



U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
Services

February 28, 2023

Ramya Reddy
Managing Policy Counsel
Masa Group
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Dear Ms. Reddy:

Thank you for your February 1, 2023 letter to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) in support of Temporary Protected Status (TPS) and Special Student Relief (SSR) for the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Secretary Mayorkas asked that I respond on his behalf.

I appreciate the concerns you outlined regarding the situation and conditions in the DRC and your interest in DRC's designation for TPS and SSR. U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) is principally responsible for advising the Secretary on TPS issues and implementing that program, and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement is principally responsible for advising the Secretary on SSR designations.

As you are aware, the Secretary may designate a country for TPS and extend or terminate a country's existing TPS designation based upon specific statutory criteria. To designate a country for TPS or extend a country's TPS designation, the Secretary must find one or more of the following: (1) there is an ongoing armed conflict within the country that would pose a serious threat to the personal safety of the country's nationals if they were returned; (2) there has been an environmental disaster resulting in a substantial, but temporary, disruption of the living conditions in the area affected, the country is temporarily unable to handle adequately the return of its nationals, and the country has officially requested TPS designation; or (3) there exist extraordinary and temporary conditions in the country that prevent nationals from returning in safety and permitting the country's nationals to remain temporarily would not be contrary to the national interest of the United States. *See* Immigration and Nationality Act § 244(b)(1).

Please be assured that DHS is monitoring the conditions in the DRC in consultation with interagency partners. DHS is committed to administering its programs, including TPS, in an equitable manner. DHS also offers support that may be available upon request to assist those affected by special situations, including eligible nationals of the DRC residing in the United States. Such support includes:

- Change or extension of nonimmigrant status if eligible nationals are currently in the United States, even if the request is filed after the authorized period of admission has expired;
- Expedited processing of requests for advance parole documents;

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- Expedited adjudication of requests for off-campus employment authorization for F-1 students experiencing severe economic hardship;
- Expedited adjudication of employment authorization applications, where appropriate;
- Assistance if applicants received a Request for Evidence or a Notice of Intent to Deny and were unable to appear for an interview, submit evidence, or respond in a timely manner because of the natural disaster; and
- Replacement of lost or damaged immigration or travel documents issued by USCIS, such as a Permanent Resident Card (Green Card).

More information on these options is available under “Special Situations” on the USCIS website at <https://www.uscis.gov/humanitarian/special-situations>.

Thank you again for your letter and interest in this important issue. Please share this response with the other organizations that cosigned your letter. Should you require any additional assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ur M. Jaddou", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Ur M. Jaddou
Director