



**CITIES** *for* **ACTION**

The Honorable Kirstjen Nielsen  
Secretary of Homeland Security  
U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
3801 Nebraska Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20528

The Honorable Mike Pompeo  
Secretary of State  
U.S. Department of State  
2201 C Street NW  
Washington, DC 20520

July 12, 2018

Dear Secretary Nielsen and Secretary Pompeo:

We, the mayors and county executives of the Cities for Action coalition, writing on behalf of over 175 U.S. cities and counties, urge you to extend Somalia's Temporary Protected Status (TPS) designation for a full 18 months. Ending TPS would send Somali members of our communities back to a country that cannot guarantee its nationals' safe return. It is our responsibility as local leaders to ensure our residents' safety and well-being. We submit to you that sending Somali TPS recipients back to a country experiencing extreme violence, massive displacement, and food insecurity is unacceptable.

Decades of armed conflict and political instability make it impossible for Somali nationals to return safely. Somalia has been without a functioning national government since 1991, sparking an ongoing civil war and allowing terrorist groups to flourish, most notably al-Shabab. al-Shabab, which is closely allied with al-Qaeda, continues to organize terrorist attacks in the country, especially in the capital of Mogadishu, and often targets civilians.

Civilians have also been harmed in the ongoing fighting. Between January 2016 and October 2017, the United Nations documented over 2,000 civilian deaths and over 2,500 civilians injured. Armed conflict has also caused massive displacement. According to the United Nations, more than 1.5 million people are displaced within Somalia and an additional 1 million Somalis are refugees in neighboring countries.



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The humanitarian situation in Somalia remains dire. Internally displaced people in Somalia are particularly vulnerable to physical and sexual violence. Natural disasters have brought the country to the brink of famine. In 2017, a massive drought across East Africa necessitated emergency food assistance for millions of Somalis. In April and May of this year, torrential rains brought historic flooding across the country, further damaging crops, displacing hundreds of thousands of people, and destroying shelters for people who were already internally displaced. Attacks on aid workers make it difficult for food aid to reach the most vulnerable civilians.

The George H. W. Bush administration first designated Somalia for TPS in 1991. As a result of the ongoing nature of the strife in Somalia, and out of recognition of the armed conflict there, the Department of Homeland Security re-designated Somalia for TPS in 2012. We ask you to join previous administrations from both parties in recognizing the country's extraordinary and ongoing hardships and extend Somalia's TPS designation for a full 18 months.

Sincerely,

Cities for Action