

The dangers of ending TPS for Haiti

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Forced migration from Haiti is not accidental. It is the result of decades of political exclusion, economic extraction, climate vulnerability, and international policies that weaken—rather than strengthen—community power. Any meaningful response must therefore be transnational, linking protection for Haitians abroad with sustained investment in grassroots leadership within Haiti.

—from [Faith in Action](#), from prayer and rally in Springfield, OH, 05 February 2026

Much of our Mercy Justice work centers on legislation in the United States, both at the state and federal levels. But as we have often heard from our sisters and associates across the Mercy world, U.S. policies ripple around the planet with dire consequences for populations in countries across the globe. Particularly when we talk about immigration, we often emphasize the root causes of migration, such as climate change's disproportionate effect on less wealthy nations and violence that is often tied to U.S. political entanglements.

The recent headlines around [Temporary Protected Status](#) (TPS), and particularly TPS for Haiti, are a good example of why these root causes matter so much to our work and how any moral immigration policy must take these forces into account.

TPS is a designation afforded to an individual country by the Department of Homeland Security since 1990 for the protection of people who are already in the U.S. It is a recognition that individuals from the named country cannot safely return there due to armed conflicts, environmental disasters, public health crises, or other extraordinary situations. Importantly, TPS beneficiaries cannot be detained by DHS, cannot be removed from the U.S., and are permitted to apply for work and travel authorizations. By definition, TPS is temporary, typically granted for 12–18 months at a time, but can be extended indefinitely, depending on conditions on the ground. It is also not a path to citizenship, sometimes leaving people in limbo, especially given the recent focus on immigrants by the current administration.

Over the course of the last several months, then–Secretary of Homeland Security Kristi Noem began abruptly terminating the TPS designations of a number of countries including Venezuela, South Sudan, Ethiopia, Nicaragua, Honduras, Somalia, Myanmar, Yemen, and Haiti. The official explanation reads that the legal basis for protection no longer exists, and yet, in all of these cases, conditions remain deeply unsafe. In fact, the U.S. government maintains [Level 4 travel advisories](#) (do not travel) to most of the above countries due to kidnapping/hostage-taking, unrest, terrorism, and health hazards.

For example, a recent [United Nations report](#) shares details of the disproportionate effect of destabilization on children in Haiti. The latest estimates suggest that gang violence there has displaced over 1.4 million people, more than half of whom are children. Additionally, most of these gangs engage in child trafficking for destruction of property, kidnappings, killings, and sexual violence. Conditions remain so dire in Haiti that 133 faith leaders signed a recent [amicus brief to the Supreme Court](#) (SCOTUS) detailing their first-hand experience of the continued humanitarian crises the country has suffered since the catastrophic hurricane in 2010. The SCOTUS case focuses on TPS for both Haiti and Syria with oral arguments scheduled for April 29.

These attempts to rapidly dismantle TPS mirror other strategies over the last 16 months of fomenting chaos and confusion while expressing a callous disregard for the human lives that hang in the balance. In my own work in our Haiti coalitions, the TPS debacle is such a crisis that we have seen all of our work on root causes of the conflict and violence suspended to shift focus to addressing this issue. There is hope to resolve it this week; a vote on Representative Pressley's discharge petition passed on the floor of the House of Representatives on April 15, 2026.

In addition to the dangers posed to nationals being returned to countries in humanitarian crisis, TPS termination harms local countries and the U.S. as a whole. As of March 2025, there were [nearly 1.3 million people from 17 countries](#) benefiting from TPS in the United States. From Haiti alone, there are 350,000 TPS holders across the country, contributing \$5.9 billion to the U.S. economy. These individuals own businesses, work as teachers and caregivers, and over 20% work in healthcare, an industry that has seen shortages of workers.

From a national security standpoint as well, continued destabilization of Haiti, which would be made worse by a mass influx of deportees, [harms U.S interests in the region](#). The criminal gangs that control much of the country remain in power with U.S.-sourced weapons and ammunition, making it crucial to address domestic firearms sales laws as well as ramp up oversight of exports through legislation such as the ARMAS Act and the Stop Arming Cartels Act. Mercy continues to advocate for these bills with many of our partners.