



The Honorable President Joe Biden
President of the United States
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

The Honorable Alejandro Mayorkas
Secretary of Homeland Security
2707 Martin Luther King Jr Ave SE
Washington, DC 20528

RECEIVED
By ESEC at 12:17 pm, Feb 18, 2022

February 17, 2022

RE: RAICES CALLS FOR IMMEDIATE DESIGNATION OF TEMPORARY PROTECTED STATUS (TPS) FOR CAMEROON

Dear President Biden and Secretary Mayorkas:

We write to urge you to immediately designate Cameroon for Temporary Protected Status (TPS) and protect thousands of Cameroonians from returning to the ongoing armed conflict impacting most regions of the country. Since 2014, Cameroon's far north has been in conflict with Boko Haram, adding thousands of more deaths and displaced people. Government security forces and separatists have also faced accusations of attacking schools, raiding villages, burning homes and arbitrarily arresting and killing dozens of civilians, according to local and international NGOs. These state-sponsored human rights violations continue to be prevalent and make the return to Cameroon unsafe for those already living in the U.S. It is a shame that your unwillingness to designate Cameroon for TPS, despite all these abuses, has killed more than 4,000 and displaced more than 700,000 civilians.

Cameroonians recently deported from the United States have suffered persecution and other serious human rights violations post-return. Last week, Human Rights Watch issued a report documenting Cameroonians deported from the US were tortured, physically or sexually abused, or assaulted by state agents, and were detained in jails, prisons, military camps, or other detention facilities, both legal and illegal, for periods ranging from days to months¹. Nearly all described squalid detention conditions with little to no food, medical care, sanitation, or protection from Covid-19. We cannot continue to send people back to torture, death and an unstable environment

Furthermore, your inaction on this issue has caused for Cameroonians to be unjustly detained by Immigration and Customs enforcement (ICE) as they wait their deportation or attempt to fight their case. Immigrant detention is a horrible, dehumanizing experience for everyone, but ICE makes it even worse for Black immigrants. While immigrants from Africa or the Caribbean made up about 4% of people in ICE detention from 2012 to 2017, they represented 24% of all solitary confinement lockups over that time². This means Black immigrants are six times more likely to be sent to solitary confinement. Designating TPS for Cameroon would help prevent such atrocities for Cameroonian immigrants.

Deporting Cameroonians who are already in the U.S. breaks President Biden's promises. President Biden and Vice President Harris campaigned on keeping families together - a value at the core of their blueprint to manage migration and fix our broken immigration system. Issuing TPS for Cameroon is not only the

¹ "How Can You Throw Us Back?"

<https://www.hrw.org/report/2022/02/10/how-can-you-throw-us-back/asylum-seekers-abused-us-and-deported-harm-cameroon>

²Punishing Status and the Punishment Status Quo: Solitary Confinement in U.S. Immigration Prisons, 2013-2017

<https://osf.io/preprints/socarxiv/zdy7f/>

right thing to do, but also morally and economically smart. We call on the United States government to act immediately to extend protection from deportation to Cameroonians living in the U.S.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Erika Andiola".

Erika Andiola, Chief Advocacy Officer, RAICES



**U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
Services**

April 28, 2022

Erika Andiola
Chief Advocacy Officer, RAICES
1305 N. Flores Street
San Antonio, TX 78212

Dear Ms. Andiola:

Thank you for your February 17, 2022 letter to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) regarding a request to designate Cameroon for Temporary Protected Status (TPS) and to protect thousands of Cameroonians from returning to ongoing armed conflict. Secretary Mayorkas asked that I respond on his behalf, and I apologize for the delay.

On Friday, April 15, 2022, DHS announced the designation of Cameroon for TPS for 18 months. The United States recognizes the ongoing armed conflict in Cameroon, and we will provide temporary protection to those in need. Cameroonian nationals currently residing in the United States who cannot safely return will be able to remain and work in the United States until conditions in their home country improve.

Individuals eligible for TPS under this designation must have continuously resided in the United States since April 14, 2022. Individuals who attempt to travel to the United States after April 14, 2022, will not be eligible for TPS. Cameroon's 18-month designation will go into effect on the publication date of the forthcoming Federal Register notice. The Federal Register notice will provide instructions for applying for TPS and an Employment Authorization Document. TPS applicants must meet all eligibility requirements and undergo security and background checks.

Thank you again for your letter and interest in this important issue. Should you wish to discuss this further, please do not hesitate to contact me at Public.engagement@uscis.dhs.gov.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ur M. Jaddou" followed by a long horizontal flourish.

Ur M. Jaddou
Director