



## EMAIL BULLETIN

### **U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY CONSIDERS REVOKING TEMPORARY PROTECTED STATUS (TPS) FOR 300,000 EL SALVADORANS, HONDURANS, AND NICARAGUANS**

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The Department of Homeland Security is considering ending Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for approximately 300,000 individuals from El Salvador, Honduras and Nicaragua. The final decision on TPS for the three nations is still under intense debate within the administration. In the past, 18 month extensions of TPS have been relatively routine for the Central Americans.

TPS was approved for Nicaragua and Honduras after Hurricane Mitch struck in 1998, and for El Salvador after earthquakes in 2001 killed more than 1,000 people and destroyed more than 220,000 homes. TPS was intended to allow individuals from these countries to stay in the United States temporarily and thereby soften the blow of the natural disasters. TPS bars the deportation of individuals from those countries. Across the nation, more than 220,000 Salvadorans, 70,000 Hondurans and 3,600 Nicaraguans could be forced to depart the US or remain in the US illegally if TPS is not extended, according to DHS numbers. The Bush administration must make a formal announcement on TPS 60 days before its expiration in July.

One senior administration official involved with Latin American issues said that Department of Homeland Security officials have decided that TPS for the Central Americans must end. "It's a decision that can yet be changed, but really it's almost at the last stages," the official said.

Another official said some government members want to keep TPS or devise "an exit strategy" that would end the program but look for ways to avoid the public relations nightmare of having thousands of Central Americans being forcibly removed from the US. The Department of Homeland Security is still consulting with State Department and other U.S. agencies before making a final decision, officials added.

The President of El Salvador, Tony Saca has been calling on President Bush and other top officials in an effort to gain another extension of TPS, officials said. The case of El Salvador is emblematic because it is the biggest beneficiary of TPS and a loyal U.S. ally. It is the only Latin American nation that continues to contribute troops in Iraq. Not getting TPS renewed would be a major blow for Saca, who is facing legislative elections in March. Almost two million Salvadorans living in the U.S. send almost \$2.5 billion back home in remittances, a lifeline for the country's economy, according to the Inter American Development Bank.