

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-0908

March 31, 2022

The Honorable Alejandro Mayorkas
Secretary
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
3801 Nebraska Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20016

Dear Secretary Mayorkas:

We write to respectfully request that you redesignate Venezuela for Temporary Protected Status (TPS). Extending this designation is absolutely essential for eligible Venezuelans currently in the United States who are unable to return to their homeland due to the dire conditions in that country.

This month, Interim President of Venezuela, Juan Guaidó, requested that the United States continue TPS for eligible Venezuelans. TPS provides temporary legal status and work authorization for foreign nationals who cannot return to their country of origin, and has historically been implemented in cases of natural disasters, armed conflict, and other extraordinary circumstances. The designation for Venezuela is set to expire in less than six months, but the factors on the ground in Venezuela that led to the designation have only deteriorated since 2021. Under the brutality, incompetence, and deliberate mismanagement of the Maduro regime, Venezuela is not safe for ordinary Venezuelans.

Recently, the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission of the United Nations Human Rights Council concluded that “there are reasonable grounds to believe” that the Maduro regime committed crimes against humanity.” The International Fact-Finding Mission documented that the Maduro regime carried out extra-judicial murders, disappearances, and torture of political opponents. Additionally, since September 2021, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights found that there had been 93 incidents of criminalization, threats and stigmatization against activists, independent media, and trade union members. Meanwhile, violence in areas near the border with Colombia has increased and has forced the displacement of thousands of Venezuelans. International human rights groups estimated that over the course of 2021, there were at least 254 political prisoners detained across the country.

The Maduro regime’s use of food as a weapon of social and political control has led millions of Venezuelans to suffer from food insecurity. This has only been exacerbated by the regime’s mishandling of the COVID-19 pandemic. More than 6 million Venezuelans have fled the atrocious conditions in the country. Close to 83 percent of them are hosted in Latin America and the Caribbean, straining social protection systems throughout the region. For those Venezuelans forced to return to Venezuela, the threat of harassment, arbitrary harassment, and extrajudicial killings by Maduro’s security services hangs over their head.

Given the Maduro regime's ongoing campaign of state-sanctioned violence against the people of Venezuela and the humanitarian crisis present in the country, we request that you redesignate Venezuela for TPS for an additional 18 months. Failure to do so would result in a very real death sentence for countless Venezuelans who have fled their country.

Thank you for your attention to this critical matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'M. Rubio', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Marco Rubio
U.S. Senator

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Robert Menendez', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Robert Menendez
U.S. Senator

CC: Secretary of State Antony Blinken