



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contacts

Kemi Bello, kbello@ilrc.org, (415) 321-8568

380 Organizations Rebuke President Obama's Failure to Protect 1.2 Million Immigrants *Refugees Fleeing El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala Desperately Need Protection from Violence*

WASHINGTON, DC — Today, 380 national, state, and local organizations that advocate for the rights of immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers delivered [a letter](#) to President Obama requesting that he designate El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala (the Northern Triangle countries) for Temporary Protected Status (TPS), potentially benefiting at least [1.2 million](#) undocumented immigrants. TPS is a form of humanitarian protection that provides a stay of deportation and employment authorization for undocumented immigrants who cannot safely be returned to their country of birth.

Letter Excerpt: We urge you to use the remaining time of your presidency to exhaust all options that would ease the suffering of the immigrant community and maintain family unity. A failure to do so risks cementing a legacy of deportation and enforcement that has led to the deportation of close to three million mothers, fathers, sons, and daughters.

“President Obama has established a paradoxical policy where victims of persecution in the Northern Triangle countries are considered refugees, but those who successfully flee that same persecution and arrive in the United States are jailed in detention facilities and quickly deported back to the very countries they fled,” stated **Jose Magaña-Salgado, Managing Policy Attorney at the Immigrant Legal Resource Center.**

Today’s letter follows a [letter](#) released Tuesday by over 100 immigration and administrative law professors stating the President, contrary to his own remarks, does have the executive authority to expand TPS. The President’s [statement](#) that he has been “pushed to the limits of [his] executive authority” is incorrect and discouraging to the communities who experience the daily brunt of our nation’s immigration enforcement system.

The organizations argue that while litigation on DACA and DAPA continues, the President should use his last few months in office to designate Guatemala and re-designate El Salvador and Honduras for TPS. The letter follows the Administration’s tacit admission of the worsening conditions in the Northern Triangle countries through its [expansion](#) of the Central American Minors program, which provides in-country processing for refugees in Central America.

“As people continue to flee rampant violence in Central America’s Northern Triangle, it is critical that the president use the tools at his disposal to address this humanitarian crisis,” said **Mary Meg McCarthy, Executive Director at Heartland Alliance’s National Immigrant Justice Center.** *“Blocking refugees from safety is immoral and violates domestic and international law. Congress gave the president clear statutory authority to provide Temporary Protected Status 25 years ago. Now is the time for President Obama to provide relief from record deportations.”*

The letter joins a chorus of growing voices in support of TPS for the Northern Triangle countries, including more than [100 immigration and administrative law professors](#); [200 faith groups](#); [146 members](#) of the House of Representatives; and [23 members](#) of the U.S. Senate. The letter is a renewed effort of a previous request for TPS sent by over 270 organizations in [earlier this year](#).

Read the full letter here: <http://bit.ly/2bYxsqz>

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About the Immigrant Legal Resource Center

The Immigrant Legal Resource Center (ILRC) is a national nonprofit that works with immigrants, community organizations, legal professionals, law enforcement, and policy makers to build a democratic society that values diversity and the rights of all people. Through community education programs, legal training & technical assistance, and policy development & advocacy, the ILRC's mission is to protect and defend the fundamental rights of immigrant families and communities.

<https://www.ilrc.org>

About the National Immigrant Justice Center

Heartland Alliance's National Immigrant Justice Center (NIJC) is dedicated to ensuring human rights protections and access to justice for all immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers. NIJC provides direct legal services to and advocates for these populations through policy reform, impact litigation, and public education. Since its founding three decades ago, NIJC has been unique in blending individual client advocacy with broad-based systemic change.

<https://www.immigrantjustice.org/>