

MIGRATION CHAIRMAN AND CRS URGE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT TO DESIGNATE TEMPORARY PROTECTED STATUS FOR VENEZUELA

April 4, 2019

WASHINGTON—On April 4, 2019 Bishop Joe S. Vásquez of Austin, Chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' (USCCB) Committee on Migration, joined Sean Callahan, CEO of Catholic Relief Services (CRS), in sending a letter to Secretary of Homeland Security, Kirstjen Nielsen, and Secretary of State, Michael Pompeo, urging an 18-month designation of Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for Venezuela.

TPS is a temporary, renewable, and statutorily-authorized immigration status that allows individuals to remain and work lawfully in the U.S. during a period in which it is deemed unsafe for nationals to return to their home country.

There is no current TPS designation for Venezuela. However, conditions in the country and existing political instability have created a situation in which Venezuelan nationals cannot be safely returned home at this time. The Justice and Peace Commission of the Venezuelan Bishops Conference **have recently noted** the numerous violations of fundamental human rights inflicted by the country's police and the violation of citizens' access to health and medicine. Catholic partners **have further reported** on the acute food shortages and malnutrition facing the country.

“At this time, it is vital that Venezuelans in the United States have an opportunity to live with dignity, work lawfully, and provide for their families' well-being until they can safely return home.” Bishop Vasquez noted. “We must provide humanitarian assistance to all our Venezuelan brothers and sisters in need, whether they live in the United States, in other South American countries, or in Venezuela itself,” Callahan said.

Read the full letter here: <https://justiceforimmigrants.org/news/usccb-crs-letter-advocating-for-tps-status-for-venezuelans/>