



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

DEC 18 2013

T. Douglas Stump, President
Crystal Williams, Executive Director
AILA National Office
1331 G Street, NW
Washington, DC 20528

Dear Ms. Williams and Mr. Stump:

Thank you for your November 14, 2013 letter urging Acting Secretary of Homeland Security Rand Beers to designate the Philippines for Temporary Protected Status (TPS). The authority to designate a country for TPS is based upon specific criteria outlined by the United States Congress in Section 244 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA), 8 U.S.C. Section 1254a, and is vested in the Secretary of Homeland Security.

The Secretary, after consultation with appropriate agencies, has the discretionary authority to designate a country for TPS where he finds that one of the following conditions exists: (1) an ongoing armed conflict within the foreign state poses a serious threat to the personal safety of the foreign state's nationals if they are returned there; (2) there has been an earthquake, flood, drought, epidemic, or other environmental disaster resulting in a substantial, but temporary, disruption of the living conditions in the area affected, the foreign state is temporarily unable to handle adequately the return of its nationals, and the foreign state has officially requested TPS designation; or (3) extraordinary and temporary conditions in the foreign state prevent nationals from returning safely, unless the Secretary finds that permitting a country's nationals to remain in the United States is contrary to the national interest of the United States. *See* INA § 244(b)(1)(A-C).

We in U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) are deeply saddened by the effects of the typhoon that struck the Philippines on November 8, 2013. Our thoughts and prayers are with the victims of this tragedy. USCIS is the agency within the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) responsible for administering the TPS program. USCIS monitors country conditions and evaluates them to determine whether a country could be designated for TPS under the appropriate statutory requirements. DHS and USCIS continue to monitor the situation in the Philippines and are actively engaged with the Department of State and other agencies.

Additionally, there are options other than TPS that are available for eligible Filipinos who may have been affected by the typhoon and the damage it caused. We have taken steps to ensure that the following relief measures are available upon request: change or extension of status,

extensions of certain grants of parole and expedited processing of advance parole requests, expedited adjudication of requests for employment authorization where appropriate, and assistance to lawful permanent residents (LPRs) stranded overseas without immigration or travel documentation. USCIS is also proactively identifying and expediting its processing of immigrant petitions for immediate relatives of U.S. citizens. Filipino LPRs and U.S. citizens with such pending immigrant petitions may also make individual requests for their petitions to be expedited. These relief measures are outlined on the page “USCIS Reminds Filipino Nationals Impacted by Typhoon Haiyan of Available Immigration Relief Measures,” which is posted on our website at www.uscis.gov and may be accessed directly from a scrolling banner on the homepage. USCIS informed stakeholders of this information on November 22, 2013, via electronic communication.

Please be assured that USCIS remains committed to assisting populations in need around the world through its humanitarian programs and continues to look at ways in which we can assist those Filipino nationals affected by the typhoon. I appreciate your interest in the well-being of nationals from the Philippines, and thank you again for your letter. Should you wish to discuss this further, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Alejandro N. Mayorkas". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Alejandro N. Mayorkas
Director