

October 17, 2022

President Joseph R. Biden
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Nebraska Avenue Complex
3801 Nebraska Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20395

Cc: Rachel E. Canty, Director of the Student and Exchange Visitor Program

Re: Request Special Student Relief and TPS or DED for Pakistanis in the United States

Dear President Biden and Secretary Mayorkas:

Due to devastating flooding that left one-third of Pakistan underwater, the undersigned 101 organizations write to support a [Senate request](#) that the U.S. Department of Homeland Security grant Temporary Protected Status (TPS) or Deferred Enforced Departure (DED) to individuals from Pakistan, and also to ask DHS-SEVP to grant [Special Student Relief \(SSR\)](#) to F-1 students from Pakistan.¹ The [United Nations Refugee Agency \(UNHCR\) reports](#) that the flooding has affected “over 30 million people in Pakistan,” left “6.4 million people in need of immediate support,” and displaced “hundreds of thousands” of people.

TPS and DED are crucial tools the Biden administration has at its disposal to safeguard vulnerable people in the United States when safe return to their home countries is impossible. Crucially, Congress gave the power to designate TPS to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (as opposed to a determination by Congress) so administrations can work quickly to put protection in place at the onset of life-threatening conditions due to conflict, environmental disaster, or other extraordinary conditions.

The most [recent data posted in the SEVP Data Library \(2020\)](#) shows that there were 8,638 active SEVIS records for students with Pakistan listed as their country of citizenship. As the impacts of the flooding continue, F-1 students from Pakistan would greatly benefit from the availability of Special Student Relief, which allows DHS to suspend the 20-hour per week limits on incident-to-status on-campus and USCIS-authorized off-campus employment, and for students to be considered engaged in a “full course of study” for the duration of their employment authorization if they satisfy specific minimum course load requirements.

Given the rapidly emerging consequences of the flooding, we ask that you consider and support this request, and to please forward it quickly through the necessary channels within the Department.

We also urge you to share the letter with the U.S. Department of State for their consideration as relief is contemplated for exchange visitors from Pakistan who are here as exchange visitors.

¹ Regulations allow DHS to suspend or alter rules regarding duration of status, full course of study, and employment eligibility, for specific groups of students from parts of the world that are experiencing emergent circumstances. This collection of benefits is known as “special student relief.” [63 Fed. Reg. 31872 (June 10, 1998), amending the Code of Federal Regulations governing F-1 duration of status at 8 C.F.R. § 214.2 (f)(5), full course of study at 8 C.F.R. § 214.2 (f)(6)(A) and (B), and employment eligibility at 8 C.F.R. § 214.2 (f) (9) (i) and (ii)].

Thank you for your consideration of this urgent request for Special Student Relief and TPS or DED to aid the challenges students from Pakistan are currently facing. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to Jill Welch (jill@presidentsalliance.org) and Krystina François (krystina@wearecusp.org).

Sincerely,

National

Advancing Justice - Asian Law Caucus
African Communities Together
American Friends Service Committee (AFSC)
American Immigration Lawyers Association
Amnesty International USA
Asian Americans Advancing Justice | AAJC
Asylum Seeker Advocacy Project (ASAP)
Bridges Faith Initiative
Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc.
Center for Gender & Refugee Studies
Church World Service
Climate Refugees
Communities United for Status & Protection (CUSP)
Congregation of Sisters of St. Agnes
Council on American-Islamic Relations
Dominican Sisters of Mission San Jose
Dominican Sisters of Sparkill
Franciscan Action Network
Friends Committee on National Legislation
Friends of the Earth U.S.
Haitian Bridge Alliance
Hispanic Federation
Human Rights First
ICNA Council for Social Justice
Immigrant Legal Resource Center
Immigration Hub
InReach
International Refugee Assistance Project (IRAP)
Islamic Relief USA
Justice Committee Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet Albany
Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (LIRS)
MPower Change
National Asian Pacific American Families Against Substance Abuse
National Employment Law Project
National Immigration Law Center
National Organization for Women
Northeastern University School of Law Immigrant Justice Clinic
Presidents' Alliance on Higher Education and Immigration
Sisters of Charity Federation
Sisters of Charity of Nazareth Congregational Leadership
Sisters of Charity of Nazareth Western Province Leadership
Sisters of Mercy of the Americas Justice Team
Sisters of St Joseph of Carondelet

Sunrise Movement
U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants (USCRI)
UndocuBlack Network
Unitarian Universalists for Social Justice
Women's Alliance for Theology, Ethics, and Ritual (WATER)

State/Local

Adhikaar
Advokato
African Services Committee
Al Otro Lado
Alianza Sacramento
AMEXCAN
Ayuda
Benedictine Sisters of Chicago
CAIR-Georgia
Catholic Charities of SW Kansas
Central American Resource Center
Centro Romero
Chacon Center for Immigrant Justice at Maryland Carey Law
Church of Our Saviour/La Iglesia de Nuestro Salvador
Church Women United in New York State
Colorado Jobs with Justice
Comité TPS Massachusetts
Dorothy Day Catholic Worker, Washington DC
DRUM - Desis Rising Up & Moving
Envision Freedom Fund
Georgia Muslim Voter Project
Greater Boston Legal Services
¡HICA! Hispanic Interest Coalition of Alabama
Immaculate Heart Community Commission on Justice for Immigrants and Refugees
Immigrant Defenders Law Center
Immigrant Legal Advocacy Project
International Institute of New England
InterReligious Task Force on Central America
Jewish Voice for Peace, Atlanta chapter
Just Neighbors Ministry
Legal Aid Justice Center
Lutheran Church of Our Redeemer
Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition (MIRA)
Mother of God Monastery
Muslims for Just Futures
New York Immigration Coalition
New York Legal Assistance Group
OLA RAZA INC
Pennsylvania Council of Churches
San Diego Immigrant Rights Consortium
Sisters of Saint Joseph. Brentwood
Sisters of St. Dominic of Blauvelt, New York
Sisters of St. Joseph of Boston
South Texas Human Rights Center

St. James Cathedral Immigrant Assistance
The Advocates for Human Rights
TRUE ALLIANCE CENTER INC/ HAU
United African Organization
Wallingford Indivisible
Wayne Action for Racial Equality
WESPAC Foundation, Inc.
Wilco Justice Alliance (Williamson County, TX)
Wind of the Spirit Immigrant Resource Center