



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

May 18, 2023

Ramya Reddy
Managing Policy Counsel
MASA Group
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Dear Ms. Reddy:

Thank you for your April 25, 2023 letter to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) in support of a designation of Turkey for Temporary Protected Status (TPS) and Special Student Relief (SSR) for Turkish nationals. I am responding on behalf of the Department.

The Secretary of Homeland Security may designate a country for TPS and extend or terminate a country's existing TPS designation based upon specific statutory criteria. In order to designate a country for TPS or extend a country's TPS designation, the Secretary must find one or more of the following: (1) there is an ongoing armed conflict within the country that would pose a serious threat to the personal safety of the country's nationals if they were returned; (2) there has been an environmental disaster resulting in a substantial, but temporary, disruption of the living conditions in the area affected, the country is temporarily unable to handle adequately the return of its nationals, and the country has officially requested TPS designation; or (3) there exists extraordinary and temporary conditions in the country that prevent nationals from returning in safety, and the Secretary does not find that permitting the country's nationals to remain temporarily in the United States would be contrary to the national interest of the United States.

The Secretary may authorize SSR after careful consideration of the conditions in the affected country. Under SSR, DHS may suspend certain regulatory requirements for F-1 nonimmigrant students from the affected country, such as minimum course load requirements and employment limitations. SSR allows students in F-1 student status, who are experiencing severe economic hardship resulting from the emergent circumstances in their country, to apply to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) for employment authorization. This suspension may include duration of status, full course of study, and requirements for on-campus and off-campus employment for eligible F-1 students. DHS makes decisions to designate TPS and SSR after consultation with interagency partners and careful consideration of the circumstances of the country.

I appreciate the concerns you have expressed and the information you have shared about the conditions in Turkey. Please be assured DHS continues to monitor conditions in Turkey and remains committed to administering its programs, including TPS and SSR, in an equitable

manner. DHS also offers support that may be available upon request¹ to assist eligible individuals residing in the United States affected by conditions there. Such support may include:

- Change or extension of nonimmigrant status, if eligible nationals are currently in the United States, even if the request is filed after the authorized period of admission has expired;
- Expedited processing of requests for advance parole documents;
- Expedited adjudication of requests for off-campus employment authorization for F-1 students experiencing severe economic hardship;
- Expedited adjudication of employment authorization applications, where appropriate;
- Assistance if applicants received a Request for Evidence or a Notice of Intent to Deny and were unable to appear for an interview, submit evidence, or respond in a timely manner because of the natural disaster; and
- Replacement of lost or damaged immigration or travel documents issued by USCIS, such as a Permanent Resident Card (Green Card).

Thank you again for your letter and interest in this important issue. Please share this response with the other organizations that cosigned your letter. Should you require any additional assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ur M. Jaddou", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Ur M. Jaddou
Director

¹ Additional information is available at the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services website at: <https://www.uscis.gov/humanitarian/special-situations>.