

# **EXHIBIT 69**

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 From: AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA  
 Action: WASHDC, SECSTATE ROUTINE  
 E.O.: 13526  
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 Subject: Honduras: Temporary Protected Status Recommendation

The U.S. Mission to Honduras submits the following recommendation for the extension of the Temporary Protected Status designation.

I. Statutory Basis for Designation

A. *Armed conflict: Is the foreign state currently involved in an ongoing, internal, armed conflict? If so, would the return of nationals of the foreign state to that state (or to the part of the state) pose a serious threat to their personal safety?*

(U) No

B. *Environmental disaster: Has the foreign state in question recently experienced an earthquake, flood, drought, epidemic, or other environmental disaster in the state?*

(U) No

C. *Is the foreign state unable, temporarily, to handle adequately the return to the state of aliens who are nationals of the state?*

(SBU) Yes

Honduras continues to suffer from the same serious security and economic challenges that have led many recipients of TPS to remain in the United States, and spurred even more to migrate there since TPS was granted. The GOH already receives approximately 40,000 deportees from the U.S. and another 40,000 from Mexico each year. Conditions in Honduras are slowly improving, but by any objective measure the situation remains critical. Given that most Hondurans who migrate do so for economic reasons, adding tens of thousands of deportees to an economy that is not prepared to integrate them will only exacerbate the principal cause of irregular migration. This would impose severe burdens on a cooperative but underresourced GOH and be counterproductive to U.S. interests.

D. *Has the foreign state officially requested TPS for its nationals in the United States?*

(U) On June 15, while attending the Conference on Prosperity and Security in Central America, President Hernandez met with Vice President Pence and requested an extension.

II. Extraordinary and Temporary Conditions

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- A. *Has the foreign state experienced extraordinary and temporary conditions that prevent aliens who are nationals of the state from returning to the state in safety?*

(U) Yes

Despite recent statistical improvements, Honduras continues to have one of the highest murder rates in the world for a country not at war, currently estimated to be 58 per 100,000 inhabitants. This was not always the case, and continues to represent an extraordinary circumstances created by a combination of gang activity, drug trafficking, and poor economic conditions. To the extent that efforts by the GOH and the international community are helping to bring down this rate, it is a temporary condition that can change with continued implementation of improved security and economic policies. For example, the country is conducting an aggressive purge of its police force to remove corrupt and criminals elements; 20 percent of the police force has already been removed, proof both of the GOH's political will to address serious problems and its current inability to carry out its primary mission – to enforce the rule of law and protect the lives of its citizens. There is currently only limited government presence in many parts of the country, including in coastal regions where many Hondurans with TPS previously resided and where transnational criminal organizations currently exert disproportionate influence.

- B. *Would permitting nationals of the foreign state to remain temporarily in the United States be contrary to the national interest of the United States?*

(SBU) No

Permitting Hondurans to remain temporarily in the U.S. would be in the U.S. national interest because it would give the GOH the time and space to continue implementing policies and making reforms that offer the real possibility of significantly improving conditions on the ground in Honduras. Improved conditions would give Hondurans at home, especially young people, an incentive to continue to seek their fortunes in their own country, and would make it more likely that Hondurans in the U.S., whether there illegally or under TPS, would return to their homeland voluntarily. Extending TPS would also help preserve the strong bilateral relations that currently exist between the United States and Honduras, making it more likely that the GOH would continue to cooperate with the USG on a wide range of issues. These issues include strictly bilateral ones, such as the extradition of major narcotics traffickers to the United States, as well as international ones, such as the current crisis in Venezuela, on which the GOH has been particularly supportive. As noted in our response to Question I.B.2., the rapid return of many additional Hondurans who currently hold TPS could overwhelm the GOH's ability to properly reintegrate them and make it more likely they would attempt to return to the United States.

### III. Discretionary Factors

*What, if any, additional information relevant to this decision should be brought to the attention of the Department of Homeland Security?*

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(SBU) Honduras is a solid and consistent partner of the United States. The GOH has shown itself exceptionally willing to proactively address concerns related to irregular migration, investing time, money, and political capital in trying to keep its citizens in Honduras. The GOH regularly runs media campaigns to discourage unauthorized migration, and works to welcome back its citizens with open arms.

IV. Recommendation

(SBU) Precipitously terminating TPS for Hondurans would create significant strains in currently excellent, mutually-beneficial U.S.-Honduras relations. It would risk overwhelming Honduras' system for reintegrating returned migrants and could hamper the GOH's ability to effectively cooperate with the United States on a wide range of issues. Honduras continues to struggle with serious security and economic problems that cannot be solved overnight, but which the GOH has demonstrated the political will to address. Giving the GOH more time and space to improve conditions in Honduras is directly in the U.S. national interest, since it would reduce incentives for unauthorized migration and encourage continued bilateral cooperation on other national security issues, including the fight against transnational criminal organizations. Based on these factors, we recommend that TPS for Hondurans be renewed.

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Signature:

Fulton