



SEPTEMBER 24, 2026

Update on Temporary Protected Status for El Salvador

On September 9, 2026, the temporary protected status (TPS) designation for El Salvador was scheduled to expire, following an 18-month extension announced by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) on January 17, 2025. However, that date has passed without DHS issuing a formal notice either extending or terminating TPS for Salvadoran beneficiaries. On September 3, an [alert was posted on the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services \(USCIS\) website](#) stating that Salvadoran TPS beneficiaries will continue to retain TPS protections, including employment authorization, pending a future announcement.¹

What is TPS and why is it important for Salvadorans in the United States?

TPS is a temporary form of humanitarian relief for people from a designated country, allowing them to remain in the United States legally when conditions in their country of origin make safe return impractical or impossible due to ongoing armed conflict, environmental disasters, epidemics, or other extraordinary and temporary conditions. Once TPS is granted to an individual, he or she is eligible for employment and travel authorization and is protected from deportation. To register for TPS, a person must meet certain eligibility requirements, such as being physically present in the United States since a specified date and passing a background check.

[Under federal law](#), the Secretary of DHS is expected to review a country's conditions at least 60 days before the end of a country's TPS designation and determine whether to extend or terminate TPS for the country.² If the Secretary determines the country no longer meets conditions for designation, he or she is expected to publish a formal notice of termination. Even then, the termination is not to be effective until 60 days after the date of publication. If the Secretary takes no action, the period is supposed to be extended for an additional 6 months. In the current situation related to El Salvador, DHS has not made any formal announcement regarding its designation, leaving hundreds of thousands of Salvadoran TPS recipients in a state of uncertainty.

In 2001, El Salvador first [received](#) its TPS designation after a devastating earthquake, and [more than 200,000 Salvadorans](#) were granted TPS.³ As of March 2025, over 170,000 Salvadorans had TPS.⁴ Many have continued to live and work in the United States for over decades as El Salvador's TPS designation has been repeatedly extended due to ongoing [detrimental conditions](#) in the country, including further environmental disasters, climate risks, infrastructure challenges, and food and water

¹ U.S. Citizenship & Immigr. Servs., *Temporary Protected Status Designated Country: El Salvador*, <https://www.uscis.gov/humanitarian/temporary-protected-status/temporary-protected-status-designated-country-el-salvador> (last updated Sept. 3, 2026).

² 8 U.S.C. § 1254a.

³ Designation of El Salvador Under Temporary Protected Status Program, 66 FED. REG. 14214 (Mar. 9, 2001); *see also* Extension of the Designation of El Salvador Under the Temporary Protected Status Program; Automatic Extension of Employment Authorization Documentation for Salvadorans, 67 FED. REG. 46000 (July 11, 2002).

⁴ JILL H. WILSON, CONG. RSCH. SERV., RS20844, TEMPORARY PROTECTED STATUS AND DEFERRED ENFORCED DEPARTURE (2025), <https://www.congress.gov/crs-product/RS20844>.

insecurity.⁵ During this time, they have been [contributing](#) to the U.S. economy and providing for their families.⁶ In addition, El Salvador has been under a “[State of Exception](#)” since March 2022 as a response to an increase in gang murders, raising concerns of human rights violations. The State of Exception permits local authorities to arrest any person they suspect is involved in gang activity and suspends several constitutional rights, such as criminal procedure protections and access to due process and counsel. Tens of thousands of individuals, including U.S. citizens, have been imprisoned as a result of the State of Exception and continue to await trial.⁷

How has the USCCB responded to this issue?

In recent months, DHS has terminated TPS designations for various countries, often while existing conditions in those countries make return of large numbers of people unsafe or impractical. The termination of TPS for Haiti, for instance, has had [catastrophic consequences](#) for Haitian nationals who had their protection revoked in July.⁸ In June, Bishop Brendan Cahill, chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ (USCCB) Committee on Migration, issued a [statement](#) citing the moral crisis created by revoking the legal status of hundreds of thousands of people when returning to their country of origin is not a safe or reasonable option.⁹ The statement further called on Congress to take action while also underscoring that deferred enforced departure remains an option available to the President in lieu of temporary protected status. Deferred enforced departure (DED) relies upon the President’s constitutional authority to conduct foreign affairs; it is similar to TPS, as it offers relief from deportation and access to work authorization.

At the same time, the USCCB continues to support legislative efforts to provide a pathway to permanent legal status for longtime residents of the United States who have relied on TPS and DED, such as through the bipartisan [American Dream and Promise Act](#).¹⁰ Under current law, there is no direct pathway to permanent legal status for TPS holders or DED recipients. This bill would create a long-term solution for those in this situation who have contributed positively to the fabric of American life and have established equities in the country, such as having U.S.-citizen spouses and children, owning businesses, and more.

⁵ Extension of the Designation of El Salvador for Temporary Protected Status, 90 FED. REG. 5953 (Jan. 17, 2025).

⁶ FWD.us, *El Salvador TPS Fact Sheet* (Jan. 13, 2025), <https://www.fwd.us/news/el-salvador-tps-fact-sheet/>.

⁷ U.S. Dep’t of State, *El Salvador Travel Advisory*, <https://travel.state.gov/en/international-travel/travel-advisories/el-salvador.html> (last updated June 25, 2026).

⁸ Letter from Archbishop Paul S. Coakley to President Donald J. Trump (Sept. 8, 2026), <https://www.usccb.org/resources/Letter%20to%20President%20Donald%20J.%20Trump%20Regarding%20Haitians.pdf>.

⁹ Press Release, USCCB, *We Cannot Turn A Blind Eye to Injustice, Says Bishop Cahill* (June 26, 2026), <https://www.usccb.org/news/2026/we-cannot-turn-blind-eye-injustice-says-bishop-cahill>.

¹⁰ USCCB, *Ask Your Representative to Support a Just Solution for TPS Holders and Dreamers*, <https://www.votervoice.net/USCCB/Campaigns/139633/Respond>.