



Designation of Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for Cameroon: Talking Points (Drafted 4/14)

Background: The Biden-Harris Administration granted temporary protected status (TPS) for Cameroon. This decision will benefit an estimated 40,000 Cameroonians currently living in the U.S.. The Biden-Harris administration finally heard the years-long request of the immigration coalition and their advocacy, led by Haitian Bridge Alliance and the Cameroon Advocacy Network. This is a crucial step to ensuring an equitable and just immigration system.

- **Designation of Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for Cameroon is the right thing to do.** Since 2014, Cameroon's far north has been in conflict with Boko Haram, leading to thousands of more deaths and millions to be displaced. 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.
 - The UN has stated that nine out of ten regions of Cameroon continue to be impacted by three complex humanitarian crises. An overarching context of state-sponsored human rights violations, such as restriction of freedom of expression and association, crackdowns on political opposition and dissent, and frequent use of incommunicado detention and torture, also make return to Cameroon unsafe.
- **Cameroonians in the U.S. are vital to our country's workforce and local communities.** They have deep roots in our nation and work hard for their families and local communities. This designation ensures that families are not separated and neighborhoods with Cameroonians continue to thrive.
- **This designating Cameroon will free up resources to tackle the years-long visa backlog.**
 - Cameroon is one of the top 5 countries granted asylum in the U.S. Between 2001 and 2021, almost 70% of Cameroonians who applied for asylum were found eligible. That average holds even after taking into account the Trump administration's 26% reduction in Cameroonian approvals between 2017 and 2021. With a backlog of over 1 million cases overall in the immigration courts, and 9 million at USCIS, this designation allows for the courts and USCIS to shift focus to the highest priority cases.
- **Following this designation, deportations and expulsions of Cameroonians must stop.** 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 right thing to do, but also morally and economically smart.

- Cameroonians seeking safety, especially those currently in detention centers and those living in the U.S, must not be deported or expelled but instead be given the ability to apply for this protection as we await for the Federal Register Notice to be issued.
 - Deporting Cameroonians also puts the U.S. in direct conflict with U.S. law and the 1951 Refugee and 1984 Torture Conventions because they are knowingly being returned to likely persecution, torture or other serious human rights violations.
 - Human Rights Watch [issued a report](#) documenting that 13 of the estimated 80 to 90 Cameroonians deported on flights in late 2020 were tortured, physically or sexually abused, or assaulted by state agents. Cameroonian authorities targeted the families of deported people. In seven cases HRW documented, state agents beat, abducted, detained, harassed, and in one case reportedly killed, relatives in connection with deportees' returns.
- **It is important that the same protection be issued to other eligible countries.** TPS is a statutory status given to nationals of a certain country who are currently living in the United States if conditions in that country make safe return impossible. As stated by Section 244(b)(1)(A) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA), the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) may designate a country for TPS if conditions in that country meet requirements regarding ongoing armed conflict, natural disaster, or other extraordinary and temporary conditions that prevent safe return.
 - There must be speedy actions to protect the Nationals of countries that meet the statutory requirements to be designated/redesignated - including but not limited to Ethiopia, Mauritania, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, El Salvador, and Nicaragua.