

African-American Christian Collaboration

24 October 2017

President Donald J. Trump
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Trump:

We write as leaders of principal African-American Christian communions to urge you to extend Haiti's Temporary Protected Status designation for 18 months given recent extraordinary catastrophes there.

We join the US Conference of Mayors, Governors Scott and Baker of Florida and Massachusetts, 100 US congresspersons including senators from both parties, the Broward County Commission and other local elected bodies, 416 faith leaders, 550 US doctors, and others including the editorial boards of the *Miami Herald*, *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Boston Globe*, *New York Daily News*, *Orlando Sentinel*, *Palm Beach Post*, and *Sun Sentinel* in urging this course.

Last October's Hurricane Matthew, the worst to hit Haiti in 52 years, a Category 4 with 145 mph winds, killed more than 1,000 people, cost the nation \$2.8 billion – 32% of its GDP, destroyed crops, livestock, and infrastructure, and left 1.5 million food insecure. This extraordinary event itself would warrant TPS redesignation or extension. Unfortunately it was only one of three qualifying events.

A second calamity is the unchecked cholera epidemic introduced by United Nations troops to Haiti in October, 2010 after the disease's absence from Haiti for at least a century. The UN acknowledged its responsibility only in late 2016 and to date has raised from member nations only \$10 million of a targeted \$400 million to begin addressing the epidemic, which has killed 10,000 and sickened over 800,000.

Thirdly, recovery from the 2010 earthquake, which killed 300,000 as you noted in your September, 2016 remarks in Miami, is still incomplete: nearly 40,000 quake victims remain in internally displaced persons (IDP) camps, with 200,000 more in a camp simply renamed a "settlement" (Canaan). You accurately reflected more fully in those remarks: "The 2010 Haitian earthquake unleashed a horrible and catastrophic devastation: over 300,000 dead, unbelievable, 300,000, millions displaced or injured, homes, businesses, schools reduced to rubble; amid the suffering Haiti showed the world so much heart and so much incredible resilience, but the truth is Haiti is still suffering very badly, maybe as badly, after all of the tears..."

At stake in this decision are the lives and futures of 58,000 Haitians who came to the United States before January 12, 2011— most of them before January 12, 2010, the date of the earthquake — and of their families, including US-born children who should not have to choose between their birthright and future as Americans and their parents. Nor can Haiti's government safely assimilate 58,000 more deportees, or replace their remittances to an estimated 350,000 relatives, while struggling to recover from the earthquake, cholera, and Matthew simultaneously.

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It has therefore asked you to extend TPS to mid-2019 to facilitate its recovery efforts. Doing so would lend a helping hand to stave off desperation and serve the security interests of both our nations.

Mr. President, it can take years to recover from natural disasters of the kind described above. We need only look to our own experiences with Hurricane Katrina and other such events. It is our belief that Haiti fully qualifies for a generous TPS extension at this time, as urged by so many political, editorial, and civic leaders. This issue is understandably of great concern to Haitian Americans, many of whom voted for you and whose greatest champion you promised to be last September. Nothing could more fully warrant approbation than your compassionate exercise of discretion in this instance.

Thank you for your service and consideration, and we would be honored to meet with you to discuss this matter.

Respectfully in Christ,

Bishop Linsay E. Jones, President
Church of Christ (Holiness), USA

Dr. James C. Perkins, President
Progressive National Baptist Convention

Dr. Samuel C. Tolbert, Jr., President
National Baptist Convention of America

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C: The Honorable Rex W. Tillerson, Secretary of State
The Honorable Elaine Duke, Acting Secretary of Homeland Security