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October 17, 2016

The Honorable Jeh Johnson  
Department of Homeland Security  
Washington, DC 20528

Dear Secretary Johnson:

We thank you and the Obama Administration for quickly acting to designate Nepal for the Temporary Protected Status (TPS), effective June 24, 2015. As the 18-month period is coming to an end on December 21, 2016, we are writing to request you to re-designate Nepal for TPS for an additional 18 months.

As we know, the massive 7.8 magnitude earthquake that shook Nepal on April 25, 2015 and the numerous aftershocks resulted in massive death and destruction. The death toll exceeded 9,000 and over eight million people were affected in thirty-nine of Nepal's 75 districts.

The reconstruction efforts is estimated to cost over \$10 billion, half of the national GDP of Nepal. However, the reconstruction efforts have been delayed due to the volatile political situation and delay in the Government of Nepal finalizing the policy guidelines for rebuilding. According to [recent news reports](#), tens of thousands of Nepalis are still living in tents. Recent floods due to heavy monsoon rains have exacerbated the problems, [destabilizing](#) the already troubled recovery efforts further, while creating new need for relief.

With the TPS status, thousands of Nepali nationals living in the U.S. have been able to breathe a sigh of relief, and focus on supporting their families back home as they build their homes and their lives back up after the earthquake. An additional 18 months of TPS would allow them to continue supporting the rebuilding efforts in Nepal.

Therefore, along with Adhikaar, we the 136 undersigned organizations strongly urge you to re-designate Nepal for Temporary Protected Status for an additional 18 months effective December 22, 2016.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Urvashi Kaul', with a small flourish at the end.

Urvashi Kaul  
Board Chair  
Adhikaar

cc:

The Honorable John Kerry, Secretary of State  
The Honorable Leon Rodriguez, Director, U.S. Citizenship & Immigration Services  
Cecilia Muñoz, White House Domestic Policy Council  
Mary Giovagnoli, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Immigration Policy, DHS

Signed by:

**Nepali Organizations**

America Nepal Friendship Society  
America Nepal Women Association of Greater Washington DC  
Association of Asian Pacific Community Health Organizations (AAPCHO)  
Association of Nepalis in the Americas (ANA)  
Association of Nepalis in Minnesota  
Baglung Sewa Samaj-America  
Baltimore Association of Nepalese in America (BANA)  
Basanta Dance Center, New York  
Be Well Initiative  
Bhojpur Samaj America  
Blood Donors of America  
Centro Corazon de Maria  
Chitwan Society of America  
Dance Theater of Nepal Inc.  
Grassroots Movement in Nepal (GMIN) - New York  
Greater Washington Tamu Samaj  
Gulmi America Model Movement  
Hami Nepali  
Heavenly Path USA  
International Commission for Dalit Rights  
Khasokhas Weekly  
Kirat Rai Society of America  
Kirat Yakthung Chumlung America  
Long Island Nepalese Society New York  
Manang Samaj of NY  
Mustang Kyidug USA  
Nepa Pasa Pucha Amerikaye  
Nepal Seattle Society  
Nepalese Association of Georgia (NAG)  
Nepalese Young Professionals in New York (NYPNY)  
Nepali American Artist Association  
Nepali American Friendship Association  
Nepali American Public Affairs Council  
Newa Guthi  
Non-resident Nepali Association National Coordination Council USA (NRN NCC)  
NRN NCC USA, NY Chapter  
Nepali Women's Global Network (NWGN)  
New York Nepalese Football Club  
Overseas Nepali Forum  
South Asian American Voices for Impact (SAAVI)  
Sampreshan  
Sanctuary for Families  
Thakali Sewa Samiti USA  
The Gurung (Tamu) Society Inc. USA  
United Kiratrai Organization of America, New York Chapter  
United Nepalese Student Organization  
United Sherpa Association  
USNepal Sports and Culture Inc  
Women for Cause

## **National Organizations**

AFL-CIO  
American Immigration Council  
American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA)  
Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum  
Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund  
Asian Americans Advancing Justice-LA  
Asian Pacific Americans Labor Alliance/Institute for Asian Pacific American Leadership & Advancement  
Center for Asian Pacific American Women  
Centro de los Derechos del Migrante, Inc.  
Farmworker Justice  
Hmong National Development  
Immigrant Justice Corps  
Immigrant Legal Resource Center  
International Rescue Committee  
NAFSA: Association of International Educator  
National Asian Pacific American Bar Association (NAPABA)  
National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum  
National Association of Asian American Professionals  
National Coalition for Asian Pacific American Community Development (National CAPACD)  
National Council of Asian Pacific Americans (NCAPA)  
National Domestic Workers Alliance  
National Employment Law Project  
National Immigrant Justice Center  
National Korean American Service and Education Consortium  
National Queer Asian Pacific Islander Alliance  
OCA-Asian Pacific American Advocates  
South Asian Americans Leading Together  
South Asian Bar Association of North America  
South Asian Public Health Association (SAPHA)  
The Advocates for Human Rights  
Voices for Freedom  
Women's Voices for the Earth

## **State-wide Organizations**

AFIRE Chicago  
African Immigrant Services (AIS)  
Asian Health Coalition  
CAIR-Chicago  
Empire Justice Center  
Immigrant Law Center of Minnesota  
JWJ Raiti Family Foundation  
Lutheran Social Services of New York  
My Sisters' Place  
New York New Jersey Regional Joint Board, Workers United a/w SEIU  
Northwest Immigrant Rights Project  
OneAmerica  
Raksha, Inc  
South Asian American Policy & Research Institute (SAAPRI)  
South Asian American Voices For Impact  
South Asian Fund For Education, Scholarship & Training (SAFEST)

The New York Immigration Coalition

**Local Organizations**

Advocacy Institute  
Asian American Organizing Project  
Asian Counseling and Referral Service  
Asian Law Alliance  
Asian Services in Action  
Bangladesh American Community Development and Youth Services (BACDYS)  
Bellevue/NYU Program for Survivors of Torture  
Carroll Gardens Association  
Catholic Migration Services  
Chhaya CDC  
Chinese Community Center, Houston  
City Bar Justice Center  
Community Development Project at the Urban Justice Center  
Damayan Migrant Workers Association  
DRUM - Desis Rising Up & Moving  
Emerald Isle Immigration Center  
FTC-Tenants 380 East 18th St, Brooklyn  
GMHC  
Haitian Americans United for Progress  
India Home  
Instituto de Educacion Popular del Sur de California  
Jacob A Riis Neighborhood Settlement House, Inc  
Jewish Community Action  
Jews for Racial & Economic Justice  
KhushDC  
MinKwon Center for Community Action  
National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum - Seattle Chapter  
New York Asian Women's Center  
OLA of Eastern Long Island, Inc.  
Safe Horizon  
Sakhi for South Asian Women  
Satrang  
SEPA Mujer Inc.  
Services, Immigrant Rights, and Education Network (SIREN)  
South Asian Network  
The Arab American Association of NY  
UPLIFT  
Woodside on the Move

## PRESS COVERAGE:

BBC

[“A slow recovery for Nepal's tourist industry”](#)

By Rebecca Wearn

April 18, 2016

“Tourism is the lifeblood of the Nepalese economy, but since the earthquake in 2015 that cost 8,000 lives and left many thousands more homeless, visitors have stayed away. Almost a year later, the country is still struggling to recover.”

Newsweek

[“NEPAL'S POOREST FACE THE HARDEST RECOVERY FROM THE 2015 EARTHQUAKE”](#)

By Elijah Wolfson

April 21, 2016

“Even before the 2015 earthquakes rattled Nepal, the barriers to development were staggering. The slim country (about 150 miles wide) is crammed between and relies on the twin global powerhouses China and India, and has never developed a robust industry of its own. Meanwhile, many residents live in far-flung villages that pepper the mountainsides, making communication and service delivery difficult in good times, and impossible during the annual monsoon season—or when catastrophe strikes. Basic necessities like access to latrines and clean water are an ongoing challenge: According to Tripti Rai, the Nepal country director for the international non-governmental organization WaterAid, across the country only 25 percent of water systems were functional even before the earthquake.

*... Those working with the disenfranchised say they've been left to cope on their own. “We've asked for help” from the government, says Silwal, but the center has gotten nothing, no financial assistance or any other support. The staff has done everything they can in the interim.”*

Newsweek

[“ONE YEAR AFTER A DEVASTATING EARTHQUAKE, NEPAL IS STILL IN RUINS”](#)

By Elijah Wolfson

April 21, 2016

“Throughout Nepal, water has become a pressing concern. The earthquake destroyed nearly 5,200 water supply systems and 220,000 personal toilets, says Ram Chandra Devkotka, director general of the Department of Water Supply and Sewage. In some cases, tanks cracked or pipes broke. In others, the shifting earth changed groundwater levels or stream flow, causing water sources to suddenly disappear. **Around 1.14 million people are now in need of a consistently safe supply of drinking water, and 1.04 million do not have access to usable toilets...**

The financial requirements to fix these problems nationwide might be insurmountable. According to a Post-Disaster Needs Assessment prepared by Nepal's National Planning Commission, **the total amount required to fully recover and rebuild is estimated to be \$6.6 billion—about one-third the annual gross domestic product of Nepal.** The World Bank predicts Nepal's annual GDP growth rate will plummet from around 4.5 percent in the early 2010s to just 1.7 percent in 2016, and UNICEF's Nepal representative, Tomoo Hozumi, **says an estimated 700,000 to 982,000 people have been pushed into poverty after the quake.”**

*Time*

[“Why Nepal Is Still in Rubble a Year After a Devastating Quake”](#)

By Nikhil Kumar

April 24, 2016

“At a June conference in Kathmandu, [international donors] promised \$4.1 billion to help the country get back on its feet. “The response and the level of commitment was higher than anybody had predicted,” says Renaud Meyer, the country director in Nepal for the U.N. Development Programme (UNDP). ***But the money earmarked for rebuilding homes has yet to reach victims like Giri***, many of whom have only received around \$150 in compensation since the earthquake. With reconstruction work at a virtual standstill and scores stuck in tents, numerous earthquake victims were reported to have perished during the country’s freezing Himalayan winter... As tens of thousands of earthquake victims prepare to endure a second monsoon season living in temporary shelters, the country also faces the risk of fresh political turmoil. While the border unrest eased after Nepal’s main political parties amended the constitution in January, the changes do not fully address the Madhesi demands for a more equitable settlement, leaving open the door to further strife, according to analysts at the International Crisis Group. ***In a new report in early April, they warned that the country risked further violence, as Madhesi groups remain dissatisfied with the constitutional changes.*** There is also the continued threat of natural disasters, with the country experiencing a series of smaller tremors since last year’s earthquakes, most recently on April 9, when a 4.5-magnitude rupture jolted Nepal.”

*The Atlantic*

[“Nepal's Earthquakes: One Year Later”](#)

By Alan Taylor

April 25, 2016

“On April 25, 2015, a violent 7.8-magnitude earthquake struck Nepal—followed weeks later by a 7.3-magnitude aftershock—killing almost 9,000 people, injuring 22,000, and damaging or destroying nearly 800,000 homes. A year later, some of the debris has been cleared away, but very little reconstruction has taken place. Nepal held memorial services this weekend and Prime Minister Khadga Prasad Oli announced the start of some heritage site reconstruction projects. ***More than 600,000 Nepalese still live in temporary or unsafe housing.***”

*The Telegraph*

[“Nepal earthquake anniversary: one year on, not one home rebuilt by government”](#)

By Jennifer Rigby

April 25, 2016

“After the earthquake, instead of reconstruction, the government focused on pushing through a new constitution which sparked deadly protests from some ethnic groups. This led to an unofficial 135-day blockade at the India border, which was until then the main access point for supplies including fuel and medicine.

The blockade lasted until February this year, slowing reconstruction further.”

Asia Society

[“Nepal Earthquake, One Year Later: 'We Are Still Being Reminded That It's Not Over'”](#)

By Michelle FlorCruz

April 26, 2016

“One year ago, Nepal was hit by a devastating 7.8 magnitude earthquake, a tumult that killed nearly 9,000 people and displaced another 3 million. In the ensuing 12 months, rebuilding efforts remain sluggish, and foreign aid continues to be restricted. But witnesses to the destruction say the memories and the problems are anything but distant.

“I still get nightmares, but I tell myself that rather than panicking, it's wiser to identify open spaces and go there after the shaking stops,” Prerana Marasini, a Nepali who works as the communications coordinator for Oxfam in Lalitpur, Nepal, said in an interview. “But questions like: ‘what if it strikes in the midnight?’ come to my mind frequently.”

***...“We still have aftershocks hitting us — the latest one was on Thursday evening [March 30]. We are still being reminded that it's not over.”***

CNN

[“Nepal, a year after the quake: 'Help us'”](#)

A slow recovery means hundreds of thousands are still in temporary and unsafe shelters

By Moni Basu

“Many buildings here survived a 1934 quake, which until last year was the worst natural calamity to hit Nepal. But they did not survive in 2015.

All across Nepal, people fear what will happen if the earth shakes again. That worry has been aggravated by months of acute shortages of medicine, gas needed for cooking and petroleum for vehicles -- the result of a blockade last fall of the main border crossings with India by minority groups demanding greater representation in the country's new constitution.

The blockade was salt on the earthquake wound. It weighed heavily on the minds of Nepalis as they rang in their new year last week. Joy tempered by memories of suffering. It has been a hard 12 months... One camp in Kathmandu has more than 500 tents, numbered by rows, and about 2,000 residents. Water is delivered in the afternoons by private agencies. There is no electricity. People manage with battery-operated emergency lights. They live in constant fear of the upcoming monsoons... ***The tent city reminds me of Haiti after the 2010 earthquake when hundreds of thousands of people were forced into temporary shelters. Some remained there for years. Do the Nepalis face the same sad future?***

The New York Times

[“A Year After Earthquake, Nepal's Recovery Is Just Beginning”](#)

By Ellen Barry

April 30, 2016

“Many people here pin their hopes on promises of foreign aid: After the disaster, images of collapsed temples and stoic villagers in a sea of rubble were beamed around the world, and donors came forward with pledges of \$4.1 billion in foreign grants and soft loans.

But those promises, so far, have not done much to speed the progress of Nepal's reconstruction effort. Outside Kathmandu, the capital, many towns and villages remain choked with rubble, as if the earthquake had happened

yesterday. The government, hampered by red tape and political turmoil, has only begun to approve projects. **Nearly all of the pledged funds remain in the hands of the donors, unused.**

**Veterans of immense relief efforts in Haiti and after the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami say it is normal for spending to remain low for the first year after a disaster, then ramp up gradually after detailed surveys and construction standards are in place.** And since the earthquake, which killed almost 9,000 people, other problems have besieged Nepal, including violent protests over the passage of a new Constitution and a blockade of fuel imports from India that lasted four and a half months.”

*Nepali Times*

[“Women still waiting to rebuild homes and lives”](#)

Women survivors of the earthquake struggle to cope with grief, loneliness and government neglect

By Shreejana Shrestha

June 24-30, 2016

“Nepal Police data shows that about 2,000 women were widowed in the earthquake, and some 50,000 women lost their homes. Just over a quarter of the total households impacted in the 14 affected districts are female-headed, according to a Post-Disaster Needs Assessment report prepared by the National Planning Commission last year.

Among the distinct problems faced by women survivors are the lack of land titles and house ownership papers, and limited access to economic resources, including a dearth of job prospects. It was usually the men in the family who worked the system, dealt with the bureaucracy. **With them gone, most women face severe challenges in the recovery process.”**

*Nepali Times*

[“Second monsoon in the earthquake zone”](#)

Survivors have received little help, but no one seems surprised

By Thomas Bell

August 19-25, 2016

“All along the walk from Chautara of Sindhupalchok across Nuwakot, Rasuwa and Dhading to Gorkha, families are surviving their second monsoon out in the open. There is almost no rebuilding to be seen. Visible everywhere are village council meetings about how people will qualify for the Rs 200,000 rebuilding grant per family.

Everyone agrees the policy makes no sense, for all sorts of reasons. For example, the money is not nearly enough to build any of the approved designs, so many people only hope to get the first payment of Rs 50,000, and to do with it whatever they think makes the most sense.”

*The Himalayan Times*

[“Human trafficking on rise after earthquakes”](#)

September 9, 2016

“In the aftermath of the devastating earthquakes last year, Nepal has witnessed a sharp increase in human trafficking. According to the Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare, 17,000 to 18,000 persons are trafficked from Nepal to different countries every year. In the fiscal 2015/16, a total of 1,697 persons was trafficked for the purpose of hard labour and prostitution.”