

The Honorable Marco Rubio

Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20520

The Honorable Markwayne Mullin

Secretary of Homeland Security
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
3801 Nebraska Ave NW
Washington, D.C. 20016

**RE: Urgent Request for Emergency Temporary Protected Status Designation for Venezuela
Following the Catastrophic Earthquakes of June 24, 2026**

Dear Secretary Rubio and Secretary Mullin:

I, _____, respectfully submit this urgent request, on behalf of the Venezuelan community and Venezuelan nationals residing in the United States—including more than 600,000 individuals previously covered by TPS-related protections—to request that the Department of Homeland Security ("DHS"), in consultation with the Department of State, immediately designate or redesignate Venezuela for Temporary Protected Status ("TPS") following the catastrophic earthquakes that struck the country on June 24, 2026.

On June 24, 2026, Venezuela was struck by two powerful back-to-back earthquakes of approximately magnitudes 7.2 and 7.5, affecting the capital Caracas, La Guaira State, Carabobo State, and other northern and coastal regions. The U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) issued a Red Alert—its highest classification—indicating a high probability of fatalities and extensive damage. The Global Disaster Alert and Coordination System (GDACS) classified the event as a Red Earthquake with high humanitarian impact, estimating 2.4 million people exposed to severe shaking (MMI VII or higher). Preliminary reports confirm significant casualties, collapsed structures, and ongoing rescue operations. Simón Bolívar International Airport was closed, metro and rail services were interrupted, and the La Guaira coastal corridor—Venezuela's principal port, airport, and logistics gateway—suffered significant damage.

This disaster did not strike a country with ordinary emergency-response capacity. Venezuela's public health system, hospitals, electrical grid, water supply, telecommunications, transportation networks, and emergency institutions were already severely weakened before these earthquakes. The seismic disaster has compounded an existing humanitarian and institutional collapse, rendering it impossible for Venezuela to safely absorb the forced return of its nationals.

The statutory basis for TPS expressly contemplates this emergency. Under INA § 244(b)(1)(B), 8 U.S.C. § 1254a(b)(1)(B), TPS may be designated where there has been an earthquake or other environmental disaster resulting in a substantial, but temporary, disruption of living conditions, and where the country is temporarily unable to handle the return of its nationals. Independently, INA § 244(b)(1)(C) authorizes TPS where extraordinary and temporary conditions prevent nationals from

returning safely. Venezuela now satisfies both provisions. To the extent a formal request by the foreign state is required under INA § 244(b)(1)(B), I urge the Department of State to immediately engage diplomatic channels to secure such request. In the alternative, DHS has independent authority to act under INA § 244(b)(1)(C).

The United States has consistently recognized that catastrophic earthquakes warrant TPS designation: following the 2010 magnitude 7.0 earthquake in Haiti; after the 2001 earthquakes in El Salvador that damaged housing, infrastructure, and public services; and after the 2015 magnitude 7.8 earthquake in Nepal. These precedents confirm that TPS is an established and appropriate response when a major earthquake makes safe return impracticable. The same legal and humanitarian predicate—here compounded by Venezuela's prior and pre-existing crisis—clearly applies.

Accordingly, I respectfully request that DHS, in consultation with the Department of State, immediately designate or redesignate Venezuela for an 18-month emergency TPS period pursuant to INA §§ 244(b)(1)(B), (b)(1)(C), and (b)(2), effective June 24, 2026, and covering Venezuelan nationals physically present in the United States as of that date. I further request that the Administration implement all related protections, including protection from removal, employment authorization, and a meaningful registration period for eligible individuals.

The TPS statute was enacted for precisely this type of moment: when disaster, institutional incapacity, and unsafe country conditions make return unreasonable and inhumane. Consistency with U.S. precedent, fidelity to the statute, and basic humanitarian obligation compel immediate action.

Respectfully submitted,

Signature: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, ZIP Code: _____

Date: _____