcement of the decision posted on the Department of Homeland Security website, on the USCIS website, and in a notice that was published in the *Federal Register* on March 5, 2018.

Thank you again for your letter and interest in this important issue. Should you wish to discuss this matter further, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "LFC", written over a horizontal line.

L. Francis Cissna
Director