

PRESIDENT BUSH DIRECTS SECRETARY CHERTOFF TO AUTHORIZE LIBERIAN DEFERRED ENFORCED DEPARTURE (DED)

Press Office
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
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President Bush Directs Secretary Chertoff to Authorize Liberian Deferred Enforced Departure (DED)

WASHINGTON – President Bush issued a memorandum today to Secretary of Homeland Security, Michael Chertoff, directing the deferral of enforced departure for 18 months, until March 31, 2009, of any qualified Liberian national (or person without nationality who last habitually resided in Liberia) who is currently present in the United States and who is under a grant of Temporary Protected Status (TPS) as of September 30, 2007. The President also directed that the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) implement continued employment authorization for eligible individuals during the 18 months covered by DED.

The President may authorize DED as part of his executive powers to conduct foreign relations. Although DED is not a specific immigration status, individuals covered by DED are protected from removal from the United States, usually for a specific period of time. TPS for Liberia is scheduled to terminate at 12:01 a.m., October 1, 2007. TPS was originally granted for Liberia due to armed conflict and widespread civil strife. That conflict ended in 2003 and conditions have improved such that TPS is no longer warranted. While acknowledging the progress in Liberia, the President cited political and economic conditions in the country that justify deferred departure.

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) will issue a Federal Register notice in the near future detailing the automatic 18-month extension of employment authorization and the Employment Authorization Documents (EADs) that Liberian TPS-holders currently possess. USCIS will also issue an updated Fact Sheet and more detailed Questions and Answers upon publication of that Federal Register notice, including information on how DED-covered individuals may obtain an EAD. For employment purposes, individuals may continue to present any legally acceptable documents, or combination of documents, described on the Form I-9 (Employment Eligibility Verification).

Employers having questions or concerns may call the USCIS Office of Business Liaison Employer Hotline at 800-357-2099. Also, employers may call the U.S. Department of Justice Office of Special Counsel for Immigration Related Unfair Employment Practices (OSC) Employer Hotline at 800-255-8155. Employees or applicants may call the OSC

Employee Hotline at 800-255-7688 for information regarding the automatic extension. Additional information is available on the OSC Web site at <http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/osc/index.html>.

For more information, Liberians or employers may contact the USCIS National Customer Service at 800-375-5283 or visit the USCIS website: www.uscis.gov.