



Committee on Migration

c/o Migration and Refugee Services, USCCB

3211 Fourth Street NE • Washington DC 20017-1194

202-541-3227 • fax 202-722-8805 • email mrs@usccb.org • www.usccb.org/mrs

November 18, 2013

Honorable Rand Beers
Acting Secretary
Department of Homeland Security
Washington, D.C.

Dear Secretary Beers:

On behalf of the Catholic Bishops of the United States, I write to ask you to designate the country of the Philippines for Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for 18 months. The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) has a long history of serving the Philippine community in the United States and serves residents of the Philippines through Catholic Relief Service (CRS).

As you know, a grant of TPS permits nationals of the designated country to reside legally in the United States with work authorization. A designation of TPS is based, in part, upon a determination that an earthquake, flood, drought, epidemic, or other environmental disaster creates a substantial, temporary disruption such that the return of that country's nationals would further destabilize the nation or bring harm to the returning nationals.

Given the widespread loss of life and property caused by Typhoon Haiyan on November 7, 2013, in our view the Philippines warrants an immediate grant of TPS. It is the latest of three major environmental disasters in thirteen months in the Philippines. Previous disasters were a 7.2 earth quake on October 15, 2013, and Typhoon Bopha in December 2012.

The devastation caused by Typhoon Haiyan more than justifies the designation of TPS for the Philippines. Specifically, initial reports include the following:

- Typhoon Haiyan had winds of up to 195 miles per hour, equivalent to a level 5 hurricane;
- 4, 460 deaths confirmed, with more anticipated;
- 11.8 million in 9 regions of the country have been impacted, with 3.6 million in the direct line of the storm; and
- 500,000 homes uninhabitable.

In addition, reports indicate a shortage of food and water in the impacted area and wide destruction of infrastructure.

Although DHS can take other limited actions to assist this population, they are insufficient compared to the magnitude of this disaster. Furthermore, the designation of TPS would ensure that nationals of the country currently residing in the United States are able to work and to send remittances back to their families, thus helping aid the recovery. It also would protect them from deportation to a nation that, for the time being, is unable to assist them in their reintegration.

In light of the devastation and substantial disruption of living conditions caused by this natural disaster, I respectfully request that you designate the Philippines for TPS as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Eusebio Elizondo", written over a horizontal line.

Most Reverend Eusebio Elizondo
Auxiliary Bishop of Seattle
Chairman, USCCB Committee on Migration

Cc: Honorable John Kerry, Secretary of State
Denis McDonough, Chief of Staff, The White House