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**By ESEC at 1:39 pm, Nov 21, 2023**

November 17, 2023

Dear President Biden and Secretary Mayorkas:

The eight undersigned national, Jewish organizations urge you to designate Israel for Temporary Protected Status (TPS) and/or authorize Israelis for Deferred Enforced Departure (DED).

We are encouraged by reports that the Department of Homeland Security is considering designating TPS for Palestinians from Gaza and the West Bank. We recognize that TPS will provide protections to Palestinians in the U.S., ensuring that they do not have to return home to the midst of ongoing conflict.

Granting TPS to Palestinians is an essential step, but it should also be accompanied by a similar announcement for Israelis. As is the case with the West Bank, the U.S. Department of State has placed Israel under a Level 3 Travel Advisory. Israel continues to be subject to regular incoming missile fire from Gaza, aimed at civilians, and more than 200,000 Israelis remain displaced from their homes following the attacks on October 7th. It is our shared, strong belief that Israelis also warrant protection until it is safe for them to return home.

These programs would enable Israelis who are currently in the United States to be protected from being forced to return to their homeland while it is still under attack and would also afford them the ability to work legally here to support themselves and their families.

As we all join together in mourning the loss of life in Israel and Gaza, the enormity of the pain and scope of the crisis can almost be paralyzing. However, designating Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza AND Israel for TPS (and/or authorizing Israelis for DED) is a concrete step that the U.S. should expeditiously take that will make a real difference in the lives of Palestinian and Israeli families who are in urgent need of stability and security while they are here in the United States.

For follow-up on this request, please reach out to Naomi Steinberg, HIAS' Vice President, U.S. Policy and Advocacy ([naomi.steinberg@hias.org](mailto:naomi.steinberg@hias.org)).

We thank you for your consideration-

HIAS

J Street

Jewish Council for Public Affairs

Jewish Labor Committee

Jewish Women International

National Council of Jewish Women

The Rabbinical Assembly

T'ruah



U.S. Citizenship  
and Immigration  
Services

March 28, 2024

Naomi Steinberg  
Vice President  
HIAS  
1300 Spring Street, Suite 500  
Silver Spring MD 20910  
naomi.steinberg@hias.org

Dear Vice President Steinberg:

Thank you for your November 17, 2023 letter to President Biden and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). I am responding on behalf of the Department.

Please be assured DHS is monitoring conditions in the region and is committed to administering its programs, including Temporary Protected Status (TPS) and Deferred Enforced Departure (DED), in an equitable manner. I appreciate the concerns you have outlined and your interest in the designation of TPS or DED for Israelis in the United States, as well as your support for designating TPS for Palestinians. DHS has hosted engagements for stakeholders, including HIAS, regarding TPS and DED as prospective immigration relief for foreign nationals from the Middle East who are currently in the United States. USCIS continues to assist individuals and their families impacted by the conflict, in addition to supporting the safe evacuation of U.S. citizens, lawful permanent residents, and their family members in the Middle East.

As you may know, the Secretary of Homeland Security may designate a country for TPS based upon specific statutory criteria. In order to designate a country for TPS, the Secretary must find one or more of the following: (1) there is an ongoing armed conflict within the country that would pose a serious threat to the personal safety of the country's nationals if they were returned; (2) there has been an environmental disaster resulting in a substantial, but temporary, disruption of the living conditions in the area affected, the country is temporarily unable to handle adequately the return of its nationals, and the country has officially requested TPS designation; or (3) there exists extraordinary and temporary conditions in the country that prevent nationals from returning in safety, and the Secretary does not find that permitting the country's nationals to remain temporarily in the United States would be contrary to the national interest of the United States. *See* Immigration and Nationality Act § 244(b)(1).

DED is an administrative stay of removal that may be authorized by the President for a designated group of foreign nationals. Although DED is not a specific immigration status, individuals covered by DED are generally not subject to removal from the United States for a designated period. The President may direct DHS to offer certain benefits, such as employment

authorization, to eligible foreign nationals covered by DED. In general, eligibility standards are set forth in the Presidential designation of DED for each specific group of eligible foreign nationals.

On February 14, 2024, President Biden issued a memorandum to the Secretary of State and the Secretary of Homeland Security determining that it was in the foreign policy interest of the United States to defer through August 14, 2025, the removal of certain Palestinians present in the United States. More information regarding DED for Palestinians can be found in the president's memorandum.<sup>1</sup> DHS will issue a Federal Register notice as soon as possible to provide additional information about the implementation of the president's memorandum. DHS will continue to monitor conditions in the region for further consideration of DED and/or TPS.

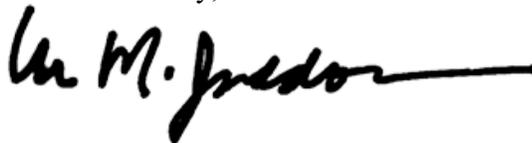
In addition to TPS and DED, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), upon request, may apply certain measures for eligible noncitizens affected by emergencies or unforeseen circumstances. Such measures may include:

- Change or extension of nonimmigrant status if eligible nationals are currently in the United States, even if the request is filed after the authorized period of admission has expired;
- Expedited processing of requests for advance parole documents;
- Expedited adjudication of requests for off-campus employment authorization for F-1 students experiencing severe economic hardship;
- Expedited adjudication of employment authorization applications, where appropriate;
- Assistance if applicants received a Request for Evidence or a Notice of Intent to Deny and were unable to appear for an interview, submit evidence, or respond in a timely manner due to the circumstances; and
- Replacement of lost or damaged immigration or travel documents issued by USCIS, such as a Permanent Resident Card (Green Card).

More information is available online at <https://www.uscis.gov/newsroom/immigration-relief-in-emergencies-or-unforeseen-circumstances>, which also includes an alert box with links to visa information and other material from the Department of State regarding the current conflict.

Thank you again for your letter and interest in this important issue. Should you require any additional assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



Ur M. Jaddou  
Director

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<sup>1</sup> See <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/presidential-actions/2024/02/14/memorandum-on-the-deferred-enforced-departure-for-certain-palestinians/>