



AMERICAN IMMIGRATION LAWYERS ASSOCIATION

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September 18, 2006

Secretary Michael Chertoff
Department of Homeland Security
3801 Nebraska Ave, NW
Washington, D.C. 20528

Dear Secretary Chertoff:

The American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA) urges you to designate Lebanon for temporary protected status (TPS) under §244(b) of the Immigration and Nationality Act.

AILA is the national association of immigration lawyers with more than 10,000 members. It was established in 1946 to promote justice, advocate for fair and reasonable immigration law and policy, advance the quality of immigration and nationality law and practice, and enhance the professional development of its members. AILA has judiciously supported the grant of TPS in limited cases in the past based on a studied consideration of the totality of the circumstances.

The fragile situation in Lebanon justifies such a designation. The hostilities in the Middle East have cost many lives and there is an ongoing urgent humanitarian crisis in Lebanon. The United Nations recently estimated that more than 700,000 people have been displaced from their homes; and Lebanon's civilian infrastructure (hospitals, schools, roads, bridges, fuel depots, seaports) has been badly damaged. These internal dislocations carry severe implications for the ability to deliver humanitarian assistance to those most in need. It would therefore impose a great burden for the reconstruction effort to require an additional influx of civilians, many of whom would likely be unable to return to their homes, and would only add to this grave situation.

AILA's support of a designation of Lebanon for TPS is consistent with the association's mission to advocate for fair United States immigration policy; it is not meant as a political statement with regard to the conflict in the Middle East, nor is it meant to be the final position of the association as to support for TPS for other countries in the Middle East in the future.

Granting TPS at this time would promote U.S. national security interests. Moreover, Lebanese nationals undergo security clearance procedures when applying for visas to the U.S. Of course, TPS may not be granted to those who pose a danger to the security of the U.S. In addition, individuals who have committed a felony or two or more misdemeanors are ineligible for TPS. Lebanon currently meets the statutory requirements for TPS

designation pursuant to section §244(b) of the Immigration and Nationality Act. And we therefore strongly urge you to designate Lebanon for temporary protected status in the U.S.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Carlina Tapia-Ruano". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "C" and a decorative flourish at the end.

Carlina Tapia-Ruano,
President, American Immigration Lawyers Association