

EXHIBIT

1

From: S2ECD <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Monday, November 6, 2017 6:44 PM
To: Kelly, John F. EOP/WHO <[REDACTED]>
Cc: S2ECD <[REDACTED]>
Subject: RE: TPS

I had a discussion with Tom B this evening and he informed me of a strategy I was not previously aware of. I incorporated this new information into my final decision and the published timeframe for the Nicaragua termination is 12 months, not 18. Elaine

Elaine C. Duke
Acting Secretary, Department of Homeland Security
[REDACTED]

From: S2ECD
Sent: Monday, November 06, 2017 3:23:29 PM
To: Kelly, John F. EOP/WHO
Cc: S2ECD
Subject: TPS

Chief, my decisions on TPS were made late yesterday based on the many reports I received last week – over a 100 pages of documentation and perspective. They are:

· Terminate TPS for Nicaragua. The advice and reporting I received on Nicaragua was unanimous. The effective termination date is 18 months from today. That will allow time for the affected persons and families to find other paths to stay in the United States or return to Nicaragua. Like we have discussed before, the best resolution is for Congress to act for the TPS recipients to provide an appropriate path. We will be working with Congress on this and the immigration priorities.

· Extension of 6 month under a “No decision” for Honduras. Much of the documentation I received within the last 5 days is conflicting and I have not had sufficient time to deconflict it. The Dept. of State reports says the country conditions do not exist, but it also states that that Honduras is unable at this time to adequately hand the return of their 86,000+ nationals. It also lists key concerns related to Honduras under the discretionary factors section of the report. Additionally, I received multiple intelligence reports late last week that indicate a TPS termination for Honduras could have strong consequences for other immigration, TCO, and drug reduction priorities. I want to understand this better so I can adequately determine the appropriate plan and path for termination. Also, given our partnership on the stated key Administration priorities, I think it is important to develop and execute the plan with the partner country, to the maximum extent possible. I intend to immediately engage Honduras to begin the discussion and planning process. This decision is a strong break with past practice and sends a strong message that this Administration will no longer routinely end TPS with little for the statute. By not affirmatively extending, I’m stating that I’m not satisfied that the country conditions remain – but not yet sure how to best end TPS for this country.

These decisions along with the public statements will send a clear signal that TPS in general is coming to a close. I believe it is consistent with the President’s position on immigration, puts us in the best position to work with Congress to address the DACA and TPS recipients, and protects our tenuous situation on immigration, TCO, and drug reduction priorities with the Northern Triangle (and by “side effect” Mexico per the Ambassador there).

These decisions were not made for fear of criticism, every decision I make receives criticism. I take seriously my role as Deputy and currently acting Secretary and would not make a decision based on anything but the facts. While some are portraying this differently, this decision is really just a difference in strategy to get to the President’s objectives. I truly believe this is the right path. And my record should stand for itself.

Elaine C. Duke
Acting Secretary, Department of Homeland Security
[REDACTED]

October 31, 2017

**Homeland
Security****DECISION**

MEMORANDUM FOR THE ACTING SECRETARY

FROM: James D. Nealon
Assistant Secretary for International Affairs
Office of Strategy, Policy, and Plans

SUBJECT: Designation of Temporary Protected Status for Honduras,
Nicaragua, and El Salvador

Purpose: To seek your approval to extend the designation of Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for Honduras, Nicaragua, and El Salvador for 18 months.

Context:**Humanitarian Reasons**

In the cases of Honduras and Nicaragua, TPS beneficiaries have by definition been in the United States since at least December 30, 1998; in the case of El Salvador, since at least February 13, 2001. In many cases, TPS recipients have been here longer. In all cases, TPS recipients are not felons – a serious criminal record disqualifies an applicant from TPS status. In addition, data shows that TPS recipients have a very high workforce participation rate, much higher than the national average. TPS recipients have jobs, have gotten married, have many thousands of American citizen children (Salvadorans alone are estimated to have 100,000 American citizen children), work legally in great numbers, pay taxes, own homes, own businesses, and live the American dream minus a path to citizenship. While TPS was always meant to be temporary, it makes no sense to send people back to their country of origin after 20 years or more. Finally, if TPS were terminated we would be taking more than 300,000 people who currently have status and taking them out of status and into the shadows. That is not in our interest.

Working Against Ourselves

The United States is currently investing approximately 700 million dollars annually in Central America, aimed at mitigating the push factors of migration. (Most of this money is directed to Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala as Nicaragua receives very little U.S. assistance). The point of this assistance is to reduce the very high levels of violence, improve governance and weak institutions like the police and courts, and create economic opportunities such that Central Americans see their futures at home and not in the United States. Much of this assistance is aimed, directly or indirectly, at improving the ability of these countries to re-integrate their citizens. In the case of Honduras, for example, they received approximately 80,000 returnees in both 2015 and 2016. While willing partners, this massive influx of returnees puts a huge burden

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on employment (large scale unemployment is compounded by the fact that almost 70 percent of Hondurans work in the gray economy), and other weak institutions and services. Adding a huge influx of TPS beneficiaries and their families would strain their system even more and possibly spur further irregular migration to the United States. It is not in our interest to work against ourselves.

Foreign Policy Considerations

For the past three years, we have been deeply engaged with Central America to change the dynamics on the ground that drive migration to the United States. Honduras and El Salvador are very willing partners, and are now investing their own resources to work closely with us to stop the flow of migrants. It is very much in our interest that they continue to do so. Results have been very positive, though there is still a very long way to go. Violence has been reduced, though it is still at intolerably high levels; weak institutions like the police and courts have been bolstered, but they are still very weak and incapable of protecting their own citizens; corruption is still endemic; and their economies are still not capable of creating sufficient jobs and opportunity for their young and growing populations. We are still years away from a Central America in which people see their futures at home and not in the United States, but we are on a path to sustainable growth and improvement. It would not be in the U.S. interest to jeopardize our cooperation and partnership by terminating TPS at this time. Whether it is our intention or not, termination of TPS will send a strong signal that we do not value our partnership, and will lead El Salvador and Honduras to re-evaluate the benefits of their relationship with us. It could affect their policy on removals, which is currently very cooperative; and could also lead them to question policies that are important to us but less important to them, such as extraditions. And finally, and most importantly, it might cause them to re-evaluate their very strong cooperation in trying to curtail irregular migration to the United States.

I would add that Honduras has a Presidential election on November 27, and renewal or not of TPS is an issue in the campaign seen by some as a measuring stick for U.S. – Honduran.

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Recommendation: I recommend that you extend designation of TPS for Honduras, El Salvador, and Nicaragua for 18 months from the date of your decision.

Approve/date _____ Disapprove/date _____

Modify/date _____ Needs discussion/date _____

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U.S. Department of Homeland Security
 U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services
 Office of the Director (MS 2000)
 Washington, DC 20529-2000



U.S. Citizenship
 and Immigration
 Services

October 26, 2017

DECISION MEMORANDUM FOR THE ACTING SECRETARY

FROM: L. Francis Cissna
 Director

2 F A C

SUBJECT: Nicaragua's Designation for Temporary Protected Status

Purpose: Nicaragua's existing designation for Temporary Protected Status (TPS) will expire on January 5, 2018. At least 60 days before the expiration of a TPS designation, the Secretary, after consultation with appropriate U.S. Government agencies, must review the conditions in a country designated for TPS to determine whether the conditions supporting the designation continue to be met. If the Secretary determines that the country no longer meets the statutory conditions for designation, she shall terminate the designation. If the Secretary does not determine, however, that the conditions for designation are no longer met, the TPS designation will be extended for 6 months, or in the Secretary's discretion, 12, or 18 months.¹

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) has completed a review of the conditions in Nicaragua and is presenting options and a recommendation for your consideration. In summary, USCIS assesses that, although Nicaragua continues to face development challenges, the country suffers few remaining residual effects of Hurricane Mitch, which formed the basis of Nicaragua's designation for TPS in 1999. Accordingly, USCIS recommends that you terminate Nicaragua's TPS designation.

As part of the review process, USCIS staff has consulted with the Department of State (DOS). However, to date, Secretary Tillerson has not weighed in and DOS has not provided any recommendation.

Nicaragua's TPS Designation: On January 5, 1999, then Attorney General Reno designated Nicaragua for TPS on environmental disaster grounds, specifically, because of the devastation caused by Hurricane Mitch in October of 1998.²

The reason for Nicaragua's designation for TPS stated in the Federal Register at the time of the initial designation was that "*Hurricane Mitch swept through Central America causing severe flooding and associated damage in Nicaragua. ...[D]ue to the environmental disaster and*

¹ See Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) § 244(b)(3)(A-C), 8 U.S.C. § 1254a(b)(3)(A-C); see also Attachment A: Temporary Protected Status Legal Authority.

² See Designation of Nicaragua Under Temporary Protected Status, 64 FR 529 (Jan. 5, 1999).

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substantial disruption of living conditions caused by Hurricane Mitch, Nicaragua is unable, temporarily, to handle adequately the return of Nicaraguan nationals."

At the time, the Attorney General estimated that there would be no more than 45,000 to 70,000 nationals of Nicaragua in the United States who would be eligible for TPS.

Nicaragua's designation has been continuously extended since the 1999 designation, with the most recent extension announced on May 16, 2016.³

To be eligible for TPS under Nicaragua's designation, along with meeting the other eligibility requirements, individuals must have continuously resided in the United States since December 30, 1998, and have been continuously physically present in the United States since January 5, 1999. There are approximately 5,300 Nicaraguan TPS beneficiaries. Approximately 2,300 individuals re-registered for TPS under Nicaragua's last extension.⁴

Current Country Conditions

USCIS has conducted an in-depth review of conditions in Nicaragua. The country condition report, upon which USCIS' assessment and recommendation are based, can be found in Attachment B.

Hurricane Mitch killed over 3,000, and affected nearly 868,000 Nicaraguans. Landslides and floods destroyed villages and caused extensive damage to the country's infrastructure and agricultural sector.

Nicaragua received a significant amount of international aid to assist in its Hurricane Mitch-related recovery efforts, and many reconstruction projects have now been completed. Although Nicaragua reportedly continues to have one of the highest housing deficits in Central America, hundreds of homes destroyed by the storm have been rebuilt. The Second Land Administration Project covers 6 of the 15 Departments in the country and has helped over 430,000 people benefit from better property rights regulations. More than 67,000 families have received legal documents for their properties, of which more than 43,000 are new land titles.⁵ Significant aid was dedicated to repairing roads, and access to drinking water and sanitation has improved. Over 200 kilometers of roads have been constructed, benefitting around 460,000 people. More than 168,000 people have benefitted from access to reliable water supplies and sanitation services as a result of international aid-based projects.

The Second Educational Sector Support Project—an International Development Assistance (IDA) project—provided 1.4 million textbooks to 225,000 primary students of the poorest regions of the country, which represent 25percent of the national enrollment in primary education.⁶ All 'afro-

³ See Extension of the Designation of Nicaragua for Temporary Protected Status, 81 FR 30325 (May 16, 2016).

⁴ The total number of beneficiaries represents all individuals who have been granted TPS since Nicaragua's designation in 1999 and who have not had their TPS withdrawn. Not all of these individuals continue to re-register because they have adjusted to another valid immigration status (e.g., over 1,600 have become lawful permanent residents or U.S. citizens), have left the United States, are no longer eligible for TPS, or have failed to re-register for other reasons. As a result, the number of beneficiaries that re-register for TPS under extensions is lower than the total number of beneficiaries.

⁵ World Bank, "World Bank in Nicaragua", available at: <http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/nicaragua/overview>

⁶ World Bank, "World Bank in Nicaragua", available at: <http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/nicaragua/overview>

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descendant and indigenous primary students in the Caribbean Coast received textbooks in their native languages for the first time ever.

The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in Nicaragua reached an all-time high of \$13.23 billion (USD) in 2016 and is expected to reach \$13.48 billion by the end of this quarter. Within a long-term context, the GDP in Nicaragua is projected to increase to about \$15.67 in 2020.⁷

Additionally, the World Bank reported that, despite global economic turbulence, Nicaragua has stood out for maintaining growth levels above the average for Latin America and the Caribbean as a result of disciplined macroeconomic policies, combined with a steady expansion of exports and foreign direct investment. Nicaragua ranks second among countries in Central America with favorable prospects for foreign direct investment and trade.⁸ In August 2017, the Nicaraguan government reported that 96 percent of the population was employed.⁹

Recovery from Hurricane Mitch has, however, been slow and encumbered by subsequent environmental challenges. A regional drought has recently impacted Nicaragua, causing crop losses, food insecurity, water shortages, and income loss in affected areas. By June of 2016, over 300,000 people were in need of food assistance. The 2017 growing season has demonstrated slightly improved conditions, allowing normal development of basic grain crops. Nicaragua has also been affected recently by a regional coffee rust epidemic, which has caused crop loss and declining coffee production throughout Central America since 2012, leading to job loss and food insecurity. Additionally, in recent years, Nicaragua has experienced an outbreak of thousands of cases of mosquito-borne illnesses, including chikungunya, dengue, and Zika.

In addition, in stark contrast to its neighbors to the north, Nicaragua also lacks high levels of crime and violence. Nicaragua's homicide rate declined to 7 homicides per 100,000 inhabitants in 2016, slightly higher than the worldwide average of 5.3 homicides per 100,000 inhabitants in 2015 (the most recent year available), and significantly lower than El Salvador's rate of 81.2 per 100,000 in 2016 and Honduras' rate of 59 per 100,000. There has been some significant, but isolated, violence along Nicaragua's Caribbean coast since 2015 relating to conflict over land between indigenous communities and settlers, and violence against women remains widespread. However, on the whole, crime rates are low, police are viewed positively and focus on preventing crime and violence, and transnational gangs and drug trafficking are largely absent from the country.

The U.S. Department of State does not have a current travel warning for Nicaragua, and the United Kingdom states that "most visits to Nicaragua are trouble free."

Finally, the U.S. Government works to repatriate individuals back to Nicaragua. During the Obama administration's second term alone, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) removed over 4,300 individuals to Nicaragua.¹⁰ The U.S. removed, on average, over 2,300 individuals to Nicaragua each year in FY2010-2012.

⁷ *Trading Economics*, "Nicaragua GDP", available at: <https://tradingeconomics.com/nicaragua/gdp>

⁸ *World Bank*, "World Bank in Nicaragua", available at: <http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/nicaragua/overview>

⁹ Alvarez Hidalgo, Wendy, *Crecimiento económico mella poco en el subempleo*, La Prensa (N.), Aug. 8, 2017.

¹⁰ From 2013-2016, 4,311 individuals were removed to Nicaragua. This total is the cumulative number of removals found in the following reports: <https://www.ice.gov/sites/default/files/documents/Report/2016/removal-stats-2016.pdf>; <https://www.ice.gov/sites/default/files/documents/Report/2016/fy2015removalStats.pdf>; <https://www.ice.gov/doclib/about/offices/ero/pdf/2014-ice-immigration-removals.pdf>; <https://www.ice.gov/doclib/about/offices/ero/pdf/2013-ice-immigration-removals.pdf>.

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Options1) *Extend Nicaragua's Designation for TPS*

Under the TPS statute, if you determine that the statutory conditions for TPS designation are met, then TPS designation will be extended for an additional period of 6 months, or in your discretion 12, or 18 months. Nicaragua was initially designated for TPS in 1999 as a result of the damage caused by Hurricane Mitch. The review of conditions in Nicaragua indicates that reconstruction and recovery efforts relating to the storm have largely been completed. Although subsequent environmental challenges hampered Nicaragua's recovery and development, Nicaragua's current challenges cannot be directly tied to destruction stemming from Hurricane Mitch. Therefore, USCIS assesses that, on balance, conditions in Nicaragua no longer support its TPS designation on the basis of Hurricane Mitch.

Although USCIS assesses otherwise, an argument could be made that the subsequent and, in some cases, ongoing environmental challenges – in particular, the prolonged, severe drought, coffee rust epidemic, and mosquito-borne disease outbreak – have sufficiently hindered recovery that a substantial disruption in living conditions endures. Under this assessment, Nicaragua continues to be unable to handle the return of its nationals, and extension is justified. USCIS is not aware of a request for extension of Nicaragua's TPS designation from the Government of Nicaragua.

From an operational perspective, extension periods of less than 18 months are challenging given the significant workload and timeframes involved in receiving and adjudicating re-registration applications and issuing new employment authorization documents. Additionally, the deliberative review process to support TPS decision making, including consultation with DOS, typically begins 10 months before the expiration date of a country's current designation. A 12- or 18-month extension of Nicaragua's designation for TPS would permit Nicaraguan TPS beneficiaries to re-register for TPS and remain in the United States with work authorization through January or July 5, 2019, respectively.

2) *Terminate Nicaragua's Designation for TPS*

If you determine that Nicaragua no longer continues to meet the statutory requirements for its TPS designation, you must terminate TPS for Nicaragua. Termination would end TPS benefits for existing Nicaraguan TPS beneficiaries. Upon the termination of TPS benefits, former beneficiaries without another immigration status or authorization to remain would no longer have permission to work and remain in the United States. They may, however, apply for any other immigration benefits for which they may be otherwise eligible (e.g., asylum, lawful permanent residence). As explained above, USCIS assesses that termination is warranted because recovery and reconstruction efforts relating to Hurricane Mitch have largely been completed and current challenges cannot be directly tied to damage from the storm.

If you decide to terminate Nicaragua's designation, you may determine the appropriate effective date of the termination. In doing so, you have the option to provide for an orderly transition period (e.g., 6, 12, or 18 months) after which TPS documentation will end. Delaying the effective

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date would provide those beneficiaries without any other immigration status a reasonable amount of time following the announcement of termination of the designation to plan and prepare for their departure from the United States, of particular importance for this population given the extended length of time Nicaraguan TPS beneficiaries have been living in the United States. Delaying the effective date would also allow Nicaragua time to prepare for and absorb its nationals in a more orderly fashion. Note: the effective date of termination may not be earlier than 60 days after the date the *Federal Register* notice announcing the termination is published or, if later, the expiration of the most recent previous extension.

3) *Redesignate Nicaragua for TPS*

In addition to making a decision to terminate or extend Nicaragua's TPS designation, you could also consider redesignating the country for TPS. A decision to redesignate a country for TPS, unlike termination or extension, is entirely at your discretion; if the statutory conditions are met, you may, but do not have to, redesignate a country for TPS. Nicaragua has experienced numerous environmental challenges in recent years, including hurricanes, tropical storms, floods, volcanic and seismic activity, drought, mosquito-borne illnesses, and a coffee rust epidemic that continue to pose challenges for Nicaragua. However, the scale and effects of these events do not appear to be on par with those that would typically support a country's designation for TPS. Additionally, Nicaragua is not experiencing the same high levels of violence and citizen insecurity as its northern neighbors. In light of these considerations, USCIS does not assess there to be a strong basis for redesignating Nicaragua for TPS.

4) *No Decision/Automatic Extension*

If you do not make a determination about whether Nicaragua's TPS designation should be extended or terminated at least 60 days prior to its expiration date, by statute, its period of designation will be automatically extended for 6 additional months (or, in your discretion, a period of 12 or 18 months). You could affirmatively choose not to make a decision about whether the conditions supporting Nicaragua's designation continue to be met and announce the automatic extension of 6 (or 12 or 18) months, noting that you or your successor will then review conditions prior to the expiration of that extension.

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Timeliness: You are required to provide timely notice of whether existing TPS designations will be extended or terminated through publication in the *Federal Register*.¹¹ Your earliest decision will facilitate publication of notice in the *Federal Register* sufficiently in advance of the January 5, 2018 expiration of Nicaragua's designation, providing predictability and clarity to beneficiaries and their employers. By statute, if you do not make a decision at least 60 days before the expiration of the current designation (i.e., by November 6, 2017), then Nicaragua's designation will automatically be extended for a minimum of 6 months.¹²

Recommendation: USCIS recommends that you terminate Nicaragua's designation for TPS with an effective date delayed by 6, 12, or 18 months to permit an orderly transition. This would permit current Nicaraguan TPS beneficiaries to continue to remain and work in the United States through July 5, 2018; January 5, 2019; or July 5, 2019, respectively.

Decision:

1. Extend: *Extend Nicaragua's existing designation for (circle one):*

6 months

12 months

18 months

Approve/date _____

2. Terminate: *Terminate Nicaragua's designation with an orderly transition period of (circle one or specify period):*

6 months

12 months

18 months

Other _____

Approve/date _____

3. Terminate and Redesignate: *Terminate Nicaragua's existing designation and simultaneously redesignate Nicaragua:*

Specify duration of redesignation (6-18 months): _____

Specify continuous residence date for eligibility under redesignation (currently December 30, 1998): _____

Approve/date _____

4. No Decision/Automatic Extension: *Delay a decision on Nicaragua's designation, resulting in an extension of (circle one):*

6 months

12 months

18 months

Approve/date _____

¹¹ See INA § 244(b)(3)(A).

¹² See INA § 244(b)(3)(A), (C).

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Attachments:

Attachment A: Temporary Protected Status Legal Authority

Attachment B: April 2017 USCIS RAIO Research Unit Report on Conditions in Nicaragua

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AR-NICARAGUA-00000011

November 6, 2017

MEMORANDUM FOR: L. Francis Cissna
Director
U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

James D. Nealon
Assistant Secretary for International Affairs
Office of Strategy, Policy, and Plans

FROM: Elaine C. Duke
Acting Secretary

SUBJECT: **Nicaragua's Designation for Temporary Protected Status**

Pursuant to the relevant provisions of the Immigration and Nationality Act pertaining to Temporary Protected Status determinations, I have reviewed information regarding the country conditions in Nicaragua. I have reviewed this information for the purpose of determining whether the conditions for the designation of Nicaragua under 8 U.S.C. § 1254a(b) continue to be met. The State Department has provided me with its view that the conditions under which Nicaragua was designated have ceased to exist, and that view is consistent with similar assessments provided to me from other sources. Furthermore, the State Department has notified me that the government of Nicaragua could adequately handle the return of their nationals. The Government of Nicaragua has not requested that I continue to extend its designation.

Based on the information that I have reviewed, I have concluded that Nicaragua no longer continues to meet the conditions for designation, and I am therefore terminating the designation for Nicaragua.

I hereby direct U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services to prepare a suitable notice for publication in the Federal Register, as required by 8 U.S.C. § 1254a(b)(3)(B). Based on the information concerning Nicaragua and the population of nationals of Nicaragua present in the United States under the terms of the temporary protected status, I have determined that a twelve-month period following my determination, pursuant to 8 U.S.C. § 1254a(d)(3), is appropriate to provide an orderly transition.

Security

U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Washington, DC 20528



**Homeland
Security**

November 6, 2017

MEMORANDUM FOR: L. Francis Cissna
Director
U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

James D. Nealon
Assistant Secretary for International Affairs
Office of Strategy, Policy, and Plans

FROM: Elaine C. Duke
Acting Secretary

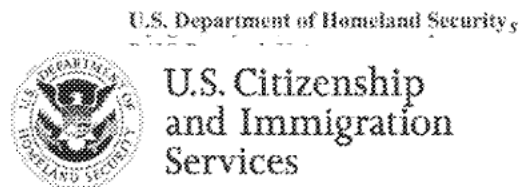
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "E. Duke".

SUBJECT: **Nicaragua's Designation for Temporary Protected Status**

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TEMPORARY PROTECTED STATUS CONSIDERATIONS: NICARAGUA APRIL 2017

Hurricane Mitch: Damages and Recovery

Hurricane Mitch made landfall in Nicaragua in October 1998. The storm killed 3,045 people, and 885 were reported missing.¹ The devastation caused by Hurricane Mitch affected nearly 868,000 people.² Landslides and floods destroyed entire villages and caused extensive damage to the transportation network, housing, medical and educational facilities, water supply and sanitation facilities, and the agricultural sector.³ Overall damage estimates ranged between \$1.3 to \$1.5 billion.⁴

As of May 1999, the Government of Nicaragua estimated that Hurricane Mitch destroyed 23,854 homes and damaged an additional 17,566.⁵ Housing reconstruction costs were estimated at \$143.7 million.⁶ Damages to roads and bridges accounted for approximately 60% of Hurricane Mitch-related reconstruction costs.⁷ Approximately 1,500 kilometers of paved and 6,500

¹ *Nicaragua: Huracán Mitch Daños, Costos, Acciones de Rehabilitación del Gobierno y la Cooperación Internacional*, Reunión del Grupo Consultivo, May 25-28, 1999.

² *Ibid.* (Past Refugee, Asylum and International Operations (RAIO) reports stated that two million people were affected by Hurricane Mitch, citing to a URL hosted by the National Climactic Data Center. This report, however, cites to a figure produced by the Government of Nicaragua at the Consultative Group Meeting for the Reconstruction and Transformation of Central America held in Stockholm, Sweden in May 1999. The purpose of the Consultative Group Meeting was to raise aid for countries devastated by Hurricane Mitch. In its efforts to obtain aid, the Government of Nicaragua produced a precise figure further broken down by region. For example, the storm affected 867,752 people, with 448,209 of the victims residing in Region II (comprised of León and Chinandega departments) and 190,577 residing in Region VI (comprised of Matagalpa and Jinotega departments). The government estimated that 50.1% of those affected were women, and 45.7% were minors under age 14. This RAIO report cites to the Government of Nicaragua figure). See also: *Mitch: The Deadliest Atlantic Hurricane Since 1780*, National Climactic Data Center, <http://lwf.ncdc.noaa.gov/oa/reports/mitch/mitch.html> (last visited Apr. 14, 2017).

³ *Nicaragua: Huracán Mitch Daños, Costos, Acciones de Rehabilitación del Gobierno y la Cooperación Internacional*.

⁴ *Nicaragua Overview*, U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), <http://web.archive.org/web/20110606154439/http://www.usaid.gov/pubs/bj2001/lac/ni/> (last visited Apr. 14, 2017) According to a USAID source, overall damages were US\$1.5 billion. The Government of Nicaragua assessed damages at US\$1.3 billion. See *Nicaragua: Huracán Mitch Daños, Costos, Acciones de Rehabilitación del Gobierno y la Cooperación Internacional*.

⁵ *Nicaragua: Huracán Mitch Daños, Costos, Acciones de Rehabilitación del Gobierno y la Cooperación Internacional*.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ *Ibid.*

Temporary Protected Status Considerations: Nicaragua
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kilometers of unpaved roads were damaged, while 3,800 meters of bridges were damaged or destroyed.⁸ As a result, the country's main cities were physically disconnected from smaller towns and communities.⁹ Road and bridge reconstruction and rehabilitation costs were estimated at \$804 million.¹⁰

Estimates of schools damaged vary. The Government of Nicaragua reported that Hurricane Mitch destroyed 296 schools and damaged 216 more.¹¹ More than 294,000 textbooks were destroyed and 555 teachers were left homeless or injured, contributing to damages totaling \$43.7 million.¹² An alternate source, however, indicated that approximately 340 schools were damaged.¹³

Likewise, estimates of damages to health infrastructure vary. According to the Government of Nicaragua, a total of 102 health units were damaged or destroyed by Hurricane Mitch, including one hospital, 30 health centers, and 71 health posts.¹⁴ However, an alternate source reports that 90 health centers, 40 health posts, and six hospitals suffered damages.¹⁵

Damages from Hurricane Mitch to the agricultural sector, comprised of the internal consumption and export markets, impacted the agricultural economy and local food access.¹⁶ The bean, corn, and rice crops, all destined for domestic consumption, suffered estimated losses of 71%, 51%, and 28%, respectively.¹⁷ Similarly, crops destined for the export market, including sesame, peanuts, and bananas, saw losses of 65%, 27%, and 18%, respectively.¹⁸ In addition, an estimated 77,000 cattle, 21,509 horses, 97,121 pigs, and 222,736 poultry were lost in the storm, contributing to a decrease in the overall food supply.¹⁹

The hurricane also damaged 79 potable water and nine sewage treatment systems.²⁰ In the urban sector, 24 water uptake systems, 20 wells, 67 water pump stations, and 52 kilometers of pipes were damaged.²¹ In the rural sector, approximately 634 wells were damaged.²² Overall, damage

⁸ Ibid. 1,500 kilometers and 6,500 kilometers account for 83% and 39% of all paved and unpaved roads in Nicaragua at the time of Hurricane Mitch, respectively.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Christoplos, Ian, et al., *Learning From Recovery After Hurricane Mitch: Experience From Nicaragua*, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, p. 14, 2009.

¹⁴ Nicaragua: Huracán Mitch Daños, Costos, Acciones de Rehabilitación del Gobierno y la Cooperación Internacional.

¹⁵ Christoplos, et. al, p.14.

¹⁶ Nicaragua: Huracán Mitch Daños, Costos, Acciones de Rehabilitación del Gobierno y la Cooperación Internacional.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

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from Hurricane Mitch caused a 40% reduction in water service, affecting close to a million people.²³

The international community and the Government of Nicaragua helped to repair the damage and destruction left behind by Hurricane Mitch. For example, the Canadian Red Cross and the United Nations Development Programme collaborated to build 1,300 homes,²⁴ and local authorities, with the assistance of various small Spanish non-governmental organizations (NGOs), built 300 homes in the municipality of Ocotol.²⁵ These programs, however, represent a mere fraction of the more than 41,000 homes that were damaged or destroyed.²⁶ Nicaragua reportedly has one of the highest housing deficits in Central America, with a need for “957,000 new houses and home improvements”—only 50% of which is covered by the private and public sectors.²⁷

A significant amount of aid was dedicated to repairing and improving road infrastructure, including various projects to rehabilitate, maintain and improve roads funded by the Inter-American Development Bank and the World Bank.²⁸ However, transportation infrastructure in Nicaragua remains “poor and often suffers damage from tropical storms and hurricanes,” with public protests related to poor road conditions occasionally occurring.²⁹

Despite the impact of Hurricane Mitch, access to drinking water and sanitation has increased in Nicaragua in the long-term.³⁰ Nicaragua has benefited from various loans from the Inter-

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ *Rebuilding after Hurricane Mitch: Housing reconstruction in Honduras and Nicaragua*, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, p.3, 2007.

²⁵ *Reconstrucción post-Mitch en Nicaragua*, EcoSur, Aug. 2009, <http://www.ecosur.org/ediciones-antiores/105/455-reconstruccion-post-mitch-en-nicaragua>, (last visited Apr. 14, 2017).

²⁶ Gómez, Rosa Julia, *Salud en la Vivienda en los Países que Conforman la Red Interamericana de Centros de Salud en la Vivienda: El Caso de Nicaragua*, Organización Panamericana de la Salud, p.22, Mar. 2000. The pre-Mitch housing shortage in Nicaragua was estimated at 594,000 housing units, affecting 3.6 million people, or eight out of 10 Nicaraguans.

²⁷ *Habitat for Humanity in Nicaragua*, Habitat for Humanity, <https://www.habitat.org/where-we-build/nicaragua>, (last visited Apr. 6, 2017).

²⁸ NI0099: *Panamerican Highway Rehabilitation*, Inter-American Development Bank, <http://www.iadb.org/en/projects/project-description-title.1303.html?id=NI0099> (last visited Apr. 14, 2017); NI0146: *Road Rehabilitation San Lorenzo-Muhan*, Inter-American Development Bank, <http://www.iadb.org/en/projects/project-description-title.1303.html?id=NI0146> (last visited Apr. 14, 2017); NI0170: *PPP Road Program for Competitiveness*, Inter-American Development Bank, <http://www.iadb.org/en/projects/project-description-title.1303.html?id=NI0170> (last visited Apr. 14, 2017); *Nicaragua: Third Roads Rehabilitation and Maintenance Project*, World Bank, Dec. 18, 2000; *Nicaragua: Fourth Roads Rehabilitation and Maintenance Project*, World Bank, Mar. 27, 2015 (see complete report).

²⁹ *Nicaragua > Infrastructure*, Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment - Central America And The Caribbean, Feb. 3, 2017, <http://janes.ihs.com/Janes/Display/1302302> (last visited Apr. 6, 2017).

³⁰ *Estimates on the use of water sources and sanitation facilities – Nicaragua*, WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme for Water Supply and Sanitation, Jun. 2015, http://www.wssinfo.org/documents/?tx_displaycontroller%5Bregion%5D=&tx_displaycontroller%5Bsearch_word%5D=nicaragua&tx_displaycontroller%5Btype%5D=country_files, (last visited Apr. 14, 2017).

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American Development Bank to improve its water and sanitation systems.³¹ According to the World Health Organization/United Nations Children’s Fund (WHO/UNICEF) Joint Monitoring Programme for Water Supply and Sanitation, as of 2015, an estimated 87% of the Nicaraguan population had access to an improved drinking water source, while an estimated 68% had access to improved sanitation facilities; in 1995—the last year of survey data before Hurricane Mitch—76% had access to an improved drinking water source, while only 49% had access to improved sanitation facilities.³²

Post-Hurricane Mitch Environmental Disasters

Nicaragua is “vulnerable to recurrent natural disasters,”³³ including hurricanes, severe storms and flooding, landslides, significant volcanic activity, and destructive earthquakes.³⁴ According to the 2017 Global Climate Risk Index, Nicaragua ranked as the 4th most affected country in the world by extreme weather events from 1996 to 2015; during this time, Nicaragua averaged \$234.7 million in damages per year, and witnessed over 3,200 total fatalities from extreme weather events.³⁵ Per the World Food Programme, Nicaragua’s vulnerability to natural disasters hinders its progress in addressing both poverty and food security.³⁶ Both strong seasonal rains

³¹ NI0097: *Modernization Potable Water/Sanitation*, Inter-American Development Bank, <http://www.iadb.org/en/projects/project-description-title.1303.html?id=NI0097>, (last visited Apr. 14, 2017); NI0142: *Implementation Sanitation Measures Managua Lake*, Inter-American Development Bank, <http://www.iadb.org/en/projects/project-description-title.1303.html?id=NI0142>, (last visited Apr. 14, 2017); Lockwood, Harold et al., *Activity Report 106, Nicaragua: Rural Water Supply, Sanitation, and Environmental Health Program*, U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) Environmental Health Project, p. 15-16, Dec. 2001; NI-L1017: *Potable Water and Sanitation Investment Program*, Inter-American Development Bank, <http://www.iadb.org/en/projects/project-description-title.1303.html?id=NI-L1017> (last visited Apr. 14, 2017); *Water and sanitation company extends services and increases efficiency*, Inter-American Development Bank, <http://www.iadb.org/en/mapamericas/nicaragua/water-and-sanitation-company-extends-services-and-increases-efficiency.5597.html> (last visited Apr. 14, 2017); *Nicaragua will improve water and sanitation services with IDB support*, Inter-American Development Bank, Dec. 3, 2010.

³² *Estimates on the use of water sources and sanitation facilities – Nicaragua*.

³³ *WFP Nicaragua Country Brief*, World Food Programme, p.2, Jun. 2016; *The World Factbook – Nicaragua*, CIA, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/nu.html>, (last visited Apr. 18, 2017).

³⁴ *Foreign Travel Advice – Nicaragua: Natural Disasters*, GOV.UK, <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/nicaragua/natural-disasters> (last visited Apr. 16, 2017).

³⁵ Kreft, Sönke, Eckstein, David and Melchior, Inga, *Global Climate Risk Index 2017*, Germanwatch, p. 5-6, Nov. 2016.

³⁶ *WFP Nicaragua Country Brief*, World Food Programme, p.2, Feb. 2017.

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and a prolonged drought in the section of Nicaragua located in Central America's "Dry Corridor"³⁷ have plagued the country in recent years.³⁸

Since Hurricane Mitch, various hurricanes, tropical depressions, and tropical storms have made landfall in Nicaragua—a country which is prone to flooding.³⁹ In November 2001, Hurricane Michelle damaged or destroyed 3,349 houses, seven bridges, and 7,000 hectares of crops;⁴⁰ in September 2007, Hurricane Felix, a category 5 storm, killed over 100 and damaged or destroyed an estimated 16,400 houses;⁴¹ in May 2008, Tropical Storm Alma damaged seven Pacific coast departments, leaving three people dead and 10 missing, and damaging "most major roads, water wells and latrines" in the department of Leon in western Nicaragua;⁴² in October 2008, Tropical Depression 16 brought intense rains that left four people dead and affected 10,633 people in eight departments;⁴³ and in November 2009, Hurricane Ida, a category 1 storm, brought heavy rains and winds to the northern coast of Nicaragua, causing damage to 875 homes, contaminating 300 wells, and affecting over 13,000 people.⁴⁴

More recently, in October 2011, heavy rains linked to Tropical Depression 12E produced flooding and landslides throughout the country.⁴⁵ An assessment carried out by the Government of Nicaragua found that 87 of 153 municipalities⁴⁶ suffered damages, and nearly 149,000 people were affected by damages to their property, crops, and other livelihoods.⁴⁷ A total of 8,924

³⁷ According to a report published by the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO) on Central America's "Dry Corridor": "The term dry corridor, although it points to a climatic phenomenon, has an ecological basis: it defines a group of ecosystems that combine in the ecoregion of dry tropical forest in Central America, which starts in Chiapas, Mexico, and in a strip of land, contains the lowlands of the Pacific slope and much of the central pre-mountain region of Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, and part of Costa Rica (up to Guanacaste); in Honduras, it also includes fragments which approach the Caribbean coast." See van der Zee Arias, Amparo, et. al, *Estudio de caracterización del Corredor Seco Centroamericano*, FAO, p.8, Dec. 2012. Another FAO report defines the "Dry Corridor" as: "an imprecise geographical demarcation defined by a zone with climatic characteristics of dry tropical forest, with a marked and prolonged dry season (*verano*), and where there is a latent risk of recurring drought during the reduced rainy season (*invierno*), which could occur due to the late arrival of the rainy season, an extension of the dry season, or a premature end of the rainy season." See Peralta Rodriguez, Orlando, et. al, *Buenas prácticas para la seguridad alimentaria y la gestión de riesgos*, FAO, p.8, Feb. 2012.

³⁸ *From Words to Facts: Acting on Climate Change in Central America, Action and Financing, Now!*, Oxfam, p.3, Nov. 2014.

³⁹ *Central America - Drought in El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua*, ACAPS, p.5, Sep. 29, 2015.

⁴⁰ *Hurricane Michelle - Honduras / Nicaragua OCHA Situation Report No. 11*, UNOCHA, Nov. 19, 2001.

⁴¹ *Emergency Operation, Nicaragua 10700*, World Food Programme, p.1, http://one.wfp.org/operations/current_operations/project_docs/107000.pdf, (last visited Apr. 17, 2017); *Latin America and the Caribbean – Hurricane Season 2007, Fact Sheet #8*, USAID, p.1, Sept. 12, 2007.

⁴² *Costa Rica and Nicaragua: Tropical Storm Alma*, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, Jun. 5, 2009.

⁴³ *Final Report - Central America: Floods*, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, Oct. 29, 2009.

⁴⁴ *Nicaragua: Floods*, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, Nov. 11, 2009.

⁴⁵ *Nicaragua: Flash Appeal Revision*, UNOCHA, p.1, 2011.

⁴⁶ Nicaragua is divided administratively into 15 departments and two autonomous regions, which are sub-divided into 153 municipalities. See *Artículo 16 de Ley No. 503, Reforma a la Ley No. 59, Ley de División Política Administrativa*, Asamblea Nacional de la República de Nicaragua, Feb. 3, 2005.

⁴⁷ *Nicaragua: Flash Appeal Revision*, UNOCHA, p.1, 2011.

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homes were flooded; 1,235 were partially destroyed, and 335 were completely destroyed.⁴⁸ Damages and losses associated with Tropical Depression 12E totaled \$445 million, or 6.8% of gross domestic product in 2010.⁴⁹ In June and July of 2013, tropical storms and heavy seasonal rain resulted in 15 deaths, widespread flooding, and 12,000 people affected.⁵⁰

During 2014 and 2015, a series of storms producing heavy rain and flooding caused significant damage and loss of life in Nicaragua. In July 2014, heavy rains and flooding in the center and Caribbean regions of the country affected 1,015 people, caused the death of three others, and damaged or destroyed 205 homes.⁵¹ Prolonged rain and flooding in October 2014 impacted close to 65,000 people, causing 33 deaths, destroying 4,500 homes, and leaving 33,000 people homeless.⁵² Heavy rains and flooding also affected 1,075 people and damaged 215 homes in May 2015,⁵³ and caused even more damage in June, when rain and flooding impacted 11 of 17 departments, affecting over 35,000 people and causing six deaths.⁵⁴ At least 20 people were killed during the 2015 rainy season.⁵⁵

In 2016, heavy rains and wind once again caused damage and flooding in Nicaragua.⁵⁶ In July, more than 8,900 people were affected, 3,900 people were evacuated, and nearly 1,700 homes were flooded due to heavy rains and flooding.⁵⁷ In November 2016, Hurricane Otto—a category 2 storm—damaged 817 and destroyed 120 homes, and necessitated the evacuation of over 11,600 people.⁵⁸

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p.7.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ *Nicaragua: Floods – June 2013*, ReliefWeb, <http://reliefweb.int/disaster/fl-2013-000085-nic> (last visited Apr. 17, 2017).

⁵¹ *Tres muertos y 1,015 personas afectadas por fuertes lluvias en Nicaragua*, *El Nuevo Diario* (Nic.), Jul. 14, 2014.

⁵² *Afectados por las fuertes lluvias ascienden a 64,360*, *Redhum*, Nov. 11, 2014; *Global Emergency Overview – November 2014*, ACAPS, p.120, Nov. 11, 2014; *Nicaragua flooding leaves 24 dead*, *Agence France-Presse*, Oct. 19, 2014.

⁵³ *Más de mil afectados por lluvias*, *Nuevo Diario* (Nic.), May 1, 2015.

⁵⁴ *Heavy rains in Nicaragua leave six dead*, *Agence France-Presse*, Jun. 15, 2015.

⁵⁵ *Al menos 20 muertos por temporada de lluvias en Nicaragua*, *Government of Nicaragua*, Oct. 24, 2015.

⁵⁶ *Gobierno atiende a familias afectadas por fuertes vientos en Malpaisillo*, *Government of Nicaragua*, Apr. 27, 2016; *REDLAC Weekly Note on Emergencies Latin America & The Caribbean - Year 9 - Volume 451*, UNOCHA, May 10, 2016; *Monitoring Emergencies: Nicaragua - 06/01/2016: 509 people affected by rain*, Pan American Health Organization, Jun. 1, 2016; *Ríos crecidos y zonas incomunicadas por las lluvias*, *El Nuevo Diario* (Nica.), Jun. 6, 2016; *Monitoring Emergencies: Nicaragua - 07/12/2016: 1,781 families have been affected in 9 municipalities due to flooding - Update*, Pan American Health Organization, Jul. 12, 2016; *Monitoring Emergencies: Nicaragua - 12/13/2016: Strong rains affect the Southern Caribbean region*, Pan American Health Organization, Dec. 13, 2016; *Más de 900 familias afectadas por lluvias*, *Redhum*, Oct. 22, 2016.

⁵⁷ *Monitoring Emergencies: Nicaragua - 07/12/2016: 1,781 families have been affected in 9 municipalities due to flooding - Update; World events - ECHO Daily Map | 12/07/2016*, European Commission Humanitarian Aid Office, Jul. 12, 2016.

⁵⁸ *Humanitarian Bulletin - Latin America and the Caribbean*, UNOCHA, p.2, Nov-Dec. 2016; *Huracán Otto provoca daños en 817 viviendas*, *Redhum*, Nov. 29, 2016; *Rosario presenta informe sobre respuesta a familias afectadas por el huracán Otto*, *Redhum*, Nov. 28, 2016.

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Consecutive years of drought (from November 2013 to April 2016)⁵⁹ have negatively impacted agriculture, fishing, and hydroelectric energy production in Nicaragua.⁶⁰ Linked to the El Niño Southern Oscillation (ESNO),⁶¹ the drought has had the most significant impact in the country's "so-called 'dry corridor'—an arid region in the northeast and centre of Nicaragua encompassing 33 of the country's 153 municipalities, characterized by low rainfall and high poverty levels" with a population of over one million people.⁶²

In 2014, the impact of the drought extended beyond the country's Dry Corridor, as an estimated 112 of 156 municipalities in Nicaragua reported damages or losses to crops.⁶³ By November 2014, over 268,000 families in the Dry Corridor were affected by crop loss,⁶⁴ and the drought was affecting the food security of 100,000 people in the country.⁶⁵

By February 2015, the drought had contributed to the loss of 1 million bushels of rice and maize, and the death of 5,000 cattle.⁶⁶ Despite having the most abundant water sources in Central America, in the summer of 2015 Nicaragua was reportedly facing a nationwide water shortage due to the impact of the drought, a lack of investment in its water system, poor water management, soil erosion, deforestation, and climate change.⁶⁷ By November 2015, Nicaragua had lost between 50 and 75 percent of its production of basic grains in the Dry Corridor, while an estimated 23% of all cattle in the country were at risk of being impacted by the drought.⁶⁸

The impact of the multi-year drought continued to be felt in 2016. The Dry Corridor remained the most impacted area of Nicaragua; in March 2016, Inter Press Service cited a study indicating that the region had lost 100 percent of its harvests and 90 percent of its water sources due to the drought.⁶⁹ Declining food production "led to food insecurity and a decline in household incomes in the region's rural areas."⁷⁰ By June 2016, over 302,000 people were in need of food assistance in Nicaragua.⁷¹ While Nicaragua received more rainfall in 2016 in comparison to previous years, the increase was reportedly insufficient to support a full recovery of surface and subterranean

⁵⁹ *Situación "muy grave" con 40 pozos comunitarios secos en Occidente*, La Prensa (Nic.), Feb. 16, 2017.

⁶⁰ Rios, Julia, *In drought-hit central Nicaragua, water 'is like looking for gold'*, Agence France-Presse, Apr. 7, 2016; Silva, José Adán, *Cambio climático seca a Nicaragua*, Inter Press Service, Mar. 30, 2016.

⁶¹ The El Niño Southern Oscillation, more commonly known as El Niño, is a "weather cycle that periodically causes drought on the western Pacific seaboard and the centre of the country, in contrast with seasonal flooding in the north and the eastern Caribbean coast." See Silva, Jose Adan, *El Niño Triggers Drought, Food Crisis in Nicaragua*, Inter Press Service, Jul. 10, 2014.

⁶² Silva, Jose Adan, *Thirsty in Nicaragua, the Country Where 'Agua' Is Part of Its Name*, Inter Press Service, Jun. 4, 2015.

⁶³ *Global Emergency Overview – November 2014*, p.120.

⁶⁴ *From Words to Facts: Acting on Climate Change in Central America, Action and Financing, Now!*, p.6.

⁶⁵ *From Words to Facts: Acting on Climate Change in Central America, Action and Financing, Now!*, p.15.

⁶⁶ *Global Emergency Overview – March 2015*, ACAPS, p.112, Mar. 24, 2015.

⁶⁷ Silva, *Thirsty in Nicaragua*.

⁶⁸ *Latin America and the Caribbean - Weekly Note on Emergencies*, UNOCHA, p.2, Nov. 2, 2015.

⁶⁹ Silva, *Cambio climático seca a Nicaragua*.

⁷⁰ *IFAD to provide \$20.5 million to boost sustainable agriculture in Dry Corridor in Nicaragua*, International Fund for Agricultural Development, Nov. 29, 2016.

⁷¹ *WFP Nicaragua Country Brief - June 2016*, World Food Programme, Jun. 2016.

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water sources impacted by the drought.⁷² As a result, at the start of the dry season in February 2017, certain communities in the Dry Corridor were already feeling the impact of the scarcity of water.⁷³

Damages resulting from other natural disasters, such as volcanic and seismic activity, have also affected Nicaragua. In September 2012, the eruption of the San Cristobal volcano—one of the most active in the country—prompted the evacuation of hundreds of residents from surrounding areas.⁷⁴ Between early May and late July 2015, the Telica volcano erupted 426 times;⁷⁵ residents of neighboring communities—over 2,000 of whom were affected—reported respiratory problems due to the release of volcanic gas and ash, and expressed fears of larger eruptions.⁷⁶ Six of the country's 18 volcanoes were active in 2016, including the Momotombo volcano, which—after more than 110 years of inactivity—erupted more than 400 times from December 2015 to April 2016, and remained constantly active through November.⁷⁷

In June 2013, a 6.6 magnitude earthquake off the coast of Nicaragua triggered a tsunami warning and caused structural damage near its epicenter.⁷⁸ On April 10, 2014, a significant 6.2 magnitude earthquake, originating in Lake Managua, struck the country, followed by subsequent 6.2 and 6.7 magnitude earthquakes the next day; in total, there were over 535 seismic events in less than two weeks following the original earthquake on April 10.⁷⁹ The earthquakes affected 24,025 people and damaged 2,952 homes.⁸⁰ In response to a 7.4 magnitude earthquake in October 2014, 100,000 people were evacuated from coastal areas.⁸¹ A 6.1 magnitude earthquake in June 2016 caused landslides, power outages, and damaged over 3,000 homes.⁸²

Nicaragua has also been impacted by a regional coffee rust⁸³ epidemic, which has caused crop loss and declining coffee production throughout Central America in recent years.⁸⁴ By October

⁷² *Situación “muy grave” con 40 pozos comunitarios secos en Occidente.*

⁷³ *Corredor Seco otra vez afectado por sequía*, La Prensa (Nic.), Feb. 17, 2017.

⁷⁴ *Thousands evacuate as Nicaragua volcano spews ash*, ABC News, Sep. 8, 2012.

⁷⁵ *Ineter: el Volcán Concepción retoma sus explosiones*, La Jornada (Nic.), Jul. 28, 2015.

⁷⁶ *Más de 2 mil afectados por cenizas y gases del Telica*, El Nuevo Diario (Nic.), May 12, 2015.

⁷⁷ *En Nicaragua vulcanólogos estadounidenses para estudiar el Momotombo*, Government of Nicaragua, Apr. 10, 2016; *Ineter pronostica baja probabilidad de actividad sísmica relevante*, Government of Nicaragua, Mar. 2, 2016; *Nicaragua sin sustos volcánicos*, Government of Nicaragua, Mar. 7, 2016; *Monitoring Emergencies: Nicaragua-11/18/2016: Momotombo Volcano presents abundant gas emissions*, Pan American Health Organization, Nov. 18, 2016.

⁷⁸ *Sismos dejan personas lesionadas y daños leves en Nicaragua*, La Prensa (Pan.), Jun. 15, 2013.

⁷⁹ *Nicaragua, Terremoto. Reporte de Situación N° 7*, UNOCHA, p.1-3, Apr. 25, 2014.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p.1.

⁸¹ *Global Emergency Overview – November 2014*, p.120.

⁸² *REDLAC Weekly Note on Emergencies Latin America & The Caribbean - Year 9 - Volume 456*, UNOCHA, June 13, 2016.

⁸³ According to an academic study of the coffee rust crises in Colombia and Central America: “Coffee rust is caused by the fungus *Hemileia vastatrix*, an obligate parasite that affects the living leaves of the genus *Coffea*...The disease causes defoliation that, when acute, can lead to the death of branches and heavy crop losses.” See J. Avelino et. al., *The coffee rust crises in Colombia and Central America (2008–2013): impacts, plausible causes and proposed solutions*, Food Security, Vol. 7, Iss. 2, p.304, April 2015.

⁸⁴ Malkin, Elisabeth, *Coffee Crop Withers: Fungus Cripples Coffee Production Across Central America*, New York Times, May 5, 2014.

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2014, an estimated 655,000 people in Honduras, Nicaragua, and El Salvador were considered food insecure due to the coffee rust epidemic.⁸⁵ As of March 2016, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) reported that coffee production in Nicaragua continued to recover from the outbreak.⁸⁶

In recent years, Nicaragua has been impacted by various mosquito-borne diseases, including Zika, dengue fever, and chikungunya.⁸⁷ In August 2015, Nicaraguan authorities declared a “state of emergency and health alert for the increase of cases of chikungunya and dengue.”⁸⁸ In 2016, there were “88,320 probable dengue cases (incidence rate of 1,411 cases per 100,000 population), including 6,599 confirmed cases.”⁸⁹ Through the first half of 2016, Nicaragua reported 4,675 suspected and 682 confirmed case of chikungunya.⁹⁰ Since first being detected in the country in early 2016, there have been 2,055 confirmed cases of Zika in Nicaragua as of early January 2017.⁹¹

Violence and Conflict

Nicaragua lacks the high levels of crime and violence which are evident in El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala. In general, Nicaragua “has a relatively low crime rate, an absence of transnational gangs and a generally trusted police force that focuses on crime prevention.”⁹²

In 2016, Nicaragua’s homicide rate slightly declined to 7 murders per 100,000 inhabitants—its lowest rate in over 15 years, and slightly higher than the 2013 global average of 6.2 per 100,000.⁹³ According to InSight Crime, much of Nicaragua was “virtually violence-free” in 2016, as “65 percent of the country’s 153 municipalities registered either one or zero homicides” during the year.⁹⁴ Regions along Nicaragua’s Caribbean coast have higher homicide rates than the rest of the country due to the presence of organized crime and drug trafficking in these areas.⁹⁵

Since 2015, violence has increased along Nicaragua’s Caribbean coast due to conflict over land between indigenous communities and *mestizo* (Nicaraguans of mixed Spanish and Native

⁸⁵ *Global Emergency Overview – November 2014*, p.120.

⁸⁶ *El Niño: Overview of Impact, Projected Humanitarian Needs, and Responses*, UNOCHA, p.18, Mar. 9, 2016.

⁸⁷ *Latin America and the Caribbean: Weekly Note on Emergencies*, UNOCHA, Jul. 4, 2016.

⁸⁸ *Latin America and the Caribbean: Weekly Note on Emergencies*, UNOCHA, Aug. 17, 2015.

⁸⁹ *Zika - Epidemiological Report: Nicaragua*, Pan-American Health Organization, Feb. 27, 2017.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

⁹² Replogle, Jill, *Why Nicaraguan Kids Aren’t Fleeing To U.S.*, KPBS, Jul. 29, 2014.

⁹³ *Global Study on Homicide 2013*, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, p.13, March 2014; Gagne, David, *InSight Crime’s 2015 Latin America Homicide Round-up*, InSight Crime, Jan. 14, 2016; Gagne, David, *InSight Crime’s 2016 Homicide Round-up*, InSight Crime, Jan. 16, 2017.

⁹⁴ Gagne, *InSight Crime’s 2016 Homicide Round-up*.

⁹⁵ Lohmuller, Michael, *Is Nicaragua as Effective at Deterring Drug Trafficking as it Claims?*, InSight Crime, Apr. 3, 2014.

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American descent) settlers from other areas of the country.⁹⁶ Driven by cheap land, the promise of timber and gold, and drought in other parts of the country, thousands of non-indigenous Nicaraguans have moved into the ancestral lands of indigenous communities in recent years.⁹⁷ The influx of settlers has “unleashed a deadly conflict” over the territory of the indigenous Miskito people,⁹⁸ who argue that their land has been illegally sold or taken by settlers.⁹⁹ Murders, rapes, abductions, beatings, beheadings, the burning of villages, and forced displacement have all been reported.¹⁰⁰ Hundreds have reportedly been killed,¹⁰¹ and more than 3,000 Miskitos have reportedly been displaced¹⁰²—many of whom fled to informal refugee camps in Honduras “where they live without any official humanitarian aid.”¹⁰³ Both the Miskitos and the settlers feel that the Nicaraguan government “has abandoned them,”¹⁰⁴ allowing both the “the settling and the violence to continue unabated.”¹⁰⁵ In addition, both sides claim that there “has been no investigation into the crimes, and police often refuse to register their complaints.”¹⁰⁶

While the U.S. Department of State’s Bureau of Diplomatic Security has reported that Nicaragua has “low overall reported crime rates,” particularly in comparison to neighboring countries like Honduras, general crime is nevertheless “a persistent risk for residents and visitors alike.”¹⁰⁷ However, less than 5% of Nicaraguans view crime as the most pressing problem in the country.¹⁰⁸

Nicaragua has been generally free from the high levels of gang violence afflicting El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras.¹⁰⁹ While Nicaragua has a “significant presence of local gangs,” there are relatively few members of Barrio 18 and Mara Salvatrucha in the country in comparison to El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala.¹¹⁰ Gangs in Nicaragua are comparatively smaller and more localized, and “there’s virtually no extortion in Nicaragua from criminal gangs of the kind

⁹⁶ *Deadly Nicaragua Land Conflict Displaces Hundreds*, Associated Press, Sep. 30, 2015; Carrere, Michelle, *Nicaragua’s hidden war*, IRIN, Oct. 4, 2016; Robles, Frances, *Nicaragua Dispute Over Indigenous Land Erupts in Wave of Killings*, New York Times, Oct. 16, 2016; Galanova, Mira, *Lush heartlands of Nicaragua’s Miskito people spark deadly land disputes*, The Guardian, Mar. 1, 2017.

⁹⁷ *Deadly Nicaragua Land Conflict Displaces Hundreds*; Carrere; Robles; Galanova.

⁹⁸ Carrere.

⁹⁹ Robles; Carrere.

¹⁰⁰ *Deadly Nicaragua Land Conflict Displaces Hundreds*; Carrere; Robles; Galanova.

¹⁰¹ Robles.

¹⁰² Carrere.

¹⁰³ Galanova.

¹⁰⁴ Carrere.

¹⁰⁵ Robles.

¹⁰⁶ Galanova.

¹⁰⁷ *Nicaragua 2014 Crime and Safety Report*, Bureau of Diplomatic Security, U.S. Department of State, May 12, 2014. See also *Nicaragua 2015 Crime and Safety Report*, Bureau of Diplomatic Security, U.S. Department of State, June 12, 2015; *Nicaragua 2016 Crime & Safety Report*, Bureau of Diplomatic Security, U.S. Department of State, April 15, 2016.

¹⁰⁸ Gagne, David, *Why Is Nicaragua 7 Times Less Violent Than Honduras?*, InSight Crime, Aug. 29, 2016.

¹⁰⁹ *Freedom in the World 2016 - Nicaragua*, Freedom House, Jun. 26, 2016.

¹¹⁰ Ribando Seelke, Clare, *Gangs in Central America*, Congressional Research Service, p.3-4, Aug. 29, 2016.

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rampant in the Central American nations to the north.”¹¹¹ Community policing and other government efforts have been effective in limiting the impact and growth of local gangs.¹¹²

Violent drug trafficking organizations—pervasive in a country like Honduras—are “largely absent” in Nicaragua.¹¹³ Nevertheless, Nicaragua remains an important transit route for drug trafficking, particularly the North and South Caribbean Autonomous Regions, which have higher crime and unemployment rates than the country at large.¹¹⁴

Police in Nicaragua focus on community policing and work with neighborhood watch groups, citizens, and community organizations to prevent crime and violence and help at-risk youth.¹¹⁵ Security forces are generally less corrupt than their counterparts in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras.¹¹⁶ The police even have a positive image amongst the population, with a 79% approval rate.¹¹⁷ In addition, the national police director has consistently ranked as the most popular public figure in the country, with an approval rating of 80% in a 2014 poll.¹¹⁸

Nevertheless, the U.S. Department of State has cited reports that “police frequently abused suspects during arrest, used excessive force, and engaged in degrading treatment.”¹¹⁹ Police presence is extremely limited outside of major urban areas, particularly in regions along the Caribbean coast.¹²⁰ Police also lack the necessary resources to effectively respond to crimes in progress.¹²¹

The U.S. Department of State reported that, according to Nicaraguan non-governmental organizations, violence against women remained high in 2016.¹²² Casa Alianza, an organization working with street children and sex workers, has reported that one in three women in Nicaragua have suffered physical abuse.¹²³ Per Amnesty International, “rape and sexual abuse are widespread in Nicaragua, and the majority of victims are young.”¹²⁴ Underreporting and the failure to enforce existing laws against rape have contributed to widespread impunity for this crime.¹²⁵

¹¹¹ Replogle; Wilkinson, Tracy, *Few Nicaraguans among Central America's exodus to U.S.*, Los Angeles Times, Aug. 30, 2014; Johnson, Tim, *Nicaraguans, safe at home, feel little reason to flee to U.S.*, McClatchy, Aug. 18, 2014.

¹¹² Replogle.

¹¹³ Gagne, *Why Is Nicaragua 7 Times Less Violent Than Honduras?*

¹¹⁴ *2016 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report (INCSR) - Nicaragua*, U.S. Department of State, Mar. 2016.

¹¹⁵ Replogle.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Replogle; Gagne, *Why Is Nicaragua 7 Times Less Violent Than Honduras?*.

¹¹⁸ Replogle.

¹¹⁹ *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2016: Nicaragua*, U.S. Department of State, Mar. 2016.

¹²⁰ *Nicaragua 2016 Crime & Safety Report*.

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2016: Nicaragua*.

¹²³ Klibanoff, Eleanor, *Nicaragua: These Women Had Dreams*, The Pulitzer Center, Aug. 16, 2013.

¹²⁴ *Listen to their Voice and Act: Stop the Rape and Sexual Abuse of Girls in Nicaragua*, Amnesty International, Nov. 25, 2010.

¹²⁵ *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2016: Nicaragua*.

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Summary

Hurricane Mitch devastated Nicaragua in 1998, causing over a billion dollars in damages to the country's infrastructure, economic activities, and people. While the international community responded to the disaster with an unprecedented amount of aid, and reconstruction projects have been completed, Nicaragua remains vulnerable to recurrent natural disasters and environmental concerns—many of which have occurred in recent years; these include hurricanes and tropical storms, floods and seasonal rains, volcanic and seismic activity, drought, mosquito-borne illnesses, coffee rust, and other extreme weather events. These and other environmental issues continue to pose challenges for Nicaragua as it seeks to promote economic development for its citizens and minimize the humanitarian impact of natural disasters like Hurricane Mitch. While Nicaragua has lower homicide and crime rates, a general lack of transnational gangs, and less corrupt security forces than its northern neighbors, it is nevertheless facing various security challenges, including armed conflict over land and high rates of violence against women.

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TPS Addendum – Updates
Last Updated: October 19, 2017

According to the World Bank, Nicaragua “has stood out for maintaining growth levels above the average for Latin America and the Caribbean” in recent years.¹²⁶ Although poverty declined from 2009 to 2014, it nevertheless “remains high,” and Nicaragua is “still one of Latin America’s least developed countries, where access to basic services is a daily challenge.”¹²⁷ In August 2017, the Nicaraguan government reported that 96% of the population was employed, and 42.6% of the population was underemployed as of the first quarter of 2017.¹²⁸ A Nicaraguan news outlet claimed that these statistics could not be verified because the Nicaraguan government had not published the underlying quarterly data on unemployment since the end of 2012.¹²⁹

The U.S. Department of State does not currently have an active travel alert or travel warning for Nicaragua.¹³⁰ In a 2017 report, the World Economic Forum ranked Nicaragua 92nd out of 136 countries in its travel and tourism competitiveness index, including 65th in regards to safety and security.¹³¹ In 2015, Nicaragua ranked 92nd out of 141 countries in the overall rankings.¹³²

(1) Any updates on crime/violence in 2017 for each of the three countries. Also, in particular, the El Salvador report gives statistics for January-April of 2017, noting the number of homicides was half what it was for the same period the year prior. Would be helpful to know whether that reduction has held;

According to Salvadoran government authorities, from January 1 to August 31, 2017, there were 2,434 murders in El Salvador—a 36.5% reduction from the same period in 2016, when 3,836 people were killed.¹³³ During the first three months of the year, there was an average of 9 homicides per day.¹³⁴ Between January 1 and August 20, there was an average of 10.05

¹²⁶ Nicaragua Overview, The World Bank, Oct. 10, 2017, <http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/nicaragua/overview> (last visited Oct. 19, 2017).

¹²⁷ Nicaragua Overview, The World Bank, Oct. 10, 2017, <http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/nicaragua/overview> (last visited Oct. 19, 2017).

¹²⁸ Alvarez Hidalgo, Wendy, Crecimiento económico mella poco en el subempleo, La Prensa (Ni.), Aug. 8, 2017.

¹²⁹ Alvarez Hidalgo, Wendy, Crecimiento económico mella poco en el subempleo, La Prensa (Ni.), Aug. 8, 2017.

¹³⁰ Safety & Security Messages, U.S. Embassy in Nicaragua, <https://ni.usembassy.gov/u-s-citizen-services/security-and-travel-information/> (last visited Oct. 19, 2017).

¹³¹ The Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Report 2017, World Economic Forum, 2017.

¹³² The Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Report 2017, World Economic Forum, 2017.

¹³³ Morales, Napoleón, Ramírez Landaverde: “Al mes de agosto los homicidios se han reducido en un 36.5%”, Diario la Pagina (El Sal.), Sep. 2, 2017.

¹³⁴ Morales, Napoleón, 10.05 salvadoreños mueren a diario en El Salvador, Diario la Pagina (El Sal.), Aug. 21, 2017.

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homicides per day.¹³⁵ In June 2017, InSight Crime reported that, despite a declining homicide rate, “gangs in El Salvador continue to wield significant control in many areas of the country, despite a heavy-handed, years-long campaign aimed at wiping out these criminal groups.”¹³⁶ In addition, El Salvador has also “repeatedly suffered from short spikes in homicides linked to temporary escalations in gang-related violence.”¹³⁷

In Honduras, from January 1 to August 23, 2017, there were a reported 2,548 murders—a 24% reduction from the same time period in 2016, when 3,356 people were killed.¹³⁸ In May 2017, the Thomson Reuters Foundation reported that, “With one of the world’s highest murder rates, Honduras is struggling to contain drug-fueled gang violence and organized crime.”¹³⁹ In September 2017, Nicaragua’s police chief reported that the country’s homicide rate from August 2016 to July 2017 was 6 homicides per 100,000 people—the lowest rate in the last 16 years.¹⁴⁰

(2) Any updates on the drought conditions for the three countries;

In July 2017, the World Food Programme (WFP) reported the following on food security in Central America:

Four years of consecutive drought (2014-2017) in parts of Central America (the zone known as Dry Corridor) have negatively affected food production and income opportunities for vulnerable people, with increased food insecurity among subsistence farmers, day labourers and their families.

The cumulative effect has reduced productive assets, disrupted livelihoods and caused irregular emigration to the USA, as the preliminary results of a recent WFP study reveals. Over the past four years, households in the Dry Corridor have had to increasingly rely on negative consumption and livelihood coping strategies with increasing levels of emergency coping strategies...

In Honduras, the cumulative effects of four years of drought have significantly undermined the food security of the most vulnerable subsistence farmers and agricultural laborers in the dry corridor... On 19 June 2017, the Government of Honduras declared state of emergency, up to 31 December 2017, to the national

¹³⁵ Morales, Napoleón, 10.05 salvadoreños mueren a diario en El Salvador, Diario la Pagina (El Sal.), Aug. 21, 2017.

¹³⁶ Goi, Leonardo, Barrio 18 Extortion Scheme Casts Doubt on El Salvador Govt Security Narrative, InSight Crime, Jun. 19, 2017.

¹³⁷ Clavel, Tristan, Spike in Attacks on Security Force Families as El Salvador Violence Declines, InSight Crime, Jun. 13, 2017.

¹³⁸ Honduras: Van 808 homicidios menos que 2016, La Prensa (Hon.), Aug. 26, 2017.

¹³⁹ Moloney, Anastasia, Hundreds flee gang warfare in Honduras' murder city, Thomson Reuters Foundation, May 15, 2017.

¹⁴⁰ La tasa de homicidios en Nicaragua baja de 8 a 6 por cada 100.000 habitantes, Agencia EFE, Sep. 12, 2017.

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agricultural productive sector and has identified 77 municipalities in urgent need for assistance.¹⁴¹

An August 2017 study conducted by a group of international organizations “found a correlation between prolonged droughts in El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras – exacerbated by El Niño phenomenon from 2014 to 2016 – and the increase in irregular migration from these countries to the United States.”¹⁴² The aforementioned study focused on El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras, particularly the parts of these countries located in the Dry Corridor.¹⁴³

In an August 2017 report on El Salvador, Honduras, and Nicaragua, the Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET) reported that:

Despite below average accumulated rainfall in parts of southern Honduras and El Salvador, and northeastern Nicaragua during the *Primera* [April-September]¹⁴⁴ growing season, the consistent distribution and lack of an extended period of drought has allowed normal development of basic grain crops in almost all of the region, including for small farmers in areas of the dry corridor affected by low production during various years.¹⁴⁵

(3) Updates on the coffee rust epidemic. We noted “continues to recover” language, which seems to imply it’s concluded or is concluding or improving, at least?

In an August 2017 report on El Salvador, Honduras, and Nicaragua, the Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET) reported that:

The prevalence of coffee rust is at its lowest point since the rust outbreak in 2012. However, the production and generation of employment in El Salvador and Nicaragua has not fully recovered, due to the impact of the rust during several years and the low prices of coffee during the same period, limiting the incentives for investment in the sector. In addition, there exists the risk of an increase in the prevalence of rust during the remainder of the year, due to favorable climatic conditions for this pest.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴¹ World Food Programme Food Security Update Central America—July 2017, The World Food Programme, Jul. 2017.

¹⁴² Emigration and food insecurity in Central American 'dry corridor' focus of new UN-backed study, UN News Centre, Aug. 23, 2017.

¹⁴³ Food Security and Emigration: Why people flee and the impact on family members left behind in El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras, International Organization for Migration, International Fund for Agricultural Development, Inter-American Development Bank, Organization of American States, World Food Programme, p.5, Aug. 2017.

¹⁴⁴ Central America and Caribbean Price Bulletin, Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET), p.1, Aug. 2017.

¹⁴⁵ El Salvador, Honduras y Nicaragua: Actualización de monitoreo remoto, Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET), p.1, Aug. 2017.

¹⁴⁶ El Salvador, Honduras y Nicaragua: Actualización de monitoreo remoto, Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET), p.1, Aug. 2017.

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(4) Any updates on the mosquito-borne disease outbreak?

In late August 2017, Salvadoran government officials reported that there had been a “noticeable” decrease in the number of cases of dengue, chikungunya and Zika in 2017.¹⁴⁷ As of early September 2017, there had been a 96% reduction in suspected cases of Zika (from 7,370 through early September 2016 to 335 during the same time period in 2017); a 92% reduction in suspected cases of chikungunya (from 5,745 to 437); and a 60% reduction in suspected cases of dengue (from 7,177 to 2,902).¹⁴⁸

Honduras witnessed a decline in the number of cases of Zika, chikungunya, and dengue through late June 2017 compared to the same period of time in 2016.¹⁴⁹ During this time period, Zika cases were down 97% (from 25,401 to 280), chikungunya cases declined 96% (from 12,053 to 249), and cases of dengue declined 81% (from 15,259 to 2,894).¹⁵⁰

The Pan American Health Organization/World Health Organization reported in late June 2017 that “During 2017, transmission of Zika continues in Nicaragua with less intensity compared to the large outbreak reported in 2016.”¹⁵¹ Through mid-May 2017, there were 389 suspected cases and 5 confirmed cases of Zika, compared to 546 suspected and 192 confirmed cases during the same period in 2016.¹⁵² In addition, by mid-May 2017, there were 22,963 suspected and 1,047 confirmed cases of dengue—“a 14% increase in suspected cases and a 52% decrease in confirmed cases compared to the same period in 2016.”¹⁵³ Finally, through mid-May 2017, there had been a total of 337 suspected and 8 confirmed cases of chikungunya, compared to 5,437 suspected and 403 confirmed cases during the same period the previous year.¹⁵⁴

(5) Finally, could we get some basic economic data/trends for the three countries? There is always interest in that from higher levels, we’ve found.

¹⁴⁷ Reportan un descenso de casos de dengue, zika y chikungunya, La Prensa Gráfica (El Sal.), Aug. 23, 2017.

¹⁴⁸ Boletín Epidemiológico Semana 36 | (del 03 al 09 de Septiembre de 2017), Ministerio de Salud (El Sal.), Sep. 15, 2017.

¹⁴⁹ Disminuyen los casos de zika, dengue y chikungunya, Secretaria de Salud (Hon.), Jul. 7, 2017.

¹⁵⁰ Disminuyen los casos de zika, dengue y chikungunya, Secretaria de Salud (Hon.), Jul. 7, 2017.

¹⁵¹ Zika - Epidemiological Report Nicaragua, Pan American Health Organization / World Health Organization, p.1, Jun. 2017.

¹⁵² Zika - Epidemiological Report Nicaragua, Pan American Health Organization / World Health Organization, p.1-2, Jun. 2017.

¹⁵³ Zika - Epidemiological Report Nicaragua, Pan American Health Organization / World Health Organization, p.2, Jun. 2017.

¹⁵⁴ Zika - Epidemiological Report Nicaragua, Pan American Health Organization / World Health Organization, p.2, Jun. 2017.

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GDP growth (annual %)¹⁵⁵

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
El Salvador	1.9	1.8	1.4	2.3	2.4
Honduras	4.1	2.8	3.1	3.6	3.6
Nicaragua	6.5	4.9	4.8	4.9	4.7

Select Economic Indicators

	El Salvador	Honduras	Nicaragua
GDP Per Capita (current US\$) (2016) ¹⁵⁶	\$4,224	\$2,361	\$2,151
Poverty headcount ratio at national poverty lines (% of population) (2014) ¹⁵⁷	31.8%	62.8%	29.6%
Unemployment, total (% of total labor force) (modeled ILO estimate) (2016) ¹⁵⁸	6.3%	6.3%	5.9%
Personal remittances, received (% of GDP) (2016) ¹⁵⁹	17.1%	17.9%	9.6%

¹⁵⁵ GDP growth (annual %), World Development Indicators, The World Bank, 2017, <http://databank.worldbank.org/data/reports.aspx?source=2&series=NY.GDP.PCAP.CD&country=NIC,SLV,HND#> (last visited Sep. 19, 2017).

¹⁵⁶ GDP Per Capita (current US\$), World Development Indicators, The World Bank, <http://databank.worldbank.org/data/reports.aspx?source=2&series=NY.GDP.PCAP.CD&country=NIC,SLV,HND#> (last visited Sep. 19, 2017).

¹⁵⁷ Poverty headcount ratio at national poverty lines (% of population), World Development Indicators, The World Bank, 2017, <http://databank.worldbank.org/data/reports.aspx?source=2&series=SI.POV.NAHC&country=HND,SLV,NIC> (last visited Sep. 19, 2017).

¹⁵⁸ Unemployment, total (% of total labor force) (modeled ILO estimate), World Development Indicators, The World Bank, 2017, <http://databank.worldbank.org/data/reports.aspx?source=2&series=NY.GDP.PCAP.CD&country=NIC,SLV,HND#> (last visited Sep. 19, 2017).

¹⁵⁹ Personal remittances, received (% of GDP), World Development Indicators, The World Bank, 2017, <http://databank.worldbank.org/data/reports.aspx?source=2&series=BX.TRF.PWKR.DT.GD.ZS&country=NIC,SLV,HND#> (last visited Sep. 19, 2017).



U.S. Department of Homeland Security
U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services
Office of the Director (MS 2000)
Washington, DC 20529-2000
**U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
Services**

DECISION MEMORANDUM FOR THE ACTING SECRETARY

FROM: L. Francis Cissna
Director

SUBJECT: **Nicaragua's Designation for Temporary Protected Status**

Purpose: Nicaragua's existing designation for Temporary Protected Status (TPS) will expire on January 5, 2018. At least 60 days before the expiration of a TPS designation, the Secretary, after consultation with appropriate U.S. Government agencies, must review the conditions in a country designated for TPS to determine whether the conditions supporting the designation continue to be met. If the Secretary determines that the country no longer meets the statutory conditions for designation, she shall terminate the designation. If the Secretary does not determine, however, that the conditions for designation are no longer met, the TPS designation will be extended for 6 months, or in the Secretary's discretion, 12, or 18 months.¹

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) has completed a review of the conditions in Nicaragua and is presenting options and a recommendation for your consideration. In summary, USCIS assesses that, although Nicaragua continues to face development challenges, the country suffers few remaining residual effects of Hurricane Mitch, which formed the basis of Nicaragua's designation for TPS in 1999. Accordingly, USCIS recommends that you terminate Nicaragua's TPS designation.

As part of the review process, USCIS staff has consulted with the Department of State (DOS). However, to date, Secretary Tillerson has not weighed in and DOS has not provided any recommendation.

Nicaragua's TPS Designation: On January 5, 1999, then Attorney General Reno designated Nicaragua for TPS on environmental disaster grounds, specifically, because of the devastation caused by Hurricane Mitch in October of 1998.²

The reason for Nicaragua's designation for TPS stated in the Federal Register at the time of the initial designation was that "*Hurricane Mitch swept through Central America causing severe*

¹ See Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) § 244(b)(3)(A-C), 8 U.S.C. § 1254a(b)(3)(A-C); see also Attachment A: Temporary Protected Status Legal Authority.

² See Designation of Nicaragua Under Temporary Protected Status, 64 FR 529 (Jan. 5, 1999).

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flooding and associated damage in Nicaragua. ... [D]ue to the environmental disaster and substantial disruption of living conditions caused by Hurricane Mitch, Nicaragua is unable, temporarily, to handle adequately the return of Nicaraguan nationals. ”

At the time, the Attorney General estimated that there would be no more than 45,000 to 70,000 nationals of Nicaragua in the United States who would be eligible for TPS.

Nicaragua's designation has been continuously extended since the 1999 designation, with the most recent extension announced on May 16, 2016.³

To be eligible for TPS under Nicaragua's designation, along with meeting the other eligibility requirements, individuals must have continuously resided in the United States since December 30, 1998, and have been continuously physically present in the United States since January 5, 1999. There are approximately 5,300 Nicaraguan TPS beneficiaries. Approximately 2,300 individuals re-registered for TPS under Nicaragua's last extension.⁴

Current Country Conditions

USCIS has conducted an in-depth review of conditions in Nicaragua. The country condition report, upon which USCIS' assessment and recommendation are based, can be found in Attachment B.

Hurricane Mitch killed over 3,000, and affected nearly 868,000 Nicaraguans. Landslides and floods destroyed villages and caused extensive damage to the country's infrastructure and agricultural sector.

Nicaragua received a significant amount of international aid to assist in its Hurricane Mitch-related recovery efforts, and many reconstruction projects have now been completed. Although Nicaragua reportedly continues to have one of the highest housing deficits in Central America, hundreds of homes destroyed by the storm have been rebuilt. The Second Land Administration Project covers 6 of the 15 Departments in the country and has helped over 430,000 people benefit from better property rights regulations. More than 67,000 families have received legal documents for their properties, of which more than 43,000 are new land titles.⁵ Significant aid was dedicated to repairing roads, and access to drinking water and sanitation has improved. Over 200 kilometers of roads have been constructed, benefitting around 460,000 people. More than 168,000 people have benefitted from access to reliable water supplies and sanitation services as a result of international aid-based projects.

³ See Extension of the Designation of Nicaragua for Temporary Protected Status, 81 FR 30325 (May 16, 2016).

⁴ The total number of beneficiaries represents all individuals who have been granted TPS since Nicaragua's designation in 1999 and who have not had their TPS withdrawn. Not all of these individuals continue to re-register because they have adjusted to another valid immigration status (e.g., over 1,600 have become lawful permanent residents or U.S. citizens), have left the United States, are no longer eligible for TPS, or have failed to re-register for other reasons. As a result, the number of beneficiaries that re-register for TPS under extensions is lower than the total number of beneficiaries.

⁵ World Bank, "World Bank in Nicaragua", available at: <http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/nicaragua/overview>

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The Second Educational Sector Support Project—an International Development Assistance (IDA) project—provided 1.4 million textbooks to 225,000 primary students of the poorest regions of the country, which represent 25% of the national enrollment in primary education.⁶ All 'afro-descendant and indigenous primary students in the Caribbean Coast received textbooks in their native languages for the first time ever.

The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in Nicaragua reached an all-time high of \$13.23 billion (USD) in 2016 and is expected to reach \$13.48 billion by the end of this quarter. Within a long-term context, the GDP in Nicaragua is projected to increase to about \$15.67 in 2020.⁷ Additionally, the World Bank reported that, despite global economic turbulence, Nicaragua has stood out for maintaining growth levels above the average for Latin America and the Caribbean as a result of disciplined macroeconomic policies, combined with a steady expansion of exports and foreign direct investment. Nicaragua ranks second among countries in Central America with favorable prospects for foreign direct investment and trade.⁸ In August 2017, the Nicaraguan government reported that 96% of the population was employed.⁹

Recovery from Hurricane Mitch has, however, been slow and encumbered by subsequent environmental challenges. A regional drought has recently impacted Nicaragua, causing crop losses, food insecurity, water shortages, and income loss in affected areas. By June of 2016, over 300,000 people were in need of food assistance. The 2017 growing season has demonstrated slightly improved conditions, allowing normal development of basic grain crops. Nicaragua has also been affected recently by a regional coffee rust epidemic, which has caused crop loss and declining coffee production throughout Central America since 2012, leading to job loss and food insecurity. Additionally, in recent years, Nicaragua has experienced an outbreak of thousands of cases of mosquito-borne illnesses, including chikungunya, dengue, and Zika.

In addition, in stark contrast to its neighbors to the north, Nicaragua also lacks high levels of crime and violence. Nicaragua's homicide rate declined to 7 homicides per 100,000 inhabitants in 2016, slightly higher than the worldwide average of 5.3 homicides per 100,000 inhabitants in 2015 (the most recent year available), and significantly lower than El Salvador's rate of 81.2 per 100,000 in 2016 and Honduras' rate of 59 per 100,000. There has been some significant, but isolated, violence along Nicaragua's Caribbean coast since 2015 relating to conflict over land between indigenous communities and settlers, and violence against women remains widespread. However, on the whole, crime rates are low, police are viewed positively and focus on preventing crime and violence, and transnational gangs and drug trafficking are largely absent from the country.

The U.S. Department of State does not have a current travel warning for Nicaragua, and the United Kingdom states that "most visits to Nicaragua are trouble free."

Finally, the U.S. Government works to repatriate individuals back to Nicaragua. During the Obama administration's second term alone, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE)

⁶ World Bank, "World Bank in Nicaragua", available at: <http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/nicaragua/overview>

⁷ Trading Economics, "Nicaragua GDP", available at: <https://tradingeconomics.com/nicaragua/gdp>

⁸ World Bank, "World Bank in Nicaragua", available at: <http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/nicaragua/overview>

⁹ Alvarez Hidalgo, Wendy, *Crecimiento económico mella poco en el subempleo*, La Prensa (Ni.), Aug. 8, 2017.

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removed over 4,300 individuals to Nicaragua.¹⁰ The U.S. removed, on average, over 2,300 individuals to Nicaragua each year in FY2010-2012.

Options1) *Extend Nicaragua's Designation for TPS*

Under the TPS statute, if you determine that the statutory conditions for TPS designation are met, then TPS designation will be extended for an additional period of 6 months, or in your discretion 12, or 18 months. Nicaragua was initially designated for TPS in 1999 as a result of the damage caused by Hurricane Mitch. The review of conditions in Nicaragua indicates that reconstruction and recovery efforts relating to the storm have largely been completed. Although subsequent environmental challenges hampered Nicaragua's recovery and development, Nicaragua's current challenges cannot be directly tied to destruction stemming from Hurricane Mitch. Therefore, USCIS assesses that, on balance, conditions in Nicaragua no longer support its TPS designation on the basis of Hurricane Mitch.

Although USCIS assesses otherwise, an argument could be made that the subsequent and, in some cases, ongoing environmental challenges – in particular, the prolonged, severe drought, coffee rust epidemic, and mosquito-borne disease outbreak – have sufficiently hindered recovery that a substantial disruption in living conditions endures. Under this assessment, Nicaragua continues to be unable to handle the return of its nationals, and extension is justified. USCIS is not aware of a request for extension of Nicaragua's TPS designation from the Government of Nicaragua.

From an operational perspective, extension periods of less than 18 months are challenging given the significant workload and timeframes involved in receiving and adjudicating re-registration applications and issuing new employment authorization documents. Additionally, the deliberative review process to support TPS decision making, including consultation with DOS, typically begins 10 months before the expiration date of a country's current designation. A 12- or 18-month extension of Nicaragua's designation for TPS would permit Nicaraguan TPS beneficiaries to re-register for TPS and remain in the United States with work authorization through January or July 5, 2019, respectively.

2) *Terminate Nicaragua's Designation for TPS*

If you determine that Nicaragua no longer continues to meet the statutory requirements for its TPS designation, you must terminate TPS for Nicaragua. Termination would end TPS benefits for existing Nicaraguan TPS beneficiaries. Upon the termination of TPS benefits, former beneficiaries without another immigration status or authorization to remain would no longer have permission to work and remain in the United States. As explained above, USCIS assesses that

¹⁰ From 2013-2016, 4,311 individuals were removed to Nicaragua. This total is the cumulative number of removals found in the following reports: <https://www.ice.gov/sites/default/files/documents/Report/2016/removal-stats-2016.pdf>; <https://www.ice.gov/sites/default/files/documents/Report/2016/fy2015removalStats.pdf>; <https://www.ice.gov/doclib/about/offices/ero/pdf/2014-ice-immigration-removals.pdf>; <https://www.ice.gov/doclib/about/offices/ero/pdf/2013-ice-immigration-removals.pdf>.

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termination is warranted because recovery and reconstruction efforts relating to Hurricane Mitch have largely been completed and current challenges cannot be directly tied to damage from the storm.

If you decide to terminate Nicaragua's designation, you may determine the appropriate effective date of the termination. In doing so, you have the option to provide for an orderly transition period (e.g., 6, 12, or 18 months) after which TPS documentation will end. Delaying the effective date would provide those beneficiaries without any other immigration status a reasonable amount of time following the announcement of termination of the designation to plan and prepare for their departure from the United States, of particular importance for this population given the extended length of time Nicaraguan TPS beneficiaries have been living in the United States. Delaying the effective date would also allow Nicaragua time to prepare for and absorb its nationals in a more orderly fashion. Note: the effective date of termination may not be earlier than 60 days after the date the *Federal Register* notice announcing the termination is published or, if later, the expiration of the most recent previous extension.

3) *Redesignate Nicaragua for TPS*

In addition to making a decision to terminate or extend Nicaragua's TPS designation, you could also consider redesignating the country for TPS. A decision to redesignate a country for TPS, unlike termination or extension, is entirely at your discretion; if the statutory conditions are met, you may, but do not have to, redesignate a country for TPS. Nicaragua has experienced numerous environmental challenges in recent years, including hurricanes, tropical storms, floods, volcanic and seismic activity, drought, mosquito-borne illnesses, and a coffee rust epidemic that continue to pose challenges for Nicaragua. However, the scale and effects of these events do not appear to be on par with those that would typically support a country's designation for TPS. Additionally, Nicaragua is not experiencing the same high levels of violence and citizen insecurity as its northern neighbors. In light of these considerations, USCIS does not assess there to be a strong basis for redesignating Nicaragua for TPS.

4) *No Decision/Automatic Extension*

If you do not make a determination about whether Nicaragua's TPS designation should be extended or terminated at least 60 days prior to its expiration date, by statute, its period of designation will be automatically extended for 6 additional months (or, in your discretion, a period of 12 or 18 months). You could affirmatively choose not to make a decision about whether the conditions supporting Nicaragua's designation continue to be met and announce the automatic extension of 6 (or 12 or 18) months, noting that you or your successor will then review conditions prior to the expiration of that extension.

Timeliness: You are required to provide timely notice of whether existing TPS designations will be extended or terminated through publication in the *Federal Register*.¹¹ Your earliest decision will facilitate publication of notice in the *Federal Register* sufficiently in advance of the January 5, 2018 expiration of Nicaragua's designation, providing predictability and clarity to beneficiaries

¹¹ See INA § 244(b)(3)(A).

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and their employers. By statute, if you do not make a decision at least 60 days before the expiration of the current designation (i.e., by November 6, 2017), then Nicaragua's designation will automatically be extended for a minimum of 6 months.¹²

Recommendation: USCIS recommends that you terminate Nicaragua's designation for TPS with an effective date delayed by 6, 12, or 18 months to permit an orderly transition. This would permit current Nicaraguan TPS beneficiaries to continue to remain and work in the United States through July 5, 2018; January 5, 2019; or July 5, 2019, respectively.

Decision:

1. Extend: *Extend Nicaragua's existing designation for (circle one):*

6 months

12 months

18 months

Approve/date _____

2. Terminate: *Terminate Nicaragua's designation with an orderly transition period of (circle one or specify period):*

6 months

12 months

18 months

Other _____

Approve/date _____

3. Terminate and Redesignate: *Terminate Nicaragua's existing designation and simultaneously redesignate Nicaragua:*

Specify duration of redesignation (6-18 months): _____

Specify continuous residence date for eligibility under redesignation (currently December 30, 1998): _____

Approve/date _____

4. No Decision/Automatic Extension: *Delay a decision on Nicaragua's designation, resulting in an extension of (circle one):*

6 months

12 months

18 months

Approve/date _____

¹² See INA § 244(b)(3)(A), (C).

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Attachments:

Attachment A: Temporary Protected Status Legal Authority

Attachment B: April 2017 USCIS RAIO Research Unit Report on Conditions in Nicaragua

INTERNAL PRE-DECISIONAL RECOMMENDATION

U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
Services

TEMPORARY PROTECTED STATUS CONSIDERATIONS: NICARAGUA APRIL 2017

Hurricane Mitch: Damages and Recovery

Hurricane Mitch made landfall in Nicaragua in October 1998. The storm killed 3,045 people, and 885 were reported missing.¹ The devastation caused by Hurricane Mitch affected nearly 868,000 people.² Landslides and floods destroyed entire villages and caused extensive damage to the transportation network, housing, medical and educational facilities, water supply and sanitation facilities, and the agricultural sector.³ Overall damage estimates ranged between \$1.3 to \$1.5 billion.⁴

As of May 1999, the Government of Nicaragua estimated that Hurricane Mitch destroyed 23,854 homes and damaged an additional 17,566.⁵ Housing reconstruction costs were estimated at \$143.7 million.⁶ Damages to roads and bridges accounted for approximately 60% of Hurricane Mitch-related reconstruction costs.⁷ Approximately 1,500 kilometers of paved and 6,500 kilometers of unpaved roads were damaged, while 3,800 meters of bridges were damaged or

¹ *Nicaragua: Huracán Mitch Daños, Costos, Acciones de Rehabilitación del Gobierno y la Cooperación Internacional*, Reunión del Grupo Consultivo, May 25-28, 1999.

² *Ibid.* (Past Refugee, Asylum and International Operations (RAIO) reports stated that two million people were affected by Hurricane Mitch, citing to a URL hosted by the National Climactic Data Center. This report, however, cites to a figure produced by the Government of Nicaragua at the Consultative Group Meeting for the Reconstruction and Transformation of Central America held in Stockholm, Sweden in May 1999. The purpose of the Consultative Group Meeting was to raise aid for countries devastated by Hurricane Mitch. In its efforts to obtain aid, the Government of Nicaragua produced a precise figure further broken down by region. For example, the storm affected 867,752 people, with 448,209 of the victims residing in Region II (comprised of León and Chinandega departments) and 190,577 residing in Region VI (comprised of Matagalpa and Jinotega departments). The government estimated that 50.1% of those affected were women, and 45.7% were minors under age 14. This RAIO report cites to the Government of Nicaragua figure). See also: *Mitch: The Deadliest Atlantic Hurricane Since 1780*, National Climactic Data Center, <http://lwf.ncdc.noaa.gov/oa/reports/mitch/mitch.html> (last visited Apr. 14, 2017).

³ *Nicaragua: Huracán Mitch Daños, Costos, Acciones de Rehabilitación del Gobierno y la Cooperación Internacional*.

⁴ *Nicaragua Overview*, U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), <http://web.archive.org/web/20110606154439/http://www.usaid.gov/pubs/bj2001/lac/ni/> (last visited Apr. 14, 2017) According to a USAID source, overall damages were US\$1.5 billion. The Government of Nicaragua assessed damages at US\$1.3 billion. See *Nicaragua: Huracán Mitch Daños, Costos, Acciones de Rehabilitación del Gobierno y la Cooperación Internacional*.

⁵ *Nicaragua: Huracán Mitch Daños, Costos, Acciones de Rehabilitación del Gobierno y la Cooperación Internacional*.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ *Ibid.*

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destroyed.⁸ As a result, the country's main cities were physically disconnected from smaller towns and communities.⁹ Road and bridge reconstruction and rehabilitation costs were estimated at \$804 million.¹⁰

Estimates of schools damaged vary. The Government of Nicaragua reported that Hurricane Mitch destroyed 296 schools and damaged 216 more.¹¹ More than 294,000 textbooks were destroyed and 555 teachers were left homeless or injured, contributing to damages totaling \$43.7 million.¹² An alternate source, however, indicated that approximately 340 schools were damaged.¹³

Likewise, estimates of damages to health infrastructure vary. According to the Government of Nicaragua, a total of 102 health units were damaged or destroyed by Hurricane Mitch, including one hospital, 30 health centers, and 71 health posts.¹⁴ However, an alternate source reports that 90 health centers, 40 health posts, and six hospitals suffered damages.¹⁵

Damages from Hurricane Mitch to the agricultural sector, comprised of the internal consumption and export markets, impacted the agricultural economy and local food access.¹⁶ The bean, corn, and rice crops, all destined for domestic consumption, suffered estimated losses of 71%, 51%, and 28%, respectively.¹⁷ Similarly, crops destined for the export market, including sesame, peanuts, and bananas, saw losses of 65%, 27%, and 18%, respectively.¹⁸ In addition, an estimated 77,000 cattle, 21,509 horses, 97,121 pigs, and 222,736 poultry were lost in the storm, contributing to a decrease in the overall food supply.¹⁹

The hurricane also damaged 79 potable water and nine sewage treatment systems.²⁰ In the urban sector, 24 water uptake systems, 20 wells, 67 water pump stations, and 52 kilometers of pipes were damaged.²¹ In the rural sector, approximately 634 wells were damaged.²² Overall, damage

⁸ Ibid. 1,500 kilometers and 6,500 kilometers account for 83% and 39% of all paved and unpaved roads in Nicaragua at the time of Hurricane Mitch, respectively.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Christoplos, Ian, et al., *Learning From Recovery After Hurricane Mitch: Experience From Nicaragua*, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, p. 14, 2009.

¹⁴ *Nicaragua: Huracán Mitch Daños, Costos, Acciones de Rehabilitación del Gobierno y la Cooperación Internacional*.

¹⁵ Christoplos, et. al, p.14.

¹⁶ *Nicaragua: Huracán Mitch Daños, Costos, Acciones de Rehabilitación del Gobierno y la Cooperación Internacional*.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

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from Hurricane Mitch caused a 40% reduction in water service, affecting close to a million people.²³

The international community and the Government of Nicaragua helped to repair the damage and destruction left behind by Hurricane Mitch. For example, the Canadian Red Cross and the United Nations Development Programme collaborated to build 1,300 homes,²⁴ and local authorities, with the assistance of various small Spanish non-governmental organizations (NGOs), built 300 homes in the municipality of Ocotal.²⁵ These programs, however, represent a mere fraction of the more than 41,000 homes that were damaged or destroyed.²⁶ Nicaragua reportedly has one of the highest housing deficits in Central America, with a need for “957,000 new houses and home improvements”—only 50% of which is covered by the private and public sectors.²⁷

A significant amount of aid was dedicated to repairing and improving road infrastructure, including various projects to rehabilitate, maintain and improve roads funded by the Inter-American Development Bank and the World Bank.²⁸ However, transportation infrastructure in Nicaragua remains “poor and often suffers damage from tropical storms and hurricanes,” with public protests related to poor road conditions occasionally occurring.²⁹

Despite the impact of Hurricane Mitch, access to drinking water and sanitation has increased in Nicaragua in the long-term.³⁰ Nicaragua has benefited from various loans from the Inter-

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ *Rebuilding after Hurricane Mitch: Housing reconstruction in Honduras and Nicaragua*, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, p.3, 2007.

²⁵ *Reconstrucción post-Mitch en Nicaragua*, EcoSur, Aug. 2009, <http://www.ecosur.org/ediciones-antteriores/105/455-reconstruccion-post-mitch-en-nicaragua>, (last visited Apr. 14, 2017).

²⁶ Gómez, Rosa Julia, *Salud en la Vivienda en los Países que Conforman la Red Interamericana de Centros de Salud en la Vivienda: El Caso de Nicaragua*, Organización Panamericana de la Salud, p.22, Mar. 2000. The pre-Mitch housing shortage in Nicaragua was estimated at 594,000 housing units, affecting 3.6 million people, or eight out of 10 Nicaraguans.

²⁷ *Habitat for Humanity in Nicaragua*, Habitat for Humanity, <https://www.habitat.org/where-we-build/nicaragua>, (last visited Apr. 6, 2017).

²⁸ *NI0099: Panamerican Highway Rehabilitation*, Inter-American Development Bank, <http://www.iadb.org/en/projects/project-description-title.1303.html?id=NI0099> (last visited Apr. 14, 2017); *NI0146: Road Rehabilitation San Lorenzo-Muhan*, Inter-American Development Bank, <http://www.iadb.org/en/projects/project-description-title.1303.html?id=NI0146> (last visited Apr. 14, 2017); *NI0170: PPP Road Program for Competitiveness*, Inter-American Development Bank, <http://www.iadb.org/en/projects/project-description-title.1303.html?id=NI0170> (last visited Apr. 14, 2017); *Nicaragua: Third Roads Rehabilitation and Maintenance Project*, World Bank, Dec. 18, 2000; *Nicaragua: Fourth Roads Rehabilitation and Maintenance Project*, World Bank, Mar. 27, 2015 (see complete report).

²⁹ *Nicaragua > Infrastructure*, Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment - Central America And The Caribbean, Feb. 3, 2017, <http://janes.ihs.com/Janes/Display/1302302> (last visited Apr. 6, 2017)

³⁰ *Estimates on the use of water sources and sanitation facilities – Nicaragua*, WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme for Water Supply and Sanitation, Jun. 2015, http://www.wssinfo.org/documents/?tx_displaycontroller%5Bregion%5D=&tx_displaycontroller%5Bsearch_word%5D=nicaragua&tx_displaycontroller%5Btype%5D=country_files, (last visited Apr. 14, 2017).

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American Development Bank to improve its water and sanitation systems.³¹ According to the World Health Organization/United Nations Children’s Fund (WHO/UNICEF) Joint Monitoring Programme for Water Supply and Sanitation, as of 2015, an estimated 87% of the Nicaraguan population had access to an improved drinking water source, while an estimated 68% had access to improved sanitation facilities; in 1995—the last year of survey data before Hurricane Mitch—76% had access to an improved drinking water source, while only 49% had access to improved sanitation facilities.³²

Post-Hurricane Mitch Environmental Disasters

Nicaragua is “vulnerable to recurrent natural disasters,”³³ including hurricanes, severe storms and flooding, landslides, significant volcanic activity, and destructive earthquakes.³⁴ According to the 2017 Global Climate Risk Index, Nicaragua ranked as the 4th most affected country in the world by extreme weather events from 1996 to 2015; during this time, Nicaragua averaged \$234.7 million in damages per year, and witnessed over 3,200 total fatalities from extreme weather events.³⁵ Per the World Food Programme, Nicaragua’s vulnerability to natural disasters hinders its progress in addressing both poverty and food security.³⁶ Both strong seasonal rains and a prolonged drought in the section of Nicaragua located in Central America’s “Dry Corridor”³⁷ have plagued the country in recent years.³⁸

³¹ NI0097: *Modernization Potable Water/Sanitation*, Inter-American Development Bank, <http://www.iadb.org/en/projects/project-description-title.1303.html?id=NI0097>, (last visited Apr. 14, 2017); NI0142: *Implementation Sanitation Measures Managua Lake*, Inter-American Development Bank, <http://www.iadb.org/en/projects/project-description-title.1303.html?id=NI0142>, (last visited Apr. 14, 2017); Lockwood, Harold et al., *Activity Report 106, Nicaragua: Rural Water Supply, Sanitation, and Environmental Health Program*, U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) Environmental Health Project, p. 15-16, Dec. 2001; NI-L1017: *Potable Water and Sanitation Investment Program*, Inter-American Development Bank, <http://www.iadb.org/en/projects/project-description-title.1303.html?id=NI-L1017> (last visited Apr. 14, 2017); *Water and sanitation company extends services and increases efficiency*, Inter-American Development Bank, <http://www.iadb.org/en/mapamericas/nicaragua/water-and-sanitation-company-extends-services-and-increases-efficiency.5597.html> (last visited Apr. 14, 2017); *Nicaragua will improve water and sanitation services with IDB support*, Inter-American Development Bank, Dec. 3, 2010.

³² *Estimates on the use of water sources and sanitation facilities – Nicaragua*.

³³ WFP *Nicaragua Country Brief*, World Food Programme, p.2, Jun. 2016; *The World Factbook – Nicaragua*, CIA, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/nu.html>, (last visited Apr. 18, 2017).

³⁴ *Foreign Travel Advice – Nicaragua: Natural Disasters*, GOV.UK, <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/nicaragua/natural-disasters> (last visited Apr. 16, 2017).

³⁵ Kreft, Sönke, Eckstein, David and Melchior, Inga, *Global Climate Risk Index 2017*, Germanwatch, p. 5-6, Nov. 2016.

³⁶ WFP *Nicaragua Country Brief*, World Food Programme, p.2, Feb. 2017.

³⁷ According to a report published by the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO) on Central America’s “Dry Corridor”: “The term dry corridor, although it points to a climatic phenomenon, has an ecological basis: it defines a group of ecosystems that combine in the ecoregion of dry tropical forest in Central America, which starts in Chiapas, Mexico, and in a strip of land, contains the lowlands of the Pacific slope and much of the central pre-mountain region of Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, and part of Costa Rica (up to Guanacaste); in Honduras, it also includes fragments which approach the Caribbean coast.” See van der Zee Arias, Amparo, et. al, *Estudio de caracterización del Corredor Seco Centroamericano*, FAO, p.8, Dec. 2012. Another FAO report defines the “Dry Corridor” as: “an imprecise geographical demarcation defined by a zone with climatic characteristics of dry tropical forest, with a marked and prolonged dry season (*verano*), and where there is a latent risk of recurring drought during the reduced rainy season (*invierno*), which could occur due to the late arrival

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Since Hurricane Mitch, various hurricanes, tropical depressions, and tropical storms have made landfall in Nicaragua—a country which is prone to flooding.³⁹ In November 2001, Hurricane Michelle damaged or destroyed 3,349 houses, seven bridges, and 7,000 hectares of crops;⁴⁰ in September 2007, Hurricane Felix, a category 5 storm, killed over 100 and damaged or destroyed an estimated 16,400 houses;⁴¹ in May 2008, Tropical Storm Alma damaged seven Pacific coast departments, leaving three people dead and 10 missing, and damaging “most major roads, water wells and latrines” in the department of Leon in western Nicaragua;⁴² in October 2008, Tropical Depression 16 brought intense rains that left four people dead and affected 10,633 people in eight departments;⁴³ and in November 2009, Hurricane Ida, a category 1 storm, brought heavy rains and winds to the northern coast of Nicaragua, causing damage to 875 homes, contaminating 300 wells, and affecting over 13,000 people.⁴⁴

More recently, in October 2011, heavy rains linked to Tropical Depression 12E produced flooding and landslides throughout the country.⁴⁵ An assessment carried out by the Government of Nicaragua found that 87 of 153 municipalities⁴⁶ suffered damages, and nearly 149,000 people were affected by damages to their property, crops, and other livelihoods.⁴⁷ A total of 8,924 homes were flooded; 1,235 were partially destroyed, and 335 were completely destroyed.⁴⁸ Damages and losses associated with Tropical Depression 12E totaled \$445 million, or 6.8% of gross domestic product in 2010.⁴⁹ In June and July of 2013, tropical storms and heavy seasonal rain resulted in 15 deaths, widespread flooding, and 12,000 people affected.⁵⁰

During 2014 and 2015, a series of storms producing heavy rain and flooding caused significant damage and loss of life in Nicaragua. In July 2014, heavy rains and flooding in the center and Caribbean regions of the country affected 1,015 people, caused the death of three others, and

of the rainy season, an extension of the dry season, or a premature end of the rainy season.” See Peralta Rodriguez, Orlando, et. al, *Buenas prácticas para la seguridad alimentaria y la gestión de riesgos*, FAO, p.8, Feb. 2012.

³⁸ *From Words to Facts: Acting on Climate Change in Central America, Action and Financing, Now!*, Oxfam, p.3, Nov. 2014.

³⁹ *Central America - Drought in El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua*, ACAPS, p.5, Sep. 29, 2015.

⁴⁰ *Hurricane Michelle - Honduras / Nicaragua OCHA Situation Report No. 11*, UNOCHA, Nov. 19, 2001.

⁴¹ *Emergency Operation, Nicaragua 10700*, World Food Programme, p.1, http://one.wfp.org/operations/current_operations/project_docs/107000.pdf, (last visited Apr. 17, 2017); *Latin America and the Caribbean – Hurricane Season 2007, Fact Sheet #8*, USAID, p.1, Sept. 12, 2007.

⁴² *Costa Rica and Nicaragua: Tropical Storm Alma*, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, Jun. 5, 2009.

⁴³ *Final Report - Central America: Floods*, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, Oct. 29, 2009.

⁴⁴ *Nicaragua: Floods*, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, Nov. 11, 2009.

⁴⁵ *Nicaragua: Flash Appeal Revision*, UNOCHA, p.1, 2011.

⁴⁶ Nicaragua is divided administratively into 15 departments and two autonomous regions, which are sub-divided into 153 municipalities. See *Artículo 16 de Ley No. 503, Reforma a la Ley No. 59, Ley de División Política Administrativa*, Asamblea Nacional de la República de Nicaragua, Feb. 3, 2005.

⁴⁷ *Nicaragua: Flash Appeal Revision*, UNOCHA, p.1, 2011.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p.7.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ *Nicaragua: Floods – June 2013*, ReliefWeb, <http://reliefweb.int/disaster/fl-2013-000085-nic> (last visited Apr. 17, 2017).

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damaged or destroyed 205 homes.⁵¹ Prolonged rain and flooding in October 2014 impacted close to 65,000 people, causing 33 deaths, destroying 4,500 homes, and leaving 33,000 people homeless.⁵² Heavy rains and flooding also affected 1,075 people and damaged 215 homes in May 2015,⁵³ and caused even more damage in June, when rain and flooding impacted 11 of 17 departments, affecting over 35,000 people and causing six deaths.⁵⁴ At least 20 people were killed during the 2015 rainy season.⁵⁵

In 2016, heavy rains and wind once again caused damage and flooding in Nicaragua.⁵⁶ In July, more than 8,900 people were affected, 3,900 people were evacuated, and nearly 1,700 homes were flooded due to heavy rains and flooding.⁵⁷ In November 2016, Hurricane Otto—a category 2 storm—damaged 817 and destroyed 120 homes, and necessitated the evacuation of over 11,600 people.⁵⁸

Consecutive years of drought (from November 2013 to April 2016)⁵⁹ have negatively impacted agriculture, fishing, and hydroelectric energy production in Nicaragua.⁶⁰ Linked to the El Niño Southern Oscillation (ESNO),⁶¹ the drought has had the most significant impact in the country's “so-called ‘dry corridor’—an arid region in the northeast and centre of Nicaragua encompassing 33 of the country's 153 municipalities, characterized by low rainfall and high poverty levels” with a population of over one million people.⁶²

⁵¹ *Tres muertos y 1,015 personas afectadas por fuertes lluvias en Nicaragua*, El Nuevo Diario (Nic.), Jul. 14, 2014.

⁵² *Afectados por las fuertes lluvias ascienden a 64,360*, Redhum, Nov. 11, 2014; *Global Emergency Overview – November 2014*, ACAPS, p.120, Nov. 11, 2014; *Nicaragua flooding leaves 24 dead*, Agence France-Presse, Oct. 19, 2014.

⁵³ *Más de mil afectados por lluvias*, Nuevo Diario (Nic.), May 1, 2015.

⁵⁴ *Heavy rains in Nicaragua leave six dead*, Agence France-Presse, Jun. 15, 2015.

⁵⁵ *Al menos 20 muertos por temporada de lluvias en Nicaragua*, Government of Nicaragua, Oct. 24, 2015.

⁵⁶ *Gobierno atiende a familias afectadas por fuertes vientos en Malpaisillo*, Government of Nicaragua, Apr. 27, 2016; *REDLAC Weekly Note on Emergencies Latin America & The Caribbean - Year 9 - Volume 451*, UNOCHA, May 10, 2016; *Monitoring Emergencies: Nicaragua - 06/01/2016: 509 people affected by rain*, Pan American Health Organization, Jun. 1, 2016; *Ríos crecidos y zonas incomunicadas por las lluvias*, El Nuevo Diario (Nica.), Jun. 6, 2016; *Monitoring Emergencies: Nicaragua - 07/12/2016: 1,781 families have been affected in 9 municipalities due to flooding - Update*, Pan American Health Organization, Jul. 12, 2016; *Monitoring Emergencies: Nicaragua - 12/13/2016: Strong rains affect the Southern Caribbean region*, Pan American Health Organization, Dec. 13, 2016; *Más de 900 familias afectadas por lluvias*, Redhum, Oct. 22, 2016.

⁵⁷ *Monitoring Emergencies: Nicaragua - 07/12/2016: 1,781 families have been affected in 9 municipalities due to flooding - Update*; *World events - ECHO Daily Map | 12/07/2016*, European Commission Humanitarian Aid Office, Jul. 12, 2016.

⁵⁸ *Humanitarian Bulletin - Latin America and the Caribbean*, UNOCHA, p.2, Nov-Dec. 2016; *Huracán Otto provoca daños en 817 viviendas*, Redhum, Nov. 29, 2016; *Rosario presenta informe sobre respuesta a familias afectadas por el huracán Otto*, Redhum, Nov. 28, 2016.

⁵⁹ *Situación “muy grave” con 40 pozos comunitarios secos en Occidente*, La Prensa (Nic.), Feb. 16, 2017.

⁶⁰ *Ríos, Julia, In drought-hit central Nicaragua, water 'is like looking for gold'*, Agence France-Presse, Apr. 7, 2016; *Silva, José Adán, Cambio climático seca a Nicaragua*, Inter Press Service, Mar. 30, 2016.

⁶¹ The El Niño Southern Oscillation, more commonly known as El Niño, is a “weather cycle that periodically causes drought on the western Pacific seaboard and the centre of the country, in contrast with seasonal flooding in the north and the eastern Caribbean coast.” See Silva, Jose Adan, *El Niño Triggers Drought, Food Crisis in Nicaragua*, Inter Press Service, Jul. 10, 2014.

⁶² *Silva, Jose Adan, Thirsty in Nicaragua, the Country Where 'Agua' Is Part of Its Name*, Inter Press Service, Jun. 4, 2015.

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In 2014, the impact of the drought extended beyond the country's Dry Corridor, as an estimated 112 of 156 municipalities in Nicaragua reported damages or losses to crops.⁶³ By November 2014, over 268,000 families in the Dry Corridor were affected by crop loss,⁶⁴ and the drought was affecting the food security of 100,000 people in the country.⁶⁵

By February 2015, the drought had contributed to the loss of 1 million bushels of rice and maize, and the death of 5,000 cattle.⁶⁶ Despite having the most abundant water sources in Central America, in the summer of 2015 Nicaragua was reportedly facing a nationwide water shortage due to the impact of the drought, a lack of investment in its water system, poor water management, soil erosion, deforestation, and climate change.⁶⁷ By November 2015, Nicaragua had lost between 50 and 75 percent of its production of basic grains in the Dry Corridor, while an estimated 23% of all cattle in the country were at risk of being impacted by the drought.⁶⁸

The impact of the multi-year drought continued to be felt in 2016. The Dry Corridor remained the most impacted area of Nicaragua; in March 2016, Inter Press Service cited a study indicating that the region had lost 100 percent of its harvests and 90 percent of its water sources due to the drought.⁶⁹ Declining food production "led to food insecurity and a decline in household incomes in the region's rural areas."⁷⁰ By June 2016, over 302,000 people were in need of food assistance in Nicaragua.⁷¹ While Nicaragua received more rainfall in 2016 in comparison to previous years, the increase was reportedly insufficient to support a full recovery of surface and subterranean water sources impacted by the drought.⁷² As a result, at the start of the dry season in February 2017, certain communities in the Dry Corridor were already feeling the impact of the scarcity of water.⁷³

Damages resulting from other natural disasters, such as volcanic and seismic activity, have also affected Nicaragua. In September 2012, the eruption of the San Cristobal volcano—one of the most active in the country—prompted the evacuation of hundreds of residents from surrounding areas.⁷⁴ Between early May and late July 2015, the Telica volcano erupted 426 times;⁷⁵ residents of neighboring communities—over 2,000 of whom were affected—reported respiratory problems due to the release of volcanic gas and ash, and expressed fears of larger eruptions.⁷⁶ Six of the

⁶³ *Global Emergency Overview – November 2014*, p.120.

⁶⁴ *From Words to Facts: Acting on Climate Change in Central America, Action and Financing, Now!*, p.6.

⁶⁵ *From Words to Facts: Acting on Climate Change in Central America, Action and Financing, Now!*, p.15.

⁶⁶ *Global Emergency Overview – March 2015*, ACAPS, p.112, Mar. 24, 2015.

⁶⁷ Silva, *Thirsty in Nicaragua*.

⁶⁸ *Latin America and the Caribbean - Weekly Note on Emergencies*, UNOCHA, p.2, Nov. 2, 2015.

⁶⁹ Silva, *Cambio climático seca a Nicaragua*.

⁷⁰ *IFAD to provide \$20.5 million to boost sustainable agriculture in Dry Corridor in Nicaragua*, International Fund for Agricultural Development, Nov. 29, 2016.

⁷¹ *WFP Nicaragua Country Brief - June 2016*, World Food Programme, Jun. 2016.

⁷² *Situación "muy grave" con 40 pozos comunitarios secos en Occidente*.

⁷³ *Corredor Seco otra vez afectado por sequía*, La Prensa (Nic.), Feb. 17, 2017.

⁷⁴ *Thousands evacuate as Nicaragua volcano spews ash*, ABC News, Sep. 8, 2012.

⁷⁵ *Ineter: el Volcán Concepción retoma sus explosiones*, La Jornada (Nic.), Jul. 28, 2015.

⁷⁶ *Más de 2 mil afectados por cenizas y gases del Telica*, El Nuevo Diario (Nic.), May 12, 2015.

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country's 18 volcanoes were active in 2016, including the Momotombo volcano, which—after more than 110 years of inactivity—erupted more than 400 times from December 2015 to April 2016, and remained constantly active through November.⁷⁷

In June 2013, a 6.6 magnitude earthquake off the coast of Nicaragua triggered a tsunami warning and caused structural damage near its epicenter.⁷⁸ On April 10, 2014, a significant 6.2 magnitude earthquake, originating in Lake Managua, struck the country, followed by subsequent 6.2 and 6.7 magnitude earthquakes the next day; in total, there were over 535 seismic events in less than two weeks following the original earthquake on April 10.⁷⁹ The earthquakes affected 24,025 people and damaged 2,952 homes.⁸⁰ In response to a 7.4 magnitude earthquake in October 2014, 100,000 people were evacuated from coastal areas.⁸¹ A 6.1 magnitude earthquake in June 2016 caused landslides, power outages, and damaged over 3,000 homes.⁸²

Nicaragua has also been impacted by a regional coffee rust⁸³ epidemic, which has caused crop loss and declining coffee production throughout Central America in recent years.⁸⁴ By October 2014, an estimated 655,000 people in Honduras, Nicaragua, and El Salvador were considered food insecure due to the coffee rust epidemic.⁸⁵ As of March 2016, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) reported that coffee production in Nicaragua continued to recover from the outbreak.⁸⁶

In recent years, Nicaragua has been impacted by various mosquito-borne diseases, including Zika, dengue fever, and chikungunya.⁸⁷ In August 2015, Nicaraguan authorities declared a “state of emergency and health alert for the increase of cases of chikungunya and dengue.”⁸⁸ In 2016, there were “88,320 probable dengue cases (incidence rate of 1,411 cases per 100,000 population), including 6,599 confirmed cases.”⁸⁹ Through the first half of 2016, Nicaragua

⁷⁷ *En Nicaragua vulcanólogos estadounidenses para estudiar el Momotombo*, Government of Nicaragua, Apr. 10, 2016; *Ineter pronostica baja probabilidad de actividad sísmica relevante*, Government of Nicaragua, Mar. 2, 2016; *Nicaragua sin sustos volcánicos*, Government of Nicaragua, Mar. 7, 2016; *Monitoring Emergencies: Nicaragua-11/18/2016: Momotombo Volcano presents abundant gas emissions*, Pan American Health Organization, Nov. 18, 2016.

⁷⁸ *Sismos dejan personas lesionadas y daños leves en Nicaragua*, La Prensa (Pan.), Jun. 15, 2013.

⁷⁹ *Nicaragua, Terremoto. Reporte de Situación N° 7*, UNOCHA, p.1-3, Apr. 25, 2014.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p.1.

⁸¹ *Global Emergency Overview – November 2014*, p.120.

⁸² *REDLAC Weekly Note on Emergencies Latin America & The Caribbean - Year 9 - Volume 456*, UNOCHA, June 13, 2016.

⁸³ According to an academic study of the coffee rust crises in Colombia and Central America: “Coffee rust is caused by the fungus *Hemileia vastatrix*, an obligate parasite that affects the living leaves of the genus *Coffea*... The disease causes defoliation that, when acute, can lead to the death of branches and heavy crop losses.” See J. Avelino et. al., *The coffee rust crises in Colombia and Central America (2008–2013): impacts, plausible causes and proposed solutions*, Food Security, Vol. 7, Iss. 2, p.304, April 2015.

⁸⁴ Malkin, Elisabeth, *Coffee Crop Withers: Fungus Cripples Coffee Production Across Central America*, New York Times, May 5, 2014.

⁸⁵ *Global Emergency Overview – November 2014*, p.120.

⁸⁶ *El Niño: Overview of Impact, Projected Humanitarian Needs, and Responses*, UNOCHA, p.18, Mar. 9, 2016.

⁸⁷ *Latin America and the Caribbean: Weekly Note on Emergencies*, UNOCHA, Jul. 4, 2016.

⁸⁸ *Latin America and the Caribbean: Weekly Note on Emergencies*, UNOCHA, Aug. 17, 2015.

⁸⁹ *Zika - Epidemiological Report: Nicaragua*, Pan-American Health Organization, Feb. 27, 2017.

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reported 4,675 suspected and 682 confirmed case of chikungunya.⁹⁰ Since first being detected in the country in early 2016, there have been 2,055 confirmed cases of Zika in Nicaragua as of early January 2017.⁹¹

Violence and Conflict

Nicaragua lacks the high levels of crime and violence which are evident in El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala. In general, Nicaragua “has a relatively low crime rate, an absence of transnational gangs and a generally trusted police force that focuses on crime prevention.”⁹²

In 2016, Nicaragua’s homicide rate slightly declined to 7 murders per 100,000 inhabitants—its lowest rate in over 15 years, and slightly higher than the 2013 global average of 6.2 per 100,000.⁹³ According to InSight Crime, much of Nicaragua was “virtually violence-free” in 2016, as “65 percent of the country’s 153 municipalities registered either one or zero homicides” during the year.⁹⁴ Regions along Nicaragua’s Caribbean coast have higher homicide rates than the rest of the country due to the presence of organized crime and drug trafficking in these areas.⁹⁵

Since 2015, violence has increased along Nicaragua’s Caribbean coast due to conflict over land between indigenous communities and *mestizo* (Nicaraguans of mixed Spanish and Native American descent) settlers from other areas of the country.⁹⁶ Driven by cheap land, the promise of timber and gold, and drought in other parts of the country, thousands of non-indigenous Nicaraguans have moved into the ancestral lands of indigenous communities in recent years.⁹⁷ The influx of settlers has “unleashed a deadly conflict” over the territory of the indigenous Miskito people,⁹⁸ who argue that their land has been illegally sold or taken by settlers.⁹⁹ Murders, rapes, abductions, beatings, beheadings, the burning of villages, and forced displacement have all been reported.¹⁰⁰ Hundreds have reportedly been killed,¹⁰¹ and more than 3,000 Miskitos have reportedly been displaced¹⁰²—many of whom fled to informal refugee

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Replogle, Jill, *Why Nicaraguan Kids Aren’t Fleeing To U.S.*, KPBS, Jul. 29, 2014.

⁹³ *Global Study on Homicide 2013*, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, p.13, March 2014; Gagne, David, *InSight Crime’s 2015 Latin America Homicide Round-up*, InSight Crime, Jan. 14, 2016; Gagne, David, *InSight Crime’s 2016 Homicide Round-up*, InSight Crime, Jan. 16, 2017.

⁹⁴ Gagne, *InSight Crime’s 2016 Homicide Round-up*.

⁹⁵ Lohmuller, Michael, *Is Nicaragua as Effective at Deterring Drug Trafficking as it Claims?*, InSight Crime, Apr. 3, 2014.

⁹⁶ *Deadly Nicaragua Land Conflict Displaces Hundreds*, Associated Press, Sep. 30, 2015; Carrere, Michelle, *Nicaragua’s hidden war*, IRIN, Oct. 4, 2016; Robles, Frances, *Nicaragua Dispute Over Indigenous Land Erupts in Wave of Killings*, New York Times, Oct. 16, 2016; Galanova, Mira, *Lush heartlands of Nicaragua’s Miskito people spark deadly land disputes*, The Guardian, Mar. 1, 2017.

⁹⁷ *Deadly Nicaragua Land Conflict Displaces Hundreds*; Carrere; Robles; Galanova.

⁹⁸ Carrere.

⁹⁹ Robles; Carrere.

¹⁰⁰ *Deadly Nicaragua Land Conflict Displaces Hundreds*; Carrere; Robles; Galanova.

¹⁰¹ Robles.

¹⁰² Carrere.

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camps in Honduras “where they live without any official humanitarian aid.”¹⁰³ Both the Miskitos and the settlers feel that the Nicaraguan government “has abandoned them,”¹⁰⁴ allowing both the “the settling and the violence to continue unabated.”¹⁰⁵ In addition, both sides claim that there “has been no investigation into the crimes, and police often refuse to register their complaints.”¹⁰⁶

While the U.S. Department of State’s Bureau of Diplomatic Security has reported that Nicaragua has “low overall reported crime rates,” particularly in comparison to neighboring countries like Honduras, general crime is nevertheless “a persistent risk for residents and visitors alike.”¹⁰⁷ However, less than 5% of Nicaraguans view crime as the most pressing problem in the country.¹⁰⁸

Nicaragua has been generally free from the high levels of gang violence afflicting El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras.¹⁰⁹ While Nicaragua has a “significant presence of local gangs,” there are relatively few members of Barrio 18 and Mara Salvatrucha in the country in comparison to El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala.¹¹⁰ Gangs in Nicaragua are comparatively smaller and more localized, and “there’s virtually no extortion in Nicaragua from criminal gangs of the kind rampant in the Central American nations to the north.”¹¹¹ Community policing and other government efforts have been effective in limiting the impact and growth of local gangs.¹¹²

Violent drug trafficking organizations—pervasive in a country like Honduras—are “largely absent” in Nicaragua.¹¹³ Nevertheless, Nicaragua remains an important transit route for drug trafficking, particularly the North and South Caribbean Autonomous Regions, which have higher crime and unemployment rates than the country at large.¹¹⁴

Police in Nicaragua focus on community policing and work with neighborhood watch groups, citizens, and community organizations to prevent crime and violence and help at-risk youth.¹¹⁵ Security forces are generally less corrupt than their counterparts in El Salvador, Guatemala, and

¹⁰³ Galanova.

¹⁰⁴ Carrere.

¹⁰⁵ Robles.

¹⁰⁶ Galanova.

¹⁰⁷ *Nicaragua 2014 Crime and Safety Report*, Bureau of Diplomatic Security, U.S. Department of State, May 12, 2014. *See also Nicaragua 2015 Crime and Safety Report*, Bureau of Diplomatic Security, U.S. Department of State, June 12, 2015; *Nicaragua 2016 Crime & Safety Report*, Bureau of Diplomatic Security, U.S. Department of State, April 15, 2016.

¹⁰⁸ Gagne, David, *Why Is Nicaragua 7 Times Less Violent Than Honduras?*, InSight Crime, Aug. 29, 2016.

¹⁰⁹ *Freedom in the World 2016 - Nicaragua*, Freedom House, Jun. 26, 2016.

¹¹⁰ Ribando Seelke, Clare, *Gangs in Central America*, Congressional Research Service, p.3-4, Aug. 29, 2016.

¹¹¹ Replogle; Wilkinson, Tracy, *Few Nicaraguans among Central America's exodus to U.S.*, Los Angeles Times, Aug. 30, 2014; Johnson, Tim, *Nicaraguans, safe at home, feel little reason to flee to U.S.*, McClatchy, Aug. 18, 2014.

¹¹² Replogle.

¹¹³ Gagne, *Why Is Nicaragua 7 Times Less Violent Than Honduras?*

¹¹⁴ *2016 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report (INCSR) - Nicaragua*, U.S. Department of State, Mar. 2016.

¹¹⁵ Replogle.

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Honduras.¹¹⁶ The police even have a positive image amongst the population, with a 79% approval rate.¹¹⁷ In addition, the national police director has consistently ranked as the most popular public figure in the country, with an approval rating of 80% in a 2014 poll.¹¹⁸

Nevertheless, the U.S. Department of State has cited reports that “police frequently abused suspects during arrest, used excessive force, and engaged in degrading treatment.”¹¹⁹ Police presence is extremely limited outside of major urban areas, particularly in regions along the Caribbean coast.¹²⁰ Police also lack the necessary resources to effectively respond to crimes in progress.¹²¹

The U.S. Department of State reported that, according to Nicaraguan non-governmental organizations, violence against women remained high in 2016.¹²² Casa Alianza, an organization working with street children and sex workers, has reported that one in three women in Nicaragua have suffered physical abuse.¹²³ Per Amnesty International, “rape and sexual abuse are widespread in Nicaragua, and the majority of victims are young.”¹²⁴ Underreporting and the failure to enforce existing laws against rape have contributed to widespread impunity for this crime.¹²⁵

Summary

Hurricane Mitch devastated Nicaragua in 1998, causing over a billion dollars in damages to the country’s infrastructure, economic activities, and people. While the international community responded to the disaster with an unprecedented amount of aid, and reconstruction projects have been completed, Nicaragua remains vulnerable to recurrent natural disasters and environmental concerns—many of which have occurred in recent years; these include hurricanes and tropical storms, floods and seasonal rains, volcanic and seismic activity, drought, mosquito-borne illnesses, coffee rust, and other extreme weather events. These and other environmental issues continue to pose challenges for Nicaragua as it seeks to promote economic development for its citizens and minimize the humanitarian impact of natural disasters like Hurricane Mitch. While Nicaragua has lower homicide and crime rates, a general lack of transnational gangs, and less corrupt security forces than its northern neighbors, it is nevertheless facing various security challenges, including armed conflict over land and high rates of violence against women.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Replogle; Gagne, *Why Is Nicaragua 7 Times Less Violent Than Honduras?*.

¹¹⁸ Replogle.

¹¹⁹ *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2016: Nicaragua*, U.S. Department of State, Mar. 2016.

¹²⁰ *Nicaragua 2016 Crime & Safety Report*.

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2016: Nicaragua*.

¹²³ Klibanoff, Eleanor, *Nicaragua: These Women Had Dreams*, The Pulitzer Center, Aug. 16, 2013.

¹²⁴ *Listen to their Voice and Act: Stop the Rape and Sexual Abuse of Girls in Nicaragua*, Amnesty International, Nov. 25, 2010.

¹²⁵ *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2016: Nicaragua*.

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TPS Addendum – Updates

Last Updated: October 19, 2017

According to the World Bank, Nicaragua “has stood out for maintaining growth levels above the average for Latin America and the Caribbean” in recent years.¹²⁶ Although poverty declined from 2009 to 2014, it nevertheless “remains high,” and Nicaragua is “still one of Latin America’s least developed countries, where access to basic services is a daily challenge.”¹²⁷ In August 2017, the Nicaraguan government reported that 96% of the population was employed, and 42.6% of the population was underemployed as of the first quarter of 2017.¹²⁸ A Nicaraguan news outlet claimed that these statistics could not be verified because the Nicaraguan government had not published the underlying quarterly data on unemployment since the end of 2012.¹²⁹

The U.S. Department of State does not currently have an active travel alert or travel warning for Nicaragua.¹³⁰ In a 2017 report, the World Economic Forum ranked Nicaragua 92nd out of 136 countries in its travel and tourism competitiveness index, including 65th in regards to safety and security.¹³¹ In 2015, Nicaragua ranked 92nd out of 141 countries in the overall rankings.¹³²

(1) Any updates on crime/violence in 2017 for each of the three countries. Also, in particular, the El Salvador report gives statistics for January-April of 2017, noting the number of homicides was half what it was for the same period the year prior. Would be helpful to know whether that reduction has held;

According to Salvadoran government authorities, from January 1 to August 31, 2017, there were 2,434 murders in El Salvador—a 36.5% reduction from the same period in 2016, when 3,836 people were killed.¹³³ During the first three months of the year, there was an average of 9 homicides per day.¹³⁴ Between January 1 and August 20, there was an average of 10.05

¹²⁶ Nicaragua Overview, The World Bank, Oct. 10, 2017, <http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/nicaragua/overview> (last visited Oct. 19, 2017).

¹²⁷ Nicaragua Overview, The World Bank, Oct. 10, 2017, <http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/nicaragua/overview> (last visited Oct. 19, 2017).

¹²⁸ Alvarez Hidalgo, Wendy, Crecimiento económico mella poco en el subempleo, La Prensa (Ni.), Aug. 8, 2017.

¹²⁹ Alvarez Hidalgo, Wendy, Crecimiento económico mella poco en el subempleo, La Prensa (Ni.), Aug. 8, 2017.

¹³⁰ Safety & Security Messages, U.S. Embassy in Nicaragua, <https://ni.usembassy.gov/u-s-citizen-services/security-and-travel-information/> (last visited Oct. 19, 2017).

¹³¹ The Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Report 2017, World Economic Forum, 2017.

¹³² The Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Report 2017, World Economic Forum, 2017.

¹³³ Morales, Napoleón, Ramírez Landaverde: “Al mes de agosto los homicidios se han reducido en un 36.5%”, Diario la Pagina (El Sal.), Sep. 2, 2017.

¹³⁴ Morales, Napoleón, 10.05 salvadoreños mueren a diario en El Salvador, Diario la Pagina (El Sal.), Aug. 21, 2017.

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homicides per day.¹³⁵ In June 2017, InSight Crime reported that, despite a declining homicide rate, “gangs in El Salvador continue to wield significant control in many areas of the country, despite a heavy-handed, years-long campaign aimed at wiping out these criminal groups.”¹³⁶ In addition, El Salvador has also “repeatedly suffered from short spikes in homicides linked to temporary escalations in gang-related violence.”¹³⁷

In Honduras, from January 1 to August 23, 2017, there were a reported 2,548 murders—a 24% reduction from the same time period in 2016, when 3,356 people were killed.¹³⁸ In May 2017, the Thomson Reuters Foundation reported that, “With one of the world’s highest murder rates, Honduras is struggling to contain drug-fueled gang violence and organized crime.”¹³⁹ In September 2017, Nicaragua’s police chief reported that the country’s homicide rate from August 2016 to July 2017 was 6 homicides per 100,000 people—the lowest rate in the last 16 years.¹⁴⁰

(2) Any updates on the drought conditions for the three countries;

In July 2017, the World Food Programme (WFP) reported the following on food security in Central America:

Four years of consecutive drought (2014-2017) in parts of Central America (the zone known as Dry Corridor) have negatively affected food production and income opportunities for vulnerable people, with increased food insecurity among subsistence farmers, day labourers and their families.

The cumulative effect has reduced productive assets, disrupted livelihoods and caused irregular emigration to the USA, as the preliminary results of a recent WFP study reveals. Over the past four years, households in the Dry Corridor have had to increasingly rely on negative consumption and livelihood coping strategies with increasing levels of emergency coping strategies...

In Honduras, the cumulative effects of four years of drought have significantly undermined the food security of the most vulnerable subsistence farmers and agricultural laborers in the dry corridor... On 19 June 2017, the Government of Honduras declared state of emergency, up to 31 December 2017, to the national

¹³⁵ Morales, Napoleón, 10.05 salvadoreños mueren a diario en El Salvador, Diario la Pagina (El Sal.), Aug. 21, 2017.

¹³⁶ Goi, Leonardo, Barrio 18 Extortion Scheme Casts Doubt on El Salvador Govt Security Narrative, InSight Crime, Jun. 19, 2017.

¹³⁷ Clavel, Tristan, Spike in Attacks on Security Force Families as El Salvador Violence Declines, InSight Crime, Jun. 13, 2017.

¹³⁸ Honduras: Van 808 homicidios menos que 2016, La Prensa (Hon.), Aug. 26, 2017.

¹³⁹ Moloney, Anastasia, Hundreds flee gang warfare in Honduras' murder city, Thomson Reuters Foundation, May 15, 2017.

¹⁴⁰ La tasa de homicidios en Nicaragua baja de 8 a 6 por cada 100.000 habitantes, Agencia EFE, Sep. 12, 2017.

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agricultural productive sector and has identified 77 municipalities in urgent need for assistance.¹⁴¹

An August 2017 study conducted by a group of international organizations “found a correlation between prolonged droughts in El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras – exacerbated by El Niño phenomenon from 2014 to 2016 – and the increase in irregular migration from these countries to the United States.”¹⁴² The aforementioned study focused on El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras, particularly the parts of these countries located in the Dry Corridor.¹⁴³

In an August 2017 report on El Salvador, Honduras, and Nicaragua, the Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET) reported that:

Despite below average accumulated rainfall in parts of southern Honduras and El Salvador, and northeastern Nicaragua during the *Primera* [April-September]¹⁴⁴ growing season, the consistent distribution and lack of an extended period of drought has allowed normal development of basic grain crops in almost all of the region, including for small farmers in areas of the dry corridor affected by low production during various years.¹⁴⁵

(3) Updates on the coffee rust epidemic. We noted “continues to recover” language, which seems to imply it’s concluded or is concluding or improving, at least?

In an August 2017 report on El Salvador, Honduras, and Nicaragua, the Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET) reported that:

The prevalence of coffee rust is at its lowest point since the rust outbreak in 2012. However, the production and generation of employment in El Salvador and Nicaragua has not fully recovered, due to the impact of the rust during several years and the low prices of coffee during the same period, limiting the incentives for investment in the sector. In addition, there exists the risk of an increase in the prevalence of rust during the remainder of the year, due to favorable climatic conditions for this pest.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴¹ World Food Programme Food Security Update Central America—July 2017, The World Food Programme, Jul. 2017.

¹⁴² Emigration and food insecurity in Central American 'dry corridor' focus of new UN-backed study, UN News Centre, Aug. 23, 2017.

¹⁴³ Food Security and Emigration: Why people flee and the impact on family members left behind in El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras, International Organization for Migration, International Fund for Agricultural Development, Inter-American Development Bank, Organization of American States, World Food Programme, p.5, Aug. 2017.

¹⁴⁴ Central America and Caribbean Price Bulletin, Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET), p.1, Aug. 2017.

¹⁴⁵ El Salvador, Honduras y Nicaragua: Actualización de monitoreo remoto, Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET), p.1, Aug. 2017.

¹⁴⁶ El Salvador, Honduras y Nicaragua: Actualización de monitoreo remoto, Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET), p.1, Aug. 2017.

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(4) Any updates on the mosquito-borne disease outbreak?

In late August 2017, Salvadoran government officials reported that there had been a “noticeable” decrease in the number of cases of dengue, chikungunya and Zika in 2017.¹⁴⁷ As of early September 2017, there had been a 96% reduction in suspected cases of Zika (from 7,370 through early September 2016 to 335 during the same time period in 2017); a 92% reduction in suspected cases of chikungunya (from 5,745 to 437); and a 60% reduction in suspected cases of dengue (from 7,177 to 2,902).¹⁴⁸

Honduras witnessed a decline in the number of cases of Zika, chikungunya, and dengue through late June 2017 compared to the same period of time in 2016.¹⁴⁹ During this time period, Zika cases were down 97% (from 25,401 to 280), chikungunya cases declined 96% (from 12,053 to 249), and cases of dengue declined 81% (from 15,259 to 2,894).¹⁵⁰

The Pan American Health Organization/World Health Organization reported in late June 2017 that “During 2017, transmission of Zika continues in Nicaragua with less intensity compared to the large outbreak reported in 2016.”¹⁵¹ Through mid-May 2017, there were 389 suspected cases and 5 confirmed cases of Zika, compared to 546 suspected and 192 confirmed cases during the same period in 2016.¹⁵² In addition, by mid-May 2017, there were 22,963 suspected and 1,047 confirmed cases of dengue—“a 14% increase in suspected cases and a 52% decrease in confirmed cases compared to the same period in 2016.”¹⁵³ Finally, through mid-May 2017, there had been a total of 337 suspected and 8 confirmed cases of chikungunya, compared to 5,437 suspected and 403 confirmed cases during the same period the previous year.¹⁵⁴

(5) Finally, could we get some basic economic data/trends for the three countries? There is always interest in that from higher levels, we’ve found.

¹⁴⁷ Reportan un descenso de casos de dengue, zika y chikungunya, La Prensa Gráfica (El Sal.), Aug. 23, 2017.

¹⁴⁸ Boletín Epidemiológico Semana 36 | (del 03 al 09 de Septiembre de 2017), Ministerio de Salud (El Sal.), Sep. 15, 2017.

¹⁴⁹ Disminuyen los casos de zika, dengue y chikungunya, Secretaria de Salud (Hon.), Jul. 7, 2017.

¹⁵⁰ Disminuyen los casos de zika, dengue y chikungunya, Secretaria de Salud (Hon.), Jul. 7, 2017.

¹⁵¹ Zika - Epidemiological Report Nicaragua, Pan American Health Organization / World Health Organization, p.1, Jun. 2017.

¹⁵² Zika - Epidemiological Report Nicaragua, Pan American Health Organization / World Health Organization, p.1-2, Jun. 2017.

¹⁵³ Zika - Epidemiological Report Nicaragua, Pan American Health Organization / World Health Organization, p.2, Jun. 2017.

¹⁵⁴ Zika - Epidemiological Report Nicaragua, Pan American Health Organization / World Health Organization, p.2, Jun. 2017.

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GDP growth (annual %)¹⁵⁵

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
El Salvador	1.9	1.8	1.4	2.3	2.4
Honduras	4.1	2.8	3.1	3.6	3.6
Nicaragua	6.5	4.9	4.8	4.9	4.7

Select Economic Indicators

	El Salvador	Honduras	Nicaragua
GDP Per Capita (current US\$) (2016) ¹⁵⁶	\$4,224	\$2,361	\$2,151
Poverty headcount ratio at national poverty lines (% of population) (2014) ¹⁵⁷	31.8%	62.8%	29.6%
Unemployment, total (% of total labor force) (modeled ILO estimate) (2016) ¹⁵⁸	6.3%	6.3%	5.9%
Personal remittances, received (% of GDP) (2016) ¹⁵⁹	17.1%	17.9%	9.6%

¹⁵⁵ GDP growth (annual %), World Development Indicators, The World Bank, 2017, <http://databank.worldbank.org/data/reports.aspx?source=2&series=NY.GDP.PCAP.CD&country=NIC.SLV.HND#> (last visited Sep. 19, 2017).

¹⁵⁶ GDP Per Capita (current US\$), World Development Indicators, The World Bank, <http://databank.worldbank.org/data/reports.aspx?source=2&series=NY.GDP.PCAP.CD&country=NIC.SLV.HND#> (last visited Sep. 19, 2017).

¹⁵⁷ Poverty headcount ratio at national poverty lines (% of population), World Development Indicators, The World Bank, 2017, <http://databank.worldbank.org/data/reports.aspx?source=2&series=SI.POV.NAHC&country=HND.SLV.NIC> (last visited Sep. 19, 2017).

¹⁵⁸ Unemployment, total (% of total labor force) (modeled ILO estimate), World Development Indicators, The World Bank, 2017, <http://databank.worldbank.org/data/reports.aspx?source=2&series=NY.GDP.PCAP.CD&country=NIC.SLV.HND#> (last visited Sep. 19, 2017).

¹⁵⁹ Personal remittances, received (% of GDP), World Development Indicators, The World Bank, 2017, <http://databank.worldbank.org/data/reports.aspx?source=2&series=BX.TRF.PWKR.DT.GD.ZS&country=NIC.SLV.HND#> (last visited Sep. 19, 2017).

Attachment A - Temporary Protected Status (TPS) Legal Authority

Pursuant to section 244(b)(1) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA), 8 U.S.C. § 1254a(b)(1), the Secretary of Homeland Security (Secretary), after consultation with appropriate agencies of the Government, may designate a foreign State (or part thereof) for TPS. The Secretary may then grant TPS to eligible nationals of that foreign State (or aliens having no nationality who last habitually resided in that State).

At least 60 days before the expiration of a TPS designation, the Secretary, after consultations with appropriate agencies of the Government, must review the conditions in a foreign State designated for TPS to determine whether the conditions for the TPS designation continue to be met and, if so, the length of an extension of the TPS designation. *See* INA § 244(b)(3)(A); 8 U.S.C. § 1254a(b)(3)(A)-(C). If the Secretary determines that the foreign State no longer meets the conditions for the TPS designation, he must terminate the designation. *See* INA § 244(b)(3)(B); 8 U.S.C. § 1254a(b)(3)(B). Although the Secretary must make his determination on extension or termination at least 60 days before the expiration of the TPS designation, publication of the required *Federal Register* notice announcing his decision must be “on a timely basis.” *See* INA § 244(b)(3)(A). There is also an automatic, minimum six-month extension of a country’s TPS designation if the Secretary does not make a decision under INA § 244(b)(3)(A); 8 U.S.C. § 1254a(b)(3)(A) that the foreign state no longer meets the conditions for designation. *See* INA § 244(b)(3)(C); 8 U.S.C. § 1254a(b)(3)(C).

After the Secretary designates a country for TPS, nationals of the country (and persons without nationality who last habitually resided in the country) may apply for TPS, but they must individually demonstrate their eligibility pursuant to the criteria established in INA § 244(c) and the TPS regulations at 8 C.F.R. § 244.1 *et seq.* These criteria include, but are not limited to, requirements that the applicant show continuous physical presence in the United States since the effective date of the country designation and continuous residence since such date as the Secretary determines; admissibility as an immigrant (with limited exceptions); that the applicant is not ineligible under certain mandatory criminal history, terrorism, and national security bars as specified in INA § 244(c)(2)(A-B); and that the applicant is registering for TPS in accordance with regulatory procedures in 8 C.F.R. §§ 244.2 – 244.9.

If granted TPS, the individual receives employment authorization and an Employment Authorization Document, if requested, that is valid for the period that he or she holds TPS. TPS is a temporary benefit that does not lead to lawful permanent residence or confer any other immigration status. When a TPS country designation ends, TPS beneficiaries maintain the same immigration status, if any, that they held prior to TPS (unless that status has expired or been terminated) or any other status they may have acquired while registered for TPS.



THE SECRETARY OF STATE

WASHINGTON

October 31, 2017

The Honorable
 Elaine C. Duke
 Acting Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security
 Washington, DC 20528

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 BY ESEC SEC
 2017 OCT 31 PM 3:32

Dear Acting Secretary Duke:

The State Department has assessed that El Salvador, Haiti, Honduras, and Nicaragua no longer meet the conditions required for continued designation for Temporary Protected Status (TPS). The disruption in living conditions in El Salvador, Honduras, and Nicaragua attributable to the environmental disasters that served as the basis for their TPS designations has decreased in severity to a degree that it may no longer be considered "substantial" within the meaning of the TPS statute. The extraordinary and temporary conditions that served as the basis for Haiti's most recent designation have sufficiently improved such that they no longer prevent nationals of Haiti from returning in safety. Attached are country conditions reports that provide the Department's assessment of conditions in each country as they pertain to their respective TPS designations.

Given the number of impacted beneficiaries, and to minimize any negative implications that termination would have on our bilateral relations with these countries, I recommend that should the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) decide to terminate TPS for these countries, that you do so with delayed effective dates of 18 months. An 18-month wind down period would provide adequate time for long-term beneficiaries to arrange for their departure and for their home countries to prepare for their reception and reintegration.

I do not make these recommendations lightly. As you consider your decision, I am sure you are well aware of the significant humanitarian, foreign policy, and political interests at play. First and foremost, termination of TPS would likely leave hundreds of thousands of TPS recipients – many of whom have lived and worked in the United States for more than 15 years and have U.S. citizen children – out of legal status. For those that depart, they will return to countries with limited economic opportunities for their reintegration. In the case of El Salvador and Honduras, both countries continue to have some of the world's highest homicide rates, and weak law enforcement capabilities and inadequate government services will make it difficult for their respective governments to ensure the protection of returning citizens – no less the U.S. citizen children who may accompany their parents.

Termination of TPS will also likely generate a backlash from the governments themselves, particularly the Honduran and Salvadoran governments, who have agreed to engage with the United States in support of the U.S. strategy in Central America. Central American leaders are likely to assert that the resources required for a large-scale re-integration of TPS beneficiaries and their dependents will undermine the Central America Strategy and Central America's complementary Alliance for Prosperity, both of which seek to generate prosperity for the region's citizens and reduce irregular migration to the United States. They may take retaliatory actions counter to our long-standing national security and economic interests like withdrawing their counternarcotics and anti-gang cooperation with the United States, reducing

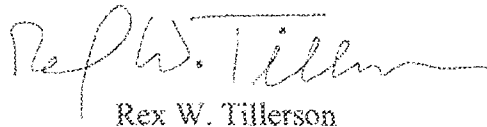
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their willingness to accept the return of their deported citizens, or refraining from efforts to control illegal migration.

However, the fact remains that the conditions in these countries do not – in the State Department’s judgment – meet the legal requirements necessary for extension. Should DHS decide to terminate the programs, I hope our Departments can work together in a thoughtful, coordinated manner to develop a plan to work with the four governments, TPS beneficiaries themselves, Congress, NGOs, and other stakeholders to mitigate any negative impact on U.S. national security and foreign policy priorities. As indicated, an 18-month wind down period will be critical to our efforts.

I thank you in advance for including the Department of State’s Bureaus of Western Hemisphere Affairs (WHA) and Population, Refugees, and Migration, as well as our public affairs team, in your Department’s planning for the public announcement of any TPS decisions, including to foreign audiences. Additionally, I request that you provide WHA with no less than 48-hours lead time prior to the public announcement so that it can notify counterpart governments, on an embargoed basis, of the decision. I also recommend DHS delay a public announcement for Honduras until November 27, to prevent TPS issues from unduly influencing the November 26 presidential election.

Sincerely,



Rex W. Tillerson

Enclosures:

As stated.

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**(SBU) DEPARTMENT OF STATE RECOMMENDATION REGARDING
TEMPORARY PROTECTED STATUS (TPS) FOR NICARAGUA – 2017**

I. Statutory Basis for Designation

Have the conditions under which the foreign state was designated for temporary protected status ceased to exist?

(SBU) Yes, the conditions have ceased to exist. Attorney General Janet Reno originally designated Nicaragua for Temporary Protected Status (TPS) effective January 5, 1999, on the grounds of environmental disaster. The original designation reads, “Hurricane Mitch swept through Central America causing severe flooding and associated damage in Nicaragua. Based on a thorough review by the Departments of State and Justice, the Attorney General finds that, due to the environmental disaster and substantial disruption of living conditions caused by Hurricane Mitch, Nicaragua is unable, temporarily, to handle adequately the return of Nicaraguan nationals” (64 FR 526). Subsequent Attorneys General and Secretaries of the Department of Homeland Security have extended TPS for Nicaragua 13 times in 18-month increments, most recently effective July 6, 2016. This extension cited not only Hurricane Mitch, but subsequent environmental disasters that have caused additional damage and exacerbated the persisting disruptions caused by Hurricane Mitch, including: (1) heavy rains and extensive flooding in October 2014, May 2015, and June 2015; (2) significant earthquakes in April and October 2014; (3) 426 eruptions of the Telica volcano between early-May and late-July 2015; and (4) a prolonged regional drought and coffee rust epidemic (81 FR 30325).

(SBU) Nicaragua is prone to severe weather and seismic events, and has suffered significant political turmoil over the last 40 years, which has made it difficult to recover fully from weather and seismic events. **While Nicaragua has never fully rebuilt and recovered from Hurricane Mitch, the disruption of living conditions attributable to Mitch in the affected area has decreased in severity to a degree that it should no longer be regarded as “substantial” within the meaning of the statute.** The social and economic conditions affected by the storm have stabilized and people are able to conduct their daily activities without impediments related to the damage of Mitch. In addition, the overall Nicaraguan economy has strengthened due to increased foreign direct investment and exports of textiles and commodities, which improves Nicaragua’s ability to handle the return of its nationals. Nicaragua’s GDP has averaged over five percent growth since 2010, and was 4.7 percent in 2016, some of the highest and most consistent growth rates in the region. Nicaragua’s GDP per capita (controlled for inflation) is higher today than in 1998, although its GDP has not fully recovered from the country’s civil war in the 1980s (see chart below).

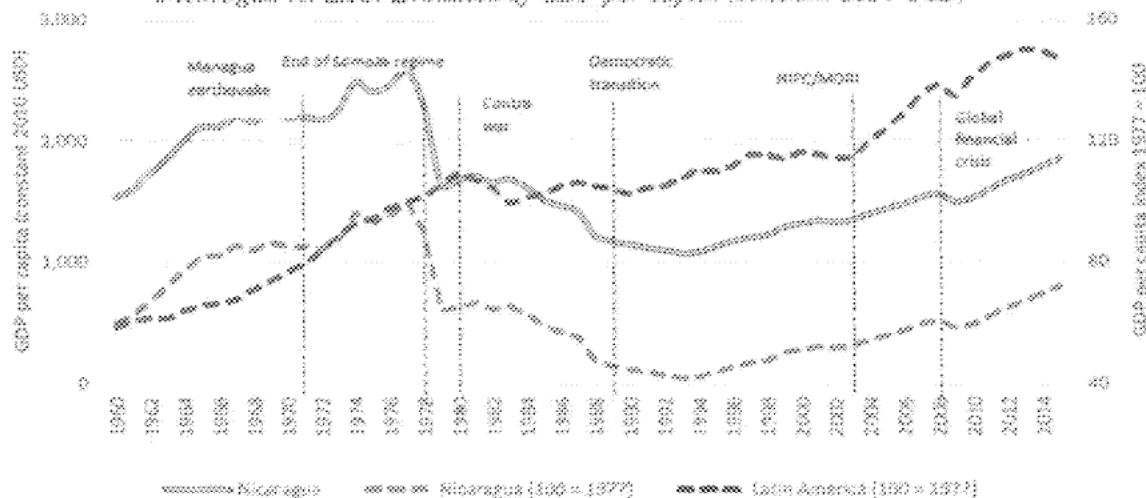
(SBU) We assess that the conditions in Nicaragua that caused it to be designated for TPS on the basis of the environmental disaster – i.e., the substantial disruption of living conditions caused by Hurricane Mitch, which rendered Nicaragua temporarily unable to adequately handle the return of its nationals and habitual residents, no longer exist.

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Figure 1.1: Nicaragua's timeline of GDP per capita
Nicaragua vs. LAC: Evolution of GDP per capita (constant 2010 USD)



Source: Authors' calculations based on World Development Indicators (WDI) (2017).

A. *Armed conflict*

1. Is the foreign state currently involved in an ongoing, internal, armed conflict?

(U) N/A.

- a. If so, would the return of nationals of the foreign state to that state (or to the part of the state) still pose a serious threat to their personal safety?

(U) N/A.

B. *Environmental Disaster*

1. Has the foreign state in question experienced an earthquake, flood, drought, epidemic, or other environmental disaster in the state?

(U) Yes. Nicaragua's location makes it vulnerable to extreme weather and seismic events. In 1998, Hurricane Mitch hit the Atlantic coast of Nicaragua with devastating results. The hurricane adversely impacted two million people, causing significant suffering and damage estimated at \$1.5 billion. The 2017 Global Climate Risk index lists Nicaragua as fourth in the world among countries most affected by extreme weather events. Hurricane Mitch, for example, was preceded and followed by a series of tropical storms and hurricanes that adversely affected the living conditions of Nicaraguans. In 2007, Hurricane Felix caused significant damage, particularly to the Caribbean Coast. In 2009, Tropical Storm Alma left more than 25,000 people homeless. Collectively, these storms contributed to poor living conditions and infrastructure in affected areas.

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(U) In addition, over the past four years Nicaragua has experienced prolonged drought, which has also disrupted living conditions. The drought has endangered the country's food security, with the greatest impact among households in poor rural communities. The lack of rain has led to reduced water table levels and levels in lakes, rivers, streams, and wells. There has been a reduction in water flow to communities, with some wells completely drying up.

a. If so, does there continue to be a substantial, but temporary, disruption of living conditions in the area affected?

(SBU) No. Nicaragua has stabilized from previous disruptions, and while Nicaragua has been experiencing a prolonged drought, we assess that the disruption of living conditions attributable specifically to Hurricane Mitch should no longer be regarded as "substantial." This is because the government has demonstrated its ability to provide basic services to its citizens.

(SBU) For example, while it remains the second poorest country in the Western Hemisphere, the Government of Nicaragua is actively seeking to increase economic growth by supporting and promoting foreign investment. The government has been working to improve access to remote communities and has built new roads in many of the areas affected by Mitch, including the first paved road to connect the Pacific side of the country to the Caribbean Coast, which is nearly completed. In addition, electrification of the country has increased from 50 percent of the country in 2007 to 90 percent today. Internet access is also now widely available in Nicaraguan municipalities, thanks to foreign direct investment in the telecommunications sector, which has fueled the expansion of 3G mobile coverage and broadband networks throughout the country. Public infrastructure investment has been a high priority for the government and has been growing in the last two years.

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

(SBU) No. Although the country remains poor and it would be challenging for returnees to find good jobs, we assess the government of Nicaragua would nevertheless be able to handle adequately the return of the approximately 5,349 TPS beneficiaries and potentially their family members.

(U) Despite a regression in building democratic institutions and lack of good governance, the Nicaraguan economy continued to show positive top-line economic results, including GDP growth of 4.7 percent in 2016. Despite this growth, Nicaragua outranks only Haiti in the Western Hemisphere in terms of GDP per capita. Poverty remains a significant issue: four in 10 Nicaraguans live on less than \$2.50 per day, and one in seven rural Nicaraguans live on less than \$1.20 per day (according to 2016 Nicaraguan government statistics). The nominal average private sector wage was \$323 per month in November 2016, which covered 73.7 percent of the standard basket of consumer goods for a family of six.

(U) The Government of Nicaragua is actively seeking to increase economic growth by supporting and promoting foreign investment. The government emphasizes its pragmatic management of the economy through a model of consensus and dialogue with private sector and labor representatives. A key draw for investors is Nicaragua's relatively low-cost and young labor force, with approximately 75 percent of the country under 39 years old. Nicaragua is a

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party to the Central America-Dominican Republic Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA-DR) and enjoys a strong trade relationship with the United States.

(U) Nicaragua remains significantly less affected by crime and gang-related violence than its northern neighbors. The homicide rate is seven per 100,000 inhabitants, significantly lower than other countries in the region. Its relative security has helped to attract tourism and foreign investment.

3. Does the foreign state continue to support the TPS designation?

(U) The Government of Nicaragua has not recently communicated its support for an extension or re-designation of TPS to the U.S. government.

C. Extraordinary and Temporary Conditions

1. 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) N/A.

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

(U) N/A.

II. Discretionary Factors

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

(SBU) The Government of Nicaragua continues to consolidate power and close democratic space. President Ortega now enjoys solid control over all four branches of government – Executive, Legislative, Judicial, and Electoral – to include the Supreme Court of Justice, the Supreme Electoral Council, and a super-majority in the National Assembly. Most recently, in 2016, the ruling Sandinista National Liberation Front party eliminated any meaningful, independent opposition from competing in the November 6 national elections and effectively removed the system of checks and balances for electoral oversight.

(SBU) The Government of Nicaragua continues to speak out strongly against U.S. activities in the region and terminates Nicaraguan government employees and party members who have unauthorized contact with anyone from the U.S. Embassy. Local employees at the U.S. Embassy suffer constant discrimination and harassment because of their employment. Political party committees in each neighborhood monitor the activities of everyone in the community and report to political and security leaders. It is possible that returnees from the United States would suffer some level of discrimination and harassment.

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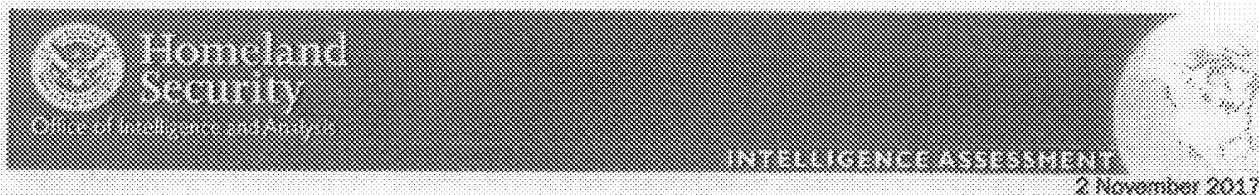
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III. Recommendation

(SBU) Since the grounds for Nicaragua's January 5, 1999, designation for TPS on the basis of environmental disaster no longer exist, the Department recommends that should the Acting DHS Secretary decide to terminate TPS for Nicaragua, that such a termination not take immediate effect and TPS benefits continue for an additional 18 months beyond the end of the current designation for the purpose of orderly transition. Since 1999, Nicaraguan nationals have had TPS, and during that time, many started families, opened businesses, and bought houses and properties. This period of transition would provide them and their family members time to prepare for their departures from the United States and as a result, also decrease the probability that these former beneficiaries would attempt to remain without status.

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(U) Border Security

(U) Implications for TPS Expiring for Beneficiaries from El Salvador, Honduras, Haiti, and Nicaragua

(U//FOUO) Scope. This Intelligence Assessment provides an overview of how the approximately 434,000 Temporary Protected Status (TPS) beneficiaries from El Salvador, Honduras, Haiti, and Nicaragua would respond should these protections expire in the second quarter of FY 2018.^{1,2} The Assessment focuses on the homeland security implications of expiring TPS protections, including the possibility of former beneficiaries returning illegally after deportation and operational considerations involving law enforcement, economic, and other concerns. It is intended for US policy makers, Intelligence Community partners, and state, local, tribal, and territorial law enforcement partners. The information cutoff date for this assessment is 24 October 2017.

(U) Prepared by the Office of Intelligence and Analysis (I&A), [REDACTED]

(U) Key Judgment

(U//FOUO) I&A judges that former TPS beneficiaries from all four countries choosing to illegally return to the United States likely would have the personal and economic motivation and the financial means to pay smugglers to assist them. I&A assesses that TPS beneficiaries from El Salvador and Honduras who are returned to their home countries would have the highest rates of illegal return migration due to established routes for illicit travel and entry at the US Southwest Border. Beneficiaries from Haiti will have more moderate levels of illegal return migration due to well-established maritime deterrence methods. Beneficiaries from Nicaragua may have some illegal return migration due to prevalent economic and social issues there; however, its smaller TPS population would represent a lower impact on DHS interests.

(U) Key Assumptions

(U//FOUO) Our analysis assumes that host nations would begin to receive repatriated citizens within 6 to 12 months of TPS expiration, and that a significant portion of beneficiaries would not pursue status adjustment, such as seeking asylum or student visas, to remain in the United States.

(U//FOUO) We assume that former TPS holders would not migrate in significant numbers to Canada or Mexico prior to being deported from or voluntarily leaving the United States.

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(U//FOUO) Risks for Return Migration to the United States

(U//FOUO) I&A judges that former TPS beneficiaries from all four countries choosing to illegally return to the United States likely would have the personal and economic motivation and the financial means to pay smugglers to assist them. I&A assesses that TPS beneficiaries from El Salvador and Honduras who are returned to their home countries would have the highest rates of illegal return migration due established routes for illicit travel and entry at the US Southwest Border. Beneficiaries from Haiti will have more moderate levels of illegal return migration due to well-established maritime deterrence methods. Beneficiaries from Nicaragua may have some illegal return migration due to prevalent economic and social issues there; however, its smaller TPS population would represent a lower impact on DHS interests.

- (U//FOUO) Family and economic ties to the United States likely would motivate repatriated TPS holders to return to the United States, possibly via illegal migration. Many TPS beneficiaries from El Salvador, Honduras, Haiti, and Nicaragua have lived continuously in the United States since the late 1990s, according to [REDACTED].¹⁴ As of July 2017, TPS beneficiaries are parents to hundreds of thousands of United States citizen children, and maintain strong economic ties to the United States through home and business ownership, according to the Center for Migration Studies, a US-based think tank and educational institute that studies international migration.¹⁵
- (U//LES) Honduras and El Salvador migrants take well-established overland routes to attempt to access the US Southwest Border illicitly using trains, buses, taxis, and personal cars. Trips take an average of 10 to 21 days and cost up to \$8,000, according to a body of [REDACTED] reporting from 2014 to 2017.¹⁶⁻¹⁸ Former TPS beneficiaries deported from the United States to Honduras and El Salvador could easily use these routes to return almost immediately to the United States; additionally, they likely have the means to pay any associated smuggling costs because of the income they earned while living and working in the United States, according to [REDACTED] research.¹⁴
- (U//LES) Since consistent USCG patrolling has successfully deterred Haitian migrants from traveling on maritime routes, many are resorting to overland routes to the US Southwest Border via South and Central America, according to a body of [REDACTED] reporting.^{15, 16, 17, 18} [REDACTED] assessed in February 2017 that Haitian maritime migration levels are likely to remain constant through FY 2019, barring any change to US immigration policy, a significant natural disaster, or major degradation of security conditions.¹⁹
- (U//LES) Like other Central Americans, Nicaraguan migrants also take overland routes to reach the US Southwest Border, but the number of Nicaraguan migrants who traveled illegally to the United States compared to those from Northern Triangle²⁰ countries was relatively low, with fewer than 1,500 total encounters per year in both FY 2016 and FY 2017, according to [REDACTED] data.^{21, 22, 23}

(U) What is Temporary Protected Status (TPS)?

(U) The Secretary of Homeland Security may designate a foreign country for Temporary Protected Status (TPS) due to conditions in the country that temporarily prevent the country's nationals from returning safely, or in certain circumstances, where the country is unable to handle the return of its nationals adequately. USCIS may grant TPS to eligible nationals of certain countries (or parts of countries), who are already in the United States. Eligible individuals without nationality who last resided in the designated country may also be granted TPS.²⁴

* (U) Northern Triangle countries include El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras.

* (U//FOUO) In FY 2016, the total encounters (apprehensions and inadmissibles) for Nicaraguan nationals were 1,347; in FY 2017, the total encounter number was 1,139, according to [REDACTED] statistics.

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(U) TPS Expiration: Direct Operational and Potential Implications

(S//FOUO) [REDACTED] Analysis noted that all TPS beneficiaries losing protected status could seek to adjust their status to prevent deportation. These adjustments include, but are not limited to, other Legal Permanent Resident (LPR) applications, asylum claims, student visas, and non-immigrant visas. Any TPS beneficiary eligible for removal could be sponsored for LPR status by a US citizen child over the age of 21. Given that the average TPS beneficiary is in their mid-forties, many may have US citizen children old enough to assist them in adjusting to LPR status. USCIS analysts also noted that the number of beneficiaries registered does not necessarily reflect the total number of individuals eligible for removal, as many have already adjusted their legal status and have not updated their records with the agency. Any TPS beneficiaries who illegally immigrate to a third nation (such as Canada) would not automatically lose TPS in the United States; however, without advanced permission to leave the country, they would likely be stopped at the border and not allowed to re-enter the United States.^{24, 25}

(U//LES) [REDACTED] data shows 240,256 removals processed in FY 2016, at a total cost of \$4.23 billion. The average cost for a removal in FY 2016 was \$11,600 per person, with individuals remaining in detention for an average of 35 days. As of 23 September 2017, there were 203 authorized detention facilities in the United States with an average daily population of 38,107.²⁶ Based on current [REDACTED] priorities, loss of TPS benefits alone would not meet the threshold for targeted removal unless individuals are found to be a national security threat, convicted of criminal acts, or previously in removal proceedings before TPS was originally designated.

(U//FOUO) State and Local Perspective: [REDACTED] reported many [REDACTED] offices commenting that, if TPS expired for any of the four countries, the impact on both federal operations and state-level interests would be dependent on whether the expiration dates were concurrent or staggered. The Massachusetts [REDACTED] indicated that while the repeal of TPS extensions would increase cost and workload for United States law enforcement, the [REDACTED] office in the state could handle the increase without major issues. The [REDACTED] offices in North Carolina and Florida indicated that they would not have adequate facilities to house any extra deportees, and they might be burdened by the costs associated with the monitoring of parolees, to include GPS ankle monitors and additional staffing needed to support these services. The [REDACTED] office in North Carolina cited the extra burden that TPS expiring would likely have on the federal immigration court system, suggesting that for those without a criminal record, the average wait time for a hearing date would likely be between 12 and 18 months. The [REDACTED] offices in Florida, Georgia, and New York indicated that TPS expiration would have a generally low or unknown impact on state tax revenue and social services due to uncertainties over the size of areas of responsibility, prioritization of removals, timelines for work authorization removal, and differing local demographics. Some polled states indicated that other economic impacts would most likely be felt at the local level.^{27, 28}

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(U) Alternative Analysis

- » (U//FOUO) I&A considered the possibility that former TPS beneficiaries returning to their home countries would remain there because they perceive US immigration policy as a barrier to returning to the United States. We also could have overestimated the effect that pull factors (the economy, families, and social ties) would have on their decision to return to the United States. If true, our estimates on return migration would be lowered, as would the potential impact to DHS personnel and resources.
 - » (U//FOUO) I&A considered the possibility that former TPS beneficiaries would travel to a third nation such as Canada or Mexico. This scenario, if true, was deemed to have no DHS impact.
 - » (U//FOUO) I&A considered the possibility that a large number of TPS beneficiaries would legally adjust status in the United States.⁴ This alternative assumes beneficiaries' knowledge of their legal options to adjust status and could impact wait times for the USCIS case load and federal immigration court. I&A currently lacks data to forecast this scenario.
 - » (U//FOUO) I&A considered the possibility that TPS beneficiaries could respond to TPS expiration by staying in the United States illegally rather than attempting to adjust status or departing to their home countries. If true, former TPS beneficiaries would contribute to the pool of illegal overstays already residing in the United States, and would burden ICE removal operations depending on prioritization. I&A currently lacks data to forecast this scenario.
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(U) Tracked by: [REDACTED]

⁴ (U) Examples of ways TPS beneficiaries could adjust their status include asylum claims, marriage to a US citizen, applications for LPR status, and applications for non-immigrant visas.

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(U) Appendix A:
TPS Overview El Salvador

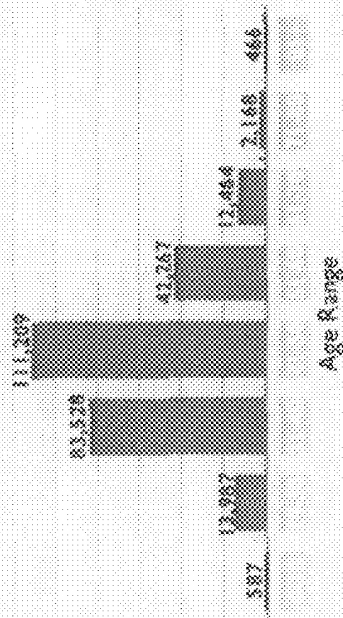
(ILV/SGU) El Salvador received TPS designation in 2001 after two earthquakes caused serious damage to the country's housing and security. The country, which experienced subsequent environmental disasters preventing beneficiaries from returning, renewed its most recent TPS extension in July 2016, expiring on 9 March 2018. El Salvador will continue to lobby for a TPS extension, almost certainly on the grounds that multiple factors (limited immigration infrastructure, underdeveloped economy, environmental problems) lower its reabsorption capacity for potential returnees. 29.04.18

(U//LES) L&A assesses that, if TPS were to expire, well-established family ties in the United States, and a host of push factors in El Salvador, such as poor job prospects, gang-related violence, and potentially poor living conditions at home, would lead to high levels of illegal return migration among returnees. Should they decide to return illegally, existing smuggling routes to the US Southwest Border would facilitate their return to the United States, as usual.

(c) Registered TPS beneficiaries in the United States prepared by August 2017 or (d) Registered TPS beneficiaries in the United States prepared by August 2017 or

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City	State	Year	Population	Area (sq. mi.)	Density (per sq. mi.)
Albuquerque	N.M.	1980	162,000	129.4	1,252
Albuquerque	N.M.	1990	189,000	129.4	1,461
Albuquerque	N.M.	2000	231,000	129.4	1,785
Albuquerque	N.M.	2010	255,000	129.4	1,970
Albuquerque	N.M.	2020	275,000	129.4	2,125
Albuquerque	N.M.	2030	295,000	129.4	2,280
Albuquerque	N.M.	2040	315,000	129.4	2,435
Albuquerque	N.M.	2050	335,000	129.4	2,590
Albuquerque	N.M.	2060	355,000	129.4	2,745
Albuquerque	N.M.	2070	375,000	129.4	2,900
Albuquerque	N.M.	2080	395,000	129.4	3,055
Albuquerque	N.M.	2090	415,000	129.4	3,210
Albuquerque	N.M.	2100	435,000	129.4	3,365

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(U//FOUO) Push Factors Increase Potential Illegal Return Migration to the United States

- » (U) Family ties would certainly lure repatriated TPS beneficiaries back to the United States. TPS holders from El Salvador have some 192,000 US citizen children, while 34 percent have mortgages.⁴³
- » (U//SBU) TPS returnees likely would have difficulties finding employment in El Salvador. The country created only 12,000 out of the 60,000 jobs needed in 2016, according to [REDACTED].⁴⁴ Nearly 85 percent of TPS holders from El Salvador have a median household income of \$50,000 in the United States, according to a July 2017 study by the Center for Migration Studies of New York.⁴⁵ In comparison, the United Nations reports that Salvadorans earn an average of \$4,100 annually.⁴⁶
- » (U//SBU) Gang-related violence is a dominant push factor for emigration from El Salvador, which would likely continue for any TPS beneficiaries returning to the country. El Salvador has the world's highest homicide rate outside of war zones: 81 per 100,000 people were killed in 2017, caused by increasing gang-on-gang violence.⁴⁷
- » (U) TPS returnees probably would face poor living conditions given recurring natural disasters and a government unable to recover from them. El Salvador ranks second in the world for risk exposure to two or more environmental hazards, according to the World Bank—resulting in an estimated 2.5 percent loss in annual GDP and further delay of economic development.⁴⁸ On July 2017 [REDACTED] recommended the extension of TPS, noting El Salvador's slow economic and social recovery from the 2001 earthquakes, as well as their vulnerability to future environmental disasters.⁴⁹

(U) Host Nation Justifications to Extend TPS

- » (U//SBU) Receiving thousands of returned citizens would overwhelm the government's limited migration infrastructure. Despite passing legislation the past summer to improve information sharing concerning returned gang members from the United States, El Salvador's migrant reintegration system remains limited, including a single long-term migration center located in San Salvador that can only facilitate up to 200 individuals per day.⁵⁰⁻⁵¹ US diplomats in San Salvador in June 2017 reported that the center does not have enough resources to meet the needs of returning TPS deportees.⁵²
- » (U//SBU) El Salvador lacks the financial resources to invest in the reintegration of a returning TPS population. [REDACTED] citing a University of Kansas survey, noted that TPS beneficiaries would need to compete with locals to find scarce jobs in order to support themselves and their families legally. El Salvador does not have adequate social services to keep these families out of poverty, according to the same source.^{53,54}
- » (U//SBU) Environmental and health challenges, according to [REDACTED] in El Salvador, render El Salvador unable to handle the return of its citizens from the United States.^{55, 56} Salvadorans face high instances of tropical diseases, respiratory illnesses, and traffic-related mortality rates in the region, according to the World Bank, diverting national expenditures from improving immigration and security programming.⁵⁷

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(U) Appendix B:

TPS Overview Honduras

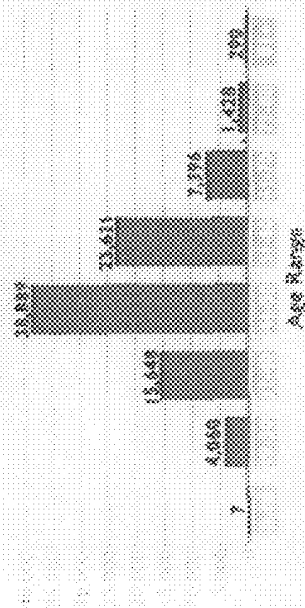
(U//FOUO) Honduras received TPS designation in early 1999 in the aftermath of Hurricane Mitch, which killed 5,637 and displaced 1.1 million people. It received its most recent extension in 2016, as additional natural disasters and pandemic illnesses have prevented the country from recovering. With its TPS expiring on 5 January 2018, Honduras will continue staying for a TPS extension, likely on the grounds that multiple factors—including a limited migration infrastructure, lack of resources, and national focus on stopping violent crime—will limit its ability to accept returning citizens.^{3, 53, 54}

(U//FOUO) U.S. assesses that if TPS were to expire, well-established family ties in the United States and a host of push factors in Honduras, such as poor living conditions and fear of gang violence, would very likely lead to high levels of illegal return migration amongst deported beneficiaries. Should these migrants decide to return illegally, existing smuggling routes to the US Southwest Border would facilitate their return to the United States.⁵⁵

(U) Registered TPS Beneficiaries in the United States presented by age and location as of 2 October 2017.⁵⁷

Honduran TPS Beneficiaries by Age

*Data Source: IJSCIS



As accordance with DHS policy regarding to IJSCIS information, it will be delivered to the public, the number, in order to protect and the way have a solid report to know without prior approval of an authorized DHS official.

Honduran TPS Beneficiaries by State and Location			
State	Number	Percentage	Total
Florida	17,594	74.8%	23,611
California	14,233	60.3%	23,611
Texas	13,868	58.7%	23,611
North Carolina	5,129	21.7%	23,611
New Jersey	5,217	22.1%	23,611
Other States	14,111	59.7%	23,611

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(U//FOUO) Push Factors Increase Potential Illegal Return Migration to the United States

- » (U) Family ties would certainly motivate resettled TPS beneficiaries to migrate back to the United States. TPS holders from Honduras have nearly 65,000 US citizen children over 20 percent have never gotten married, and over 75 percent have a median household income of \$40,000, according to a July 2017 study by the Center for Migration Studies of New York.⁴⁴ By comparison, the United Nations reports that Honduras earn an average of \$2,500 per year in their home country.⁴⁵
- » (U//SBL) Honduras remain dependent on remittances sent from family members working in the United States—another factor likely to prevent their return to the United States. Remittances comprise nearly 20 percent of the Honduran GDP, according to US Embassy [REDACTED]
- » (U//SBL) Honduras' inadequate living conditions could prompt migration. The government has been unable to reconstruct much of the Honduran infrastructure due to the 2009 economic crisis and subsequent tropical storms in 2010 and 2011. As of 2013, nearly 40 percent of households did not have electricity and 15 percent had no access to clean water, which increased food and waterborne illnesses, according to the World Bank.⁴⁶ [REDACTED] In June 2017, recommended the extension of TPS because of Honduras' slow economic and social recovery from Hurricane Mitch, as well as their vulnerability to future environmental disasters.⁴⁷
- » (U//SBL) Honduras' insurparable would likely drive migration to the United States for TPS returnees, who are accustomed to the lower crime rates of the United States. While homicide rates in Honduras have decreased since 2011, [REDACTED] and LIT reports note that the country ranks as the second most dangerous in the region, with 95 per 100,000 people killed last year. [REDACTED] is also report that the country likely would need additional time to formalize initial investments in security reform and harassment of undocumented migration.^{48,49}

(U) Host Nation Justifications to Extend TPS

- » (U//SBL) Limited migration infrastructure and social programs reduces Honduras' ability to support returning citizens. Honduras continues to have reintegration challenges, according to the World Bank, due to widespread corruption within public services, inadequate nutrition resources, and deficient government presence in rural areas, where 45 percent of citizens reside. In the past year, the country has improved its ability to accept some returning citizens, [REDACTED] by opening migratory centers in three urban areas of [REDACTED]
- » (U//SBL) The Honduran Government lacks the ability to provide resources to agencies charged with integrating resettled citizens. Honduras has one of weakest economies in Latin America, according to [REDACTED] and World Bank reports, and it is unlikely to improve in the near future because of limited investment opportunities, decreasing labor participation, and ineffective tax collection services.^{50, 51}
- » (U//SBL) The Government of Honduras views reintegration of returned citizens as a lower priority and focuses most of its resources on addressing gang violence and other domestic challenges. As part of a regional effort to stabilize migration, Honduras prioritized reducing corruption, battling gangs, and strengthening security services. Such initiatives would likely require long-term funding and political will, and, according to [REDACTED] recommending 91,000 TPS contracts would prevent success.^{52,53}

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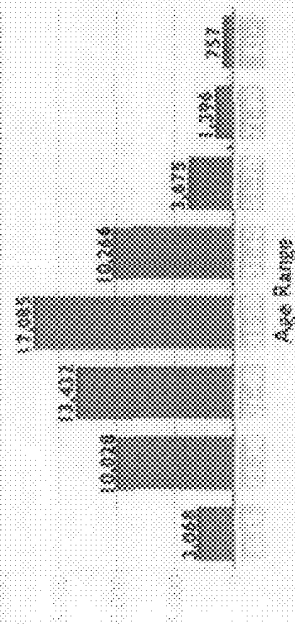
(U) Appendix C:
TPS Overview Blat

(U) Haiti received TPS designation in January 2010 after a 7.0 magnitude earthquake killed 300,000 and displaced 1.5 million Haitians. TPS status was most recently extended for an estimated 60,000 migrants in July 2017 after the devastation of Hurricane Matthew in 2016, which killed 475 and displaced 175,000 Haitians. Haiti's TPS expires on 22 January 2018, and the Government of Haiti will request another 18-month TPS extension before the deadline.^{74, 75} Limited migration-processing capabilities, law enforcement challenges, and few resources are likely reasons the Government of Haiti requires more time for recovery and preparation.

(U//SBU) I&A assesses that the expiration of TPS would very likely prompt illegal return migration among deported beneficiaries, despite typical U.S. immigration and border enforcement challenges, due to decades-long economic and family ties to the United States and a host of push factors in Haiti—including low employment opportunities, and rising violent crime.²⁶⁻²⁷

(1) Produced The Deficiency in the United States presented by and location as of Oct 2017.

Haitian TPS Beneficiaries by Age
*Data Source: USCIS



Industry: Top States and Growth Industries: EMS Products			
Continued (Table 1)			
Top 5 States	State Population	Top 5 Cities	City Population
Florida	34,204	Miami, FL	6,872
Illinois	9,881	Rockford, IL	4,655
Massachusetts	4,874	Quincy, MA	4,032
New Jersey	3,152	Fort Lauderdale, FL	1,538
Georgia	154	West Palm Beach, FL	1,214
Other States	2,327	Other Cities	87,748
Total Population			1,148,889

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(U//FOUO) Push Factors Increase Potential Haitian Return Migration to the United States

- » (U//SBU) Beneficiaries returning to Haiti would likely feel compelled to return to the United States to support family who rely on remittances. US Embassy Port-au-Prince reporting shows annual remittances from Haitians living abroad to family members in Haiti match or outpace the Government of Haiti's national budget, accounting for an estimated \$2 to \$2.5 billion annually. Haiti's 2017-2018 budget calls for an increase in taxes on Haitian citizens, according to [REDACTED].⁵⁴
 - » (U//SBU) Natural disasters continue to weaken the country's infrastructure. More than 98 percent of Haitians are vulnerable to two or more types of natural disasters, including hurricanes, floods, landslides, and drought, according to [REDACTED]. Additionally, Haiti's education system is poorly managed, with only 29 percent of school-aged children enrolled in school because of tuition costs and a lack of government resources, according to diplomatic reporting.⁵⁵
 - » (U) Family ties and economic opportunities likely will draw registered TPS holders, possibly using their means to the United States. TPS holders from Haiti have some 27,000 United States citizen children, while a quarter of all TPS holders have a foreign spouse and a median household income of \$45,000, according to a July 2017 study by the Center for Migration Studies of New York.⁵⁷
 - » (U//SBU) [REDACTED] in August 2017, recommended the expiration of TPS for Haiti due to the slow economic and social recovery after the 2010 earthquake and Hurricane Matthew, as well as its vulnerability to future environmental disasters.⁵⁸
 - » (U//LES) Haitian returnees will likely choose the United States over other destinations. USCS deferences has prevented most maritime migration, and historic migrant destinations such as Brazil and the Dominican Republic are no longer viable options due to economic or social strife, according to diplomatic reporting.⁵⁹
- (U) Host Nation Justifications to Extend TPS**
- » (U//SBU) Haiti has no long-term repatriation process established, causing inconsistent and unreliable support for future deportees and DHS deportation operations. US diplomats in Port-au-Prince have assessed that Haiti's ability to reinstate US TPS holders is unsustainable and that, if Haiti is unable to resolve competitors, DHS deportation flights will not be able to continue.⁶⁰
 - » (U//SBU) Exacerbating Haiti's ability to reintegrate returnees is the ongoing deportation of Haitians from the Dominican Republic. About 200,000 Haitians have uncertain statuses in the Dominican Republic, and currently 5,500 to 6,000 Haitians are being deported monthly from the Dominican Republic.⁶¹
 - » (U//SBU) Government and NGO repatriation assistance does not extend to more rural areas of the country, which likely will cause TPS departures to pour into already overcrowded city centers struggling to deal with rising violent crime rates, according to diplomatic reporting. Traditionally safer and more affluent neighborhoods in Port-au-Prince, as of June 2017, are experiencing a spike in violence, according to diplomatic reporting. This trend is attributed to corrupt judges, lack of appropriate law enforcement leadership response, and the October 2017 withdrawal of UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) forces.⁶²
 - » (U//SBU) The Government of Haiti does not view reintegration as a priority and most resources will be allocated to other issues. Diplomatic and Haitian media have regularly reported widespread newspaper and political corruption, and most governmental departments are running multi-million dollar deficits. In addition, Haiti's most recently passed \$2.2 billion budget sparked violent protests in September over local perceptions of corrupt and counterproductive governmental allocations, according to a body of Haitian media.⁶³

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Figure 1. The effect of the number of trials on the number of correct responses. The number of correct responses was plotted against the number of trials for each condition. The number of correct responses increased with the number of trials for all conditions. The number of correct responses was highest for the condition with the highest number of trials (10 trials) and lowest for the condition with the lowest number of trials (2 trials).

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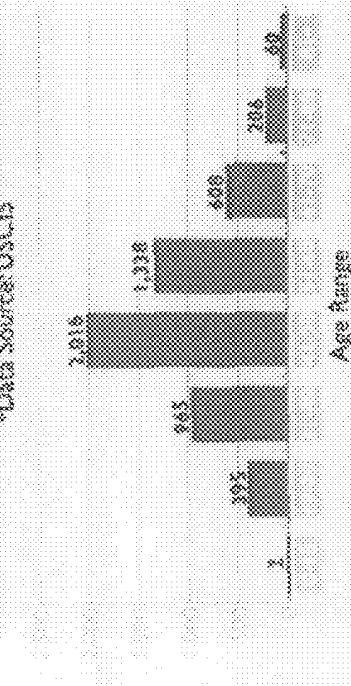
(U) Appendix D:
TPS Overview Nicaragua

(U/SSU) Nicaragua received TPS designation in January 1999 after Hurricane Mitch and flooding caused severe damage and disruption to living conditions. TPS designation has been continually extended because of subsequent natural disasters, including extensive flooding, two earthquakes, 428 eruptions of the Tacica volcano between May and July 2015, a prolonged regional drought, and a coffee rust epidemic. TPS status is set to expire 5 January 2018. *107*

[illegible]

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Nicaraguan TPS Beneficiaries by Age
*Data Source: USCIS



City/State	Population	No. Cases	C/S Ratio
Berkeley	24,121	Alameda Co.	1,684
Calicut	1,017	Holbrook Co.	279
Travis	494	Houston Co.	197
New York	180	Los Angeles Co.	156
New Jersey	56	San Francisco Co.	46
San Jose	1,384	Other States	2,119
			7,933 (Total)

1999) and, therefore, a further support to the traditional view that economic growth and development are driven by technological progress. In fact, the results of the present study suggest that the growth of the economy is not only a result of technological progress, but also a result of the growth of the population. This is in line with the findings of Barro and Sala-i-Martin (1995) and of the World Bank (1999), who found that the growth of the population is a significant determinant of economic growth. The results of the present study also suggest that the growth of the economy is not only a result of technological progress, but also a result of the growth of the population. This is in line with the findings of Barro and Sala-i-Martin (1995) and of the World Bank (1999), who found that the growth of the population is a significant determinant of economic growth.

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(U//FOUO) Push Factors Increase Potential Illegal Return Migration to the United States

- » (U//SBU) Reported TPS holders are unlikely to find work in Nicaragua comparable to TPS employment, prompting them to return to the United States. In Nicaragua, over 75 percent of Nicaraguans work agricultural jobs without official contracts or benefits and are highly vulnerable to employer exploitation, according to [REDACTED] 588
- » (U//SBU) Nicaraguans returnees face fewer security challenges than neighboring countries with high violence levels. Nicaragua's top military official stated in September 2017 that Nicaragua has lower levels of crime and drug seizures than neighboring countries, and experts in Nicaragua assert that the transnational gang La Mara Salvatrucha (MS-13) does not have a significant presence there, according to a pro-US Latin American media report. 120-111
- » (U//SBU) Returning TPS holders would find a more authoritarian country in Nicaragua, which could push newly arriving TPS holders to leave. The Nicaraguan presidential administration continues to consolidate power, according to [REDACTED] 588. In 2016, President Ortega and his wife, the Vice President, openly manipulated the political system to guarantee reelection. Additionally, in 2016, the government increased harassment and intimidation of NGOs, political opposition, and civil society organizations, according to the same report. 115

(U) Host Nation Justifications to Extend TPS

- » (U//SBU) The current Nicaraguan administration does not appear to be interested in lobbying for TPS despite significant economic and security challenges. Latin American media reported in July 2017 that Roger Castro, the Permanent Commission for Human Rights who lobbied for TPS extensions for Central Americans, said that President Ortega's administration "has not shown interest in his compassionate settled in the United States." 211-115 [REDACTED] 588. Ortega noted in July 2017 that Nicaragua's extreme weather and drought no longer met the threshold for special protected status. 115

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- [REDACTED]
- ⁸⁷ (U) (Journal) | Robert Warren and Donald Kerwin - Center for Migration Studies | Journal on Migration and Human Security | A Statistical and Demographic Profile of the US Temporary Protected Status Populations from El Salvador, Honduras, and Haiti. | July 2017 | 578-592 | | 09/21/2017 | |
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- ⁹⁰ (Online Publication) | United Nations | El Salvador Profile | 2017 | | n/a | data.un.org/countryprofile.aspx?cname=El%20Salvador | 17 October 2017 | |
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- ⁹² (Internet Site) | International Organization for Migration | Press Release | IOM Launches Reconstruction of Migration Center | 3 July 2015 | N/A | www.iom.int/news/iom-launches-reconstruction-migrant-reception-center-el-salvador | 26 September 2017 | IOM is the United Nation's Migration Center |
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- ⁹⁴ (Online Publication) | USCIS | United States Government Publishing Office | Extension of the Designation of Honduras for Temporary Protected Status | 16 May 2016 | 30331-30337 | www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR2016-05-16/pdf/2016-11306.pdf | 13 Sep 2017 | |
- [REDACTED]

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⁶⁷ [(U)] [Journal] : Robert Warren and Donald Kerwin - Center for Migration Studies : Journal on Migration and Human Security : A Statistical and Demographic Profile of the US Temporary Protected Status Populations from El Salvador, Honduras, and Haiti. | July 2017 : 574-592 | : 21 Sep 2017 |.]

⁶⁸ [(U)] [Journal] : Robert Warren and Donald Kerwin - Center for Migration Studies : Journal on Migration and Human Security : A Statistical and Demographic Profile of the US Temporary Protected Status Populations from El Salvador, Honduras, and Haiti. | July 2017 : 574-592 | : 21 Sep 2017 |.]

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⁷⁰ [Online Publication] : World Bank Group : Systematic Country Diagnostic : Honduras: Unlocking Economic Potential for Greater Opportunities | 2016 : 13 : www.worldbank.org | 20 Sep 2017 |.]

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⁷³ [Online Publication] : World Bank Group : Systematic Country Diagnostic : Honduras: Unlocking Economic Potential for Greater Opportunities | 2016 : 13 : www.worldbank.org | 20 Sep 2017 |.]

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⁷⁶ [(U)] [Internet Site] : CIA : The World Factbook | 13 June 2017 | 08 Sep 2017 | | <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/docs/nat.html> | 21 Sep 2017 |.]

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38. (b) Journal | Robert Warner and Donald Kewale - *Canal for Migration Studies | Journal on Migration and Human Security | A Statistical and Demographic Profile of the US Temporary Protected Status Populations from El Salvador, Honduras, and Haiti | Aug 2017 | 578-582 | 21 Sep 2017 |*

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0103E | 14862017071741391380 | 0103E ID: 14862017071741391380-2017-07-03-0656506-010302 | 19 July 2017 | 1 (0) Name: Edmundo Cristobal Herrer Bologn for
National Assembly Term for Health | 0103E ASSIGNED | 0103E ASSIGNED | 1
0103E | 14862017080676700003 | 0103E ID: 14862017080676700003-2017-08-06-00000-010302 | 05 September 2017 | 1 (0) Name: Patricia Solorzano Jarama Strongly
Opposes Abuses Over Death Sentence | 0103E ASSIGNED | 0103E ASSIGNED | 1

[illegible]

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1008 [LAR2017012718070669] [GINDE ID: 1002/08105314-1760-46970669-0902060179] 18 July 2017 [(U) Photo Metadata Remains Protected As Health
Records Document Under Protection With Release Authority] [(U) ASSIGNED] [(U) ASSIGNED]

1009 [LAR2017012808190611] [GINDE ID: 1002/08042465-0022-6670-6579-630206030608] 14 June 2017 [(U//FOUO) Photo of new Cabinet
Members] [(U//FOUO)] [(U//FOUO)]

1010 [LAR2017042718030921] [GINDE ID: 1002/08060104-0620-4720-0097-08040411930] 24 April 2017 [(U) Editorial Says Guy Philippe Pleads Guilty
to Killing 6000 Men With Military Weapons] [(U//FOUO)] [(U//FOUO)]

1011 [LAR20170127180671] [GINDE ID: 1002/08010940-0060-4800-6670-110806050000] 18 July 2017 [(U) Haiti Former Prime Minister Lamotte Rejects
Independent Investigation in Former Political Party] [(U//FOUO)] [(U//FOUO)]

1012 [Internal] [Robert Warren and Donald Korman - Center for Migration Studies] [Journal on Migration and Human Security] [A Statistical and Demographic Profile of the
Immigrant Population in the Dominican Republic] [(U//FOUO)] [(U//FOUO)] [(U//FOUO)]

1013 [LAR20170128087916] [GINDE ID: 1002/0270000-0307-4030-6440-80000746700] 18 September 2017 [(U) Experts Say More Saboteurs
Disruption Does Not Operate in Nicaragua] [(U//FOUO)] [(U//FOUO)]

1014 [LAR20170428080716] [GINDE ID: 1002/07061148-1067-4800-5067-010206050000] 6 September 2017 [(U) Reuters Nicaragua Report Assesses
Existence of a New Group of Terrorist Organizations] [(U//FOUO)] [(U//FOUO)]

1015 [LAR20170726081855] [GINDE ID: 1002/05080500-1745-4000-6100-811700440000] 27 July 2017 [(U) Nicaragua: Thousands of Migrants on Edge
Over Possible Expulsion of TPS] [(U//FOUO)] [(U//FOUO)]

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Office of Intelligence and Analysis

INTELLIGENCE ASSESSMENT

2 November 2017

(U) Border Security**(U) Implications for TPS Expiring for Beneficiaries from El Salvador, Honduras, Haiti, and Nicaragua**

(U//FOUO) Scope. This Intelligence Assessment provides an overview of how the approximately 434,000 Temporary Protected Status (TPS) beneficiaries from El Salvador, Honduras, Haiti, and Nicaragua would respond these protections were to expire in the second quarter of FY 2018.^{1,2} The Assessment focuses on the homeland security implications of expiring TPS protections, including the possibility of former beneficiaries returning illegally after deportation and other operational considerations involving law enforcement, economic, and other concerns. It is intended for US policy makers, Intelligence Community partners, and state, local, tribal, and territorial law enforcement partners. The information cutoff date for this assessment is 24 October 2017.

(U) Prepared by the Office of Intelligence and Analysis (I&A), with [REDACTED]

(U) Key Judgment

(U//FOUO) I&A judges that former TPS beneficiaries from all four countries choosing to illegally return to the United States likely would have the personal and economic motivation and the financial means to pay smugglers to assist them. I&A assesses that TPS beneficiaries from El Salvador and Honduras who are returned to their home countries would have the highest rates of illegal return migration due to these countries' established routes for illicit travel and entry at the US Southwest Border. Beneficiaries from Haiti will have more moderate levels of illegal return migration due to well-established maritime deterrence methods. Beneficiaries from Nicaragua may have some illegal return migration due to prevalent economic and social issues there; however, its smaller TPS population would represent a lower impact on DHS interests.

(U) Key Assumptions

(U//FOUO) Our analysis assumes that host nations would begin to receive repatriated citizens within 6 to 12 months of TPS expiration, and that a significant portion of beneficiaries would not pursue status adjustment, such as seeking asylum or student visas, to remain in the United States.

IA-XXXX-18

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(U//FOUO) We assume that former TPS holders would not migrate in significant numbers to Canada or Mexico prior to being deported from or voluntarily leaving the United States.

- » (U//FOUO) Family and economic ties to the United States likely would motivate repatriated TPS holders to return to the United States, possibly via illegal migration. Many TPS beneficiaries from El Salvador, Honduras, Haiti, and Nicaragua have lived continuously in the United States since the late 1990s, according to [REDACTED].³⁴ TPS beneficiaries made up 80 percent of the labor force, are parents to hundreds of thousands of United States citizen children, and maintain strong economic ties to the United States through home and business ownership, according to the Center for Migration Studies, a US-based think tank and educational institute that studies international migration.³⁵
- » (U//LES) Honduras and El Salvador migrants take well-established overland routes to attempt to access the US Southwest Border illicitly using trains, buses, taxis, and personal cars. Trips take an average of 10 to 21 days and cost up to \$8,000, according to a body of [REDACTED] reporting from 2014 to 2017.³⁶⁻³⁸ Former TPS beneficiaries deported from the United States to Honduras and El Salvador could easily use these routes to return almost immediately to the United States; additionally, they likely have the means to pay any associated smuggling costs because of the income they earned while living and working in the United States, according to [REDACTED] research.³⁹
- » (U//LES) Since consistent USCG patrolling has successfully deterred migrants from traveling on maritime routes, many are resorting to overland routes to the US Southwest Border via South and Central America, according to a body of [REDACTED] reporting.^{16,18,17,48} [REDACTED] assessed in February 2017 that Haitian maritime migration levels are likely to remain constant through FY 2019, barring any change to US immigration policy, a significant natural disaster, or major degradation of security conditions.⁴⁰
- » (U//LES) Like other Central Americans, Nicaraguan migrants also take overland routes to reach the US Southwest Border, but the number of Nicaraguan migrants who traveled illegally to the United States compared to those from Northern Triangle countries was relatively low, with less than 1,500 total encounters per year in both FY 2016 and FY 2017, according to [REDACTED] data.^{20,21,22,4}

(U) What is Temporary Protected Status (TPS)?

(U) The Secretary of Homeland Security may designate a foreign country for Temporary Protected Status (TPS) due to conditions in the country that temporarily prevent the country's nationals from returning safely, or in certain circumstances, where the country is unable to handle the return of its nationals adequately. (USCIS may grant TPS to eligible nationals of certain countries (or parts of countries), who are already in the United States. Eligible individuals without nationality who last resided in the designated country may also be granted TPS.)⁴¹

* (U//FOUO) In FY 2016, the total encounters (apprehensions and inadmissibles) for Nicaraguan nationals were 1,347; in FY 2017, the total encounter number was 1,139, according to [REDACTED] statistics.

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(U) TPS Expiration: DHS's Operational and Tactical Considerations

(U//FOUO) [REDACTED] Analysts noted that all TPS beneficiaries using protected status could seek to adjust their status to prevent deportation. These adjustments include, but are not limited to, other LPR applications, asylum claims, student visas, and non-immigrant visas. Any TPS beneficiary eligible for removal could be sponsored for LPR status by a US citizen child over the age of 21. Given that the average TPS beneficiary is in their mid-forties, many may have US citizen children old enough to assist them in adjusting to LPR status. USCIS analysts also noted that the number of beneficiaries registered does not necessarily reflect the total number of individuals eligible for removal, as many have already adjusted their legal status and have not updated their records with the agency. Any TPS beneficiaries who illegally immigrate to a third nation (such as Canada) would not automatically lose TPS in the United States; however, without advanced permission to leave the country, they would likely be stopped at the border and not allowed to re-enter the United States.^{24,25}

(U//LES) [REDACTED] data shows 240,255 removals processed in FY 2016, at a total cost of \$4.23 billion. The average cost for a removal in FY 2016 was \$11,869 per person, with individuals remaining in detention for an average of 34.9 days. As of 25 September 2017, there were 203 authorized detention facilities in the United States with an average daily population of 38,107.²⁶ Based on current [REDACTED] priorities, loss of TPS benefits alone would not meet the threshold for targeted removal unless individuals are found to be a national security threat, convicted of criminal acts, or previously in removal proceedings before TPS was originally designated.

(U//FOUO) **State and Local Perspective:** [REDACTED] reported many [REDACTED] offices commenting that, if TPS expired for any of the four countries, the impact on both federal operations and state-level interests would be dependent on whether the expiration dates were concurrent or staggered. The Massachusetts [REDACTED] indicated that while the repeal of TPS extensions would increase cost and workload for United States law enforcement, the [REDACTED] office in the state could handle the increase without major issues. The [REDACTED] offices in North Carolina and Florida indicated that they would not have adequate facilities to house any extra detainees, and they might be burdened by the costs associated with the monitoring of parolees, to include GPS ankle monitors and additional staffing needed to support these services. The [REDACTED] office in North Carolina cited the extra burden that TPS expiring would likely have on the federal immigration court system, suggesting that for those without a criminal record, the average wait time for a hearing date would likely be between 12 and 18 months. The [REDACTED] offices in Florida, Georgia, and New York indicated that TPS expiration would have a generally low or unknown impact on state tax revenue and social services due to uncertainties over the size of areas of responsibility, prioritization of removals, timelines for work authorization removal, and differing local demographics. Some polled states indicated that other economic impacts would most likely be felt at the local level.^{27,28}

(U) Alternative Analysis

- » (U//FOUO) I&A considered the possibility that former TPS beneficiaries returning to their home countries would remain there because they perceive US immigration policy as a barrier to returning to the United States. We also could have overestimated the effect that pull factors (the economy, familial and social ties) would have on their decision to return to the United States. If true, our estimates on return migration would be lowered, as would the potential impact to DHS personnel and resources.
- » (U//FOUO) I&A considered the possibility that former TPS beneficiaries would travel to a third nation such as Canada or Mexico. This scenario, if true, was deemed to have no DHS equities.
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- » (U//FOUO) I&A considered the possibility that TPS beneficiaries could respond to TPS expiration by staying in the United States illegally rather than attempting to adjust status or departing to their home countries. If true, former TPS beneficiaries would contribute to the pool of illegal overstayers already residing in the United States, and would burden ICE removal operations depending on prioritization. I&A currently lacks data to forecast this scenario.

(U) Tracked by: [REDACTED]

²⁹ (U) Examples of ways TPS beneficiaries could adjust their status include asylum claims, marriage to a US citizen, applications for LPR status, and applications for non-immigrant visas.

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DHS INTERNAL ONLY(U) Appendix A:
TPS Overview El Salvador

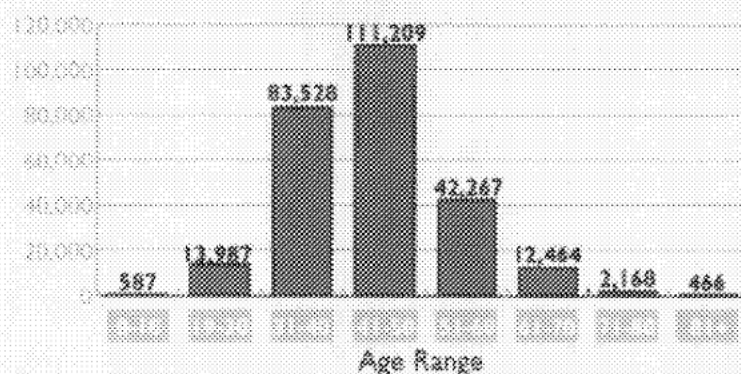
(U//SBU) El Salvador received TPS designation in 2001 after two earthquakes caused serious damage to the country's housing and security. The country, which experienced subsequent environmental disasters preventing beneficiaries from returning, received its most recent TPS extension in July 2016, expiring on 9 March 2018. El Salvador will continue to lobby for a TPS extension, almost certainly on the grounds that multiple factors (limited immigration infrastructure, underdeveloped economy, environmental problems) lower its reabsorption capacity for potential returnees.^{29,30,31,32}

(U//FOUO) I&A assesses that, if TPS were to expire, well-established family ties in the United States and a host of push factors in El Salvador, such as poor job prospects, gang-related violence, and potentially poor living conditions at home, would lead to high levels of illegal return migration among returnees. Should they decide to return illegally, existing smuggling routes to the US Southwest border would facilitate their return to the United States.^{29,34,35,36}

(U) Registered TPS Beneficiaries in the United States presented by age and location as of 2 October 2017.³⁷

(U) Salvadoran TPS Beneficiaries by Age

*Data Source: USCIS



(U//FOUO) Top States and Cities for Salvadoran TPS Holders			
Data Source: DHS			
Top State	State Population	Top City	City Population
California	38,518	Los Angeles, CA	19,299
Texas	40,497	Houston, TX	18,057
New York	31,296	Silver Spring, MD	4,266
Virginia	23,496	Dallas, TX	4,024
Maryland	34,255	Brentwood, NY	4,022
Other States	87,991	Other Cities	227,285
Total Salvadoran TPS Holders: 217,633			

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UNCLASSIFIED//LAW ENFORCEMENT SENSITIVE
DHS INTERNAL ONLY**(U//FOUO) Push Factors Increase Potential Illegal Return Migration to the United States**

- » (U) Family ties would certainly lure repatriated TPS beneficiaries back to the United States. TPS holders from El Salvador have some 192,000 US citizen children, while 34 percent have mortgages.³⁸
- » (U//SBU) TPS returnees likely would have difficulties finding employment in El Salvador. The country created only 12,000 out of the 60,000 jobs needed in 2016, according to [REDACTED].³⁹ Nearly 85 percent of TPS holders from El Salvador have a median household income of \$50,000 in the United States, according to estimates by the Center for Migration Studies of New York.⁴⁰ In comparison, the United Nations reports that Salvadorans earn an average of \$4,100 annually.⁴¹
- » (U//SBU) Gang-related violence is a dominant push factor for emigration from El Salvador, which would likely continue for any TPS beneficiaries returning to the country. El Salvador has the world's highest homicide rate outside of war zones; 81 per 100,000 people were killed in 2017, caused by increasing gang-on-gang violence.⁴²
- » (U) TPS returnees would face recurring natural disasters and a government unable to recover from them, making living conditions uninhabitable. El Salvador ranks second in the world for risk exposure to two or more environmental hazards, according to the World Bank--resulting in an estimated 2.5 percent loss in annual GDP and further delay of economic development.⁴³ On 7 July 2017, [REDACTED] recommended the extension of TPS, noting El Salvador's slow economic and social recovery from the 2001 earthquakes, as well as their vulnerability to future environmental disasters.⁴⁴

(U) Host Nation Justifications to Extend TPS

- » (U//SBU) Receiving thousands of returned citizens would overwhelm the government's limited migration infrastructure. Despite passing legislation to improve information sharing concerning returned gang members from the United States, El Salvador's migrant reintegration system remains limited, including a single long-term migration center located in San Salvador that can only facilitate up to 200 individuals per day.⁴⁵⁻⁴⁶ While the center successfully processed approximately 52,580 returning migrants and families in December 2016, [REDACTED] reports convey that the center does not have enough resources to meet the needs of returning TPS deportees.⁴⁷
- » (U//SBU) El Salvador lacks the financial resources to invest in the reintegration of a returning TPS population. TPS beneficiaries provide necessary remittances to families in El Salvador to supplement food and living expenses, creating a cycle of tax-free income that promotes unemployment and limits funding for social services.⁴⁸⁻⁴⁹ In 2015, [REDACTED] reporting noted that remittances from the United States (\$4.27 billion) were four times greater than El Salvador's public investment (\$1.02 billion), and 10 times higher than foreign direct investment (\$429 million), further preventing economic development, increasing remittance dependency, driving emigration from El Salvador, and increasing crime.⁵⁰⁻⁵¹
- » (U//SBU) Environmental and health challenges, according to [REDACTED], render El Salvador unable to handle the return of its citizens from the United States.⁵²⁻⁵³ Salvadorans face high instances of tropical diseases, respiratory illnesses, and traffic-related mortality rates in the region, according to the World Bank, diverting national expenditures from improving immigration and security programming.⁵⁴

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TPS Overview Honduras

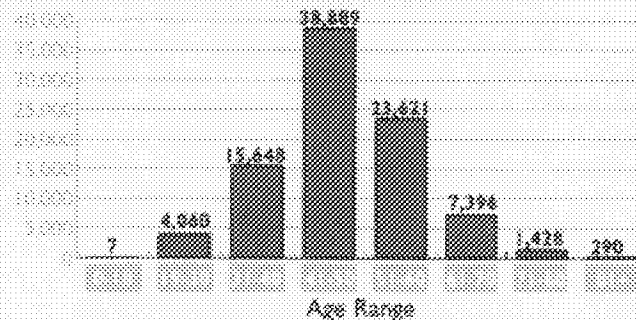
(U//SBU) Honduras received TPS designation in early 1999 in the aftermath of Hurricane Mitch, which killed 5,657 and displaced 1.1 million people. It received its most recent extension in 2016, as additional natural disasters and pandemic illnesses have prevented the country from recovering. With its TPS expiring on 5 January 2018, Honduras will continue lobbying for a TPS extension, likely on the grounds that multiple factors—including a limited migration infrastructure, lack of resources, and national focus on stopping violent crime—will limit its ability to accept returning citizens.^{55,56}

(U//FOUO) I&A assesses that if TPS were to expire, well-established family ties in the United States and a host of push factors in Honduras, such as poor living conditions and fear of gang violence, would very likely lead to high levels of illegal return migration amongst deported beneficiaries. Should these migrants decide to return illegally, existing smuggling routes to the US Southwest border would facilitate their return to the United States.^{57,58}

(U) Registered TPS Beneficiaries in the United States presented by age and location as of 2 October 2017.⁵⁹

(U) Honduran TPS Beneficiaries by Age

*Data Source: USCIS



(U//FOUO) Top States and Cities for Honduran TPS Holders (as of 2 October 2017)			
State/City	Number of Beneficiaries	State/City	Number of Beneficiaries
Florida	17,076	Miami, FL	8,198
California	14,233	Houston, TX	6,790
Texas	13,858	Los Angeles, CA	4,348
North Carolina	5,350	Brooklyn, NY	1,357
New Jersey	5,337	Dallas, TX	1,145
Other States	34,212	Other Cities	70,118
Total Registered TPS Holders			

According to DHS policy relating to FOUO information and is not to be released to the public, the media, or other personnel who do not have a valid need to know without prior approval of an authorized DHS official.

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UNCLASSIFIED//LAW ENFORCEMENT SENSITIVE
DHS INTERNAL ONLY**(U//FOUO) Push Factors Increase Potential Illegal Return Migration to the United States**

- » (U) Family ties would certainly motivate repatriated TPS beneficiaries to migrate back to the United States. TPS holders from Honduras have nearly 55,000 US citizen children; over 20 percent have mortgages; and over 75 percent have a median household income of \$40,000, according to estimates by the Center for Migration Studies of New York.⁶⁰ By comparison, the United Nations reports that Hondurans earn an average of \$2,500 per year in their home country.⁶¹
- » (U//SBU) Hondurans remain dependent on remittances sent from family members working in the United States—another factor likely to prompt their return to the United States. Remittances comprise nearly 20 percent of the Honduran GDP, according to [REDACTED] ^{62,63}
- » (U) Honduras' inadequate living conditions could prompt emigration. The government has been unable to reconstruct much of the Honduran infrastructure due to the 2009 economic crisis and subsequent tropical storms in 2010 and 2011. As of 2013, nearly 40 percent of households did not have electricity and 15 percent had no access to clean water, which increased food and waterborne illnesses, according to the World Bank.⁶⁴ On 29 June 2017, [REDACTED] recommended the extension of TPS because of Honduras' slow economic and social recovery from Hurricane Mitch, as well as their vulnerability to future environmental disasters.⁶⁵
- » (U//SBU) Honduras' insecurities would likely drive migration to the United States for TPS returnees, who are accustomed to the lower crime rates of the United States. While homicide rates in Honduras have decreased since 2011, [REDACTED] and UN reports note that the country ranks as the second most dangerous in the region, with 56 per 100,000 people killed. [REDACTED] also report that the country likely would need additional time to formalize initial investments in security reform and infrastructure to decrease illegal migration.^{66,67,68}

(U) Host Nation Justifications to Extend TPS

- » (U//SBU) Limited migration infrastructure and social programs reduces Honduras' ability to support returning citizens. Honduras continues to have reintegration challenges, according to the World Bank, due to widespread corruption within public services, inadequate nutrition resources, and deficient government presence in rural areas, where 45 percent of citizens reside. In the past year, the country has improved its ability to accept some returning citizens, [REDACTED] by opening migration centers in three urban areas.^{69,70,71}
- » (U//SBU) The Honduran Government lacks the ability to provide resources to agencies charged with integrating repatriated citizens. Honduras has one of the weakest economies in Latin America, according to [REDACTED] and World Bank reports, and it is unlikely to improve in the near future because of limited investment opportunities, decreasing labor participation, and ineffective tax collection services.^{72,73}
- » (U//SBU) The Government of Honduras views reintegration of returned citizens as a lower priority and focuses most of its resources on reducing gang violence and other domestic challenges. As part of a regional effort to stabilize migration, Honduras prioritized reducing corruption, battling gangs, and strengthening security services. Such initiatives would likely require long-term funding and political will, and, according to [REDACTED], accommodating 91,000 TPS compatriots would prevent success.^{74,75}

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UNCLASSIFIED//LAW ENFORCEMENT SENSITIVE
DHS INTERNAL ONLY(U) Appendix C:
TPS Overview Haiti

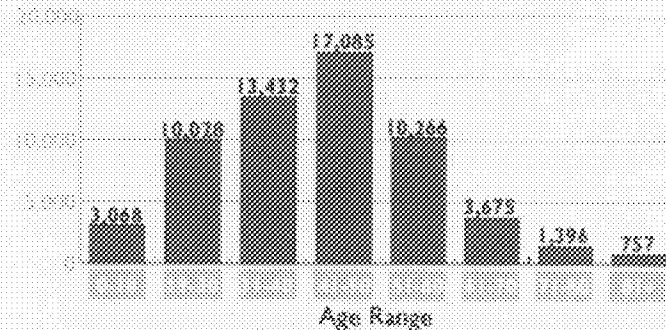
(U//SBU) Haiti received TPS designation in January 2010 after a 7.0 magnitude earthquake killed 300,000 and displaced 1.5 million Haitians. TPS status was most recently extended for an estimated 60,000 migrants in July 2017 after the devastation of Hurricane Matthew in 2016, which killed 475 and displaced 175,000 Haitians. Haiti's TPS expires on 22 January 2018, and the Government of Haiti will request another 18-month TPS extension before the deadline.^{76, 77} Limited migration-processing organizations, law enforcement challenges, and few resources are likely reasons the Government of Haiti requires more time for recovery and preparation.

(U//FOUO) I&A assesses that the expiration of TPS would very likely prompt illegal return migration among deported beneficiaries, despite typical maritime and land migration challenges, due to decades-long economic and family ties to the United States and a host of push factors in Haiti—including low employment opportunities, and rising violent crime.⁷⁸⁻⁸³

(U) Registered TPS Beneficiaries in the United States presented by age and location as of 2 Oct 2017.⁸⁴

(U) Haitian TPS Beneficiaries by Age

*Data Source: USCIS



(U//FOUO) Top States and Cities for Haitian TPS Holders			
Data Source: USCIS			
Top 5 States	State Population	Top 5 Cities	City Population
Florida	21,324	Miami, FL	5,873
New York	19,961	Brooklyn, NY	4,655
Massachusetts	4,854	Orlando, FL	4,012
New Jersey	3,152	Fort Lauderdale, FL	1,536
Georgia	156	West Palm Beach, FL	1,314
Other States	7,327	Other Cities	41,764
TPS National Total: 65,175			

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UNCLASSIFIED//LAW ENFORCEMENT SENSITIVE
DHS INTERNAL ONLY**(U//FOUO) Push Factors Increase Potential Illegal Return Migration to the United States**

- » (U//SBU) Beneficiaries returning to Haiti would likely be forced to return to the United States, as a lack of employment forces most Haitian citizens to rely on remittances sent from abroad. [REDACTED] reporting shows annual remittances from Haitians living abroad to family members in Haiti match or outpace the Government of Haiti's national budget, accounting for an estimated \$2 to \$2.5 billion annually. Haiti's 2017-2018 budget calls for an increase in taxes on Haitian citizens, according to [REDACTED] reporting.^{86,88}
- » (U//SBU) Natural disasters continue to weaken the country's infrastructure. More than 98 percent of Haitians are vulnerable to two or more types of natural disasters, including hurricanes, floods, landslides, and drought. [REDACTED]. Additionally, Haiti's education system is poorly managed, with only 29 percent of school-aged children enrolled in school because of tuition costs and a lack of government resources, according to [REDACTED] reporting.^{87,88}
- » (U) Family ties and economic opportunities likely will draw repatriated TPS holders, possibly using illicit means, to the United States. TPS holders from Haiti have some 27,000 United States citizen children, while a quarter of all TPS holders have a mortgage and a median household income of \$45,000, according to estimates by the Center for Migration Studies of New York.⁸⁹
- » (U//SBU) [REDACTED] on 3 August 2017, recommended the extension of TPS for Haiti due to its slow economic and social recovery after the 2010 earthquake and Hurricane Matthew, as well as its vulnerability to future environmental disasters.⁹⁰
- » (U//SBU) Haitian returnees will likely choose the United States over other destinations. USCG deterrence has prevented most maritime migration, and historic migrant destinations such as Brazil and the Dominican Republic are no longer viable options due to economic or social strife, according to [REDACTED] reporting.^{91,92}

(U) Host Nation Justifications to Extend TPS

- » (U//SBU) Haiti has no long-term repatriation process established, causing inconsistent and unreliable support for future deportees and DHS deportation operations. [REDACTED] in Port-au-Prince have assessed that Haiti's ability to reabsorb US TPS holders is unsustainable and that, if Haiti is unable to receive compatriots, DHS deportation flights will not be able to continue.^{93,94,95}
- » (U//SBU) Exacerbating Haiti's ability to reintegrate returnees is the ongoing deportation of Haitians from the Dominican Republic. About 200,000 Haitians have uncertain statuses in the Dominican Republic, and currently 5,500 to 6,000 Haitians are being deported monthly from the Dominican Republic.⁹⁶
- » (U//SBU) Government and NGO repatriation assistance does not extend to more rural areas of the country, which likely will cause TPS deportees to pool into already overpopulated city centers struggling to deal with rising violent crime rates, according to diplomatic reporting. Traditionally safer and more affluent neighborhoods in Port-au-Prince, as of 16 June, are experiencing a spike in violence, according to diplomatic reporting. This trend is attributed to corrupt judges, lack of appropriate law enforcement leadership response, and the withdrawal of UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) forces in mid-October.^{97,98}
- » (U//SBU) The Government of Haiti does not view reintegration as a priority and most resources will be allocated to other issues. Diplomatic and Haitian media have regularly reported widespread nepotism and political corruption, and most governmental departments are running multi-million dollar deficits. Forward progress and economic growth remain low. Haiti's most recently passed \$2.2 billion budget sparked violent protests in September over local perceptions of corrupt and counterproductive governmental allocations, according to a body of Haitian media.^{99,100}

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UNCLASSIFIED//LAW ENFORCEMENT SENSITIVE
DHS INTERNAL ONLY(U) Appendix D:
TPS Overview Nicaragua

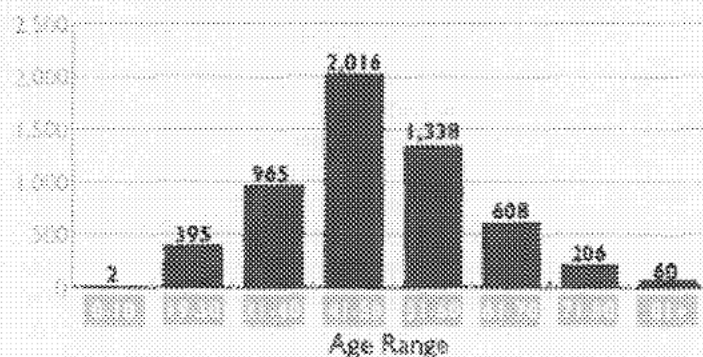
(U//SBU) Nicaragua received TPS designation in January 1999 after Hurricane Mitch and flooding caused severe damage and disruption to living conditions. TPS designation has been continually extended because of subsequent natural disasters, including extensive flooding, two earthquakes, 426 eruptions of the Telica volcano, a prolonged regional drought, and a coffee rust epidemic. TPS status is set to expire 5 January 2018.¹⁰⁸

(U//FOUO) I&A assesses that the Government of Nicaragua would not request a new TPS extension because the government appears uninterested in engaging with the United States and is probably capable of reintegrating the considerably small population of TPS holders back into the country. However, if TPS were to expire, I&A assesses that decades-long economic and family ties to the United States, as well as a host of push factors—including low employment opportunities and a corrupt government system—would lead to high illegal return migration among deported beneficiaries.

(U//FOUO) Registered TPS Beneficiaries in the United States presented by age and location as of 2 Oct 2017.¹¹⁰

(U) Nicaraguan TPS Beneficiaries by Age

*Data Source: USCIS



(U//FOUO) Top States and Cities for Nicaraguan TPS Holders Data as of 2 Oct 2017			
Top State	State Population	Top City	City Population
Florida	2,612	Miami, FL	1,694
California	1,017	Huachuca, CA	279
Texas	464	Houston, TX	197
New York	190	Los Angeles, CA	156
New Jersey	156	San Francisco, CA	88
Other States	1,204	Other States	1,219
TPS Beneficiaries: 5,510			

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UNCLASSIFIED//LAW ENFORCEMENT SENSITIVE
DHS INTERNAL ONLY**(U//FOUO) Push Factors Increase Potential Illegal Return Migration to the United States**

- » (U//SBU) Deported TPS holders are unlikely to find work in Nicaragua comparable to US employment, prompting them to return to the United States. In Nicaragua, over 75 of Nicaraguans work exclusively in informal jobs without official contracts or benefits and are highly vulnerable to employer exploitation, according to [REDACTED].¹¹¹
- » (U//SBU) Migrant returnees would return to Nicaragua with major infrastructure and lack of employment opportunities due to reduced international investment. Significant international aid to Nicaragua's economy and infrastructure was recently suspended following the government's non-transparent and flawed 2011 elections.¹¹²
- » (U) Nicaraguan returnees face fewer security challenges than neighboring countries with high violence levels. Nicaragua's top military official stated in September that Nicaragua has lower levels of crime and drug seizures than neighboring countries, and experts in Nicaragua assert that the transnational gang La Mara Salvatrucha (MS-13) does not have a significant presence there, according to a pro-US Latin American media report.^{113,114}
- » (U//SBU) Returning TPS holders would find a more authoritarian country in Nicaragua, which could push newly arriving TPS holders to leave. The Nicaraguan presidential administration continues to consolidate power, according to [REDACTED] in 2016. President Ortega and his wife, the Vice President, openly manipulated the political system to guarantee reelection. Additionally, in 2016, the government increased harassment and intimidation of NGOs, political opposition, and civil society organizations, according to the same report.¹¹⁵

(U) Host Nation Justifications to Extend TPS

- » (U//SBU) The current Nicaraguan administration does not appear to be interested in lobbying for TPS despite significant economic and security challenges. Latin American media reported in July that Roger Castano, the Permanent Commissioner for Human Rights who lobbied for TPS extension for Central Americans, said that President Ortega's administration "has not shown interest in his compatriots settled in the United States."^{116,117} [REDACTED] in Managua noted in July 2017 that Nicaragua's extreme weather and drought no longer met the threshold for special protected status.¹¹⁸

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(U) Source Summary Statement

(U//LES) This Assessment relies heavily upon [REDACTED] NGO, and foreign media reporting to assess current and past economic, social, and environmental challenges, and to assess likely future impacts of TPS expiring for beneficiaries from four Western Hemisphere countries. I&A has **medium confidence** in our assessment of the potential return migration of TPS beneficiaries, as migration trends are susceptible to public perceptions, misinformation, and individual family decisions. This Assessment could have benefited from more reporting to corroborate [REDACTED] and open source reporting on the countries' motivations for TPS extension and their capabilities for reintegrating returning migrants. I&A also concludes that the [REDACTED] and media sources used could have been influenced by host nation priorities. I&A received policy and operational insight and some statistics from [REDACTED] which we considered reliable because of the agencies' firsthand access and experience with TPS and the deportation process. Additionally, we received tactical information from [REDACTED] outreach to state and local contacts, which we incorporated in the country-specific deep dive sections and in the operational box, which we consider reliable but incomplete. We did not have sufficient time to pursue responses from at least two states that have a large majority of TPS holders—California and Texas—but still received a good survey of operational considerations from five states with sizeable TPS populations: Florida, Georgia, Massachusetts, New York, and North Carolina.

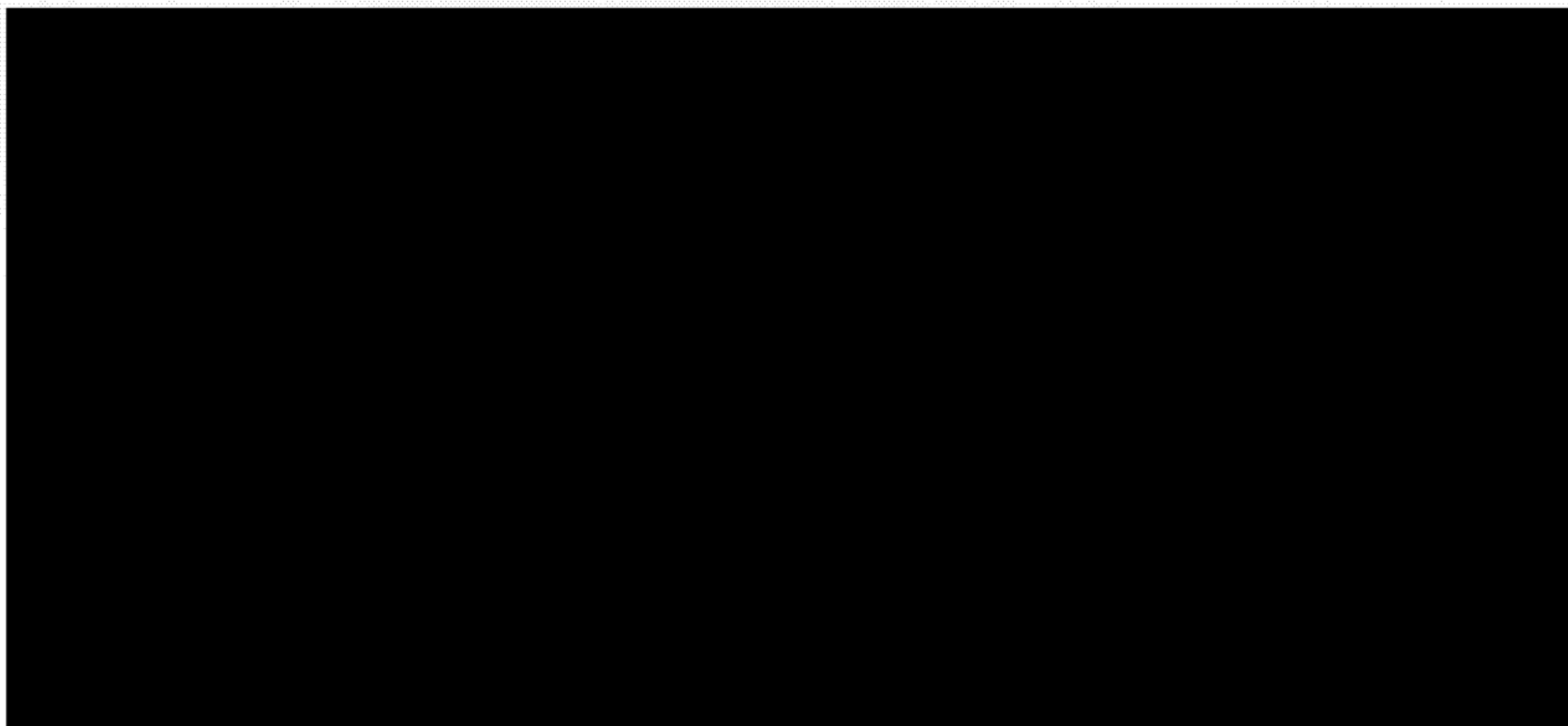
[REDACTED]

(U) [Journal | Robert Warren and Donald Kerwin - Center for Migration Studies | Journal on Migration and Human Security | A Statistical and Demographic Profile of the US Temporary Protected Status Populations from El Salvador, Honduras, and Haiti | July 2017 | 578-592 | | 21 Sep 2017 |]

[REDACTED]

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- ²⁹ [Online Publication | RIN 1615-ZB53 | United States Government Publishing Office | Federal Register: Extension of the Designation of El Salvador for Temporary Protected Status | 8 Jul 2016 | 44645-44651 | www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2016-07-08/pdf/2016-15802.pdf | 14 September 2017 |]
- ³⁰ [Online Publication | RIN 1615-ZB53 | United States Government Publishing Office | Federal Register: Extension of the Designation of El Salvador for Temporary Protected Status | 8 Jul 2016 | 44645-44651 | www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2016-07-08/pdf/2016-15802.pdf | 14 September 2017 |]
- ³¹ [Online Publication | The World Bank Group | Systematic Country Diagnostic | El Salvador: Building on Strengths for a New Generation | May 2015 | x | www.worldbank.org | 20 Sep 2017 |]



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[REDACTED]

³⁵ [(U) [Journal | Robert Warren and Donald Kerwin - Center for Migration Studies | Journal on Migration and Human Security | A Statistical and Demographic Profile of the US Temporary Protected Status Populations from El Salvador, Honduras, and Haiti | July 2017 | 578-592 | | 09/21/2017 |]

³⁶ [(U) [Journal | Robert Warren and Donald Kerwin - Center for Migration Studies | Journal on Migration and Human Security | A Statistical and Demographic Profile of the US Temporary Protected Status Populations from El Salvador, Honduras, and Haiti | July 2017 | 578-592 | | 09/21/2017 |]

[REDACTED]

³⁷ [(U) [Journal | Robert Warren and Donald Kerwin - Center for Migration Studies | Journal on Migration and Human Security | A Statistical and Demographic Profile of the US Temporary Protected Status Populations from El Salvador, Honduras, and Haiti | July 2017 | 578-592 | | 09/21/2017 |]

³⁸ [Online Publication | United Nations | El Salvador Profile | 2017 | | n/a | data.un.org/country/profile.aspx?cname=El%20Salvador | 17 October 2017 |]

[REDACTED]

³⁹ [Online Publication | The World Bank Group | Systematic Country Diagnostic | El Salvador: Building on Strengths for a New Generation | May 2015 | | x | www.worldbank.org | 20 Sep 2017 |]

[REDACTED]

⁴⁰ [Internet Site | International Organization for Migration | Press Release | IOM Launches Reconstruction of Migration Center | 3 July 2015 | N/A | www.iom.int/news/iom-launches-reconstruction-migrant-reception-center-el-salvador | 26 September 2017 | IOM is the United Nation's Migration Center]

[REDACTED]

⁴¹ [Online Publication | 2017 World Health Statistics | 2017 World Health Statistics | 2017 | 59-72 | www.who.int | 26 September 2017 |]

[REDACTED]

⁴² [Online Publication | The World Bank Group | Systematic Country Diagnostic | El Salvador: Building on Strengths for a New Generation | May 2015 | | iii, ix | www.worldbank.org | 20 September 2017 |]

⁴³ [Online Publication | USCIS | United States Government Publishing Office | Extension of the Designation of Honduras for Temporary Protected Status | 16 May 2016 | 30331-30337 | www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR2016-05-16/pdf/2016-11306.pdf | 13 Sep 2017 |]

[REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

⁶² [(U) [Journal | Robert Warren and Donald Kerwin - Center for Migration Studies | Journal on Migration and Human Security | A Statistical and Demographic Profile of the US Temporary Protected Status Populations from El Salvador, Honduras, and Haiti. | July 2017 | 578-592 | | 21 Sep 2017 |]]

⁶³ [(U) [Journal | Robert Warren and Donald Kerwin - Center for Migration Studies | Journal on Migration and Human Security | A Statistical and Demographic Profile of the US Temporary Protected Status Populations from El Salvador, Honduras, and Haiti. | July 2017 | 578-592 | | 21 Sep 2017 |]]

⁶⁴ [Online Publication | United Nations | Honduras Profile | 2017 | | n/a | data.un.org/countryprofile.aspx?cname=Honduras | 17 Oct 2017 |]

⁶⁵ [Online Publication | World Bank Group | Systematic Country Diagnostic | Honduras: Unlocking Economic Potential for Greater Opportunities | 2016 | 13 | www.worldbank.org | 20 Sep 2017 |]

⁶⁶ [Online Publication | World Bank Group | Systematic Country Diagnostic | Honduras: Unlocking Economic Potential for Greater Opportunities | 2016 | 13 | www.worldbank.org | 20 Sep 2017 |]

⁶⁷ [Internet Site | United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime (UNODC) | World Bank Data Open Data | UNODC Intentional Homicide Statistics Database | Periodically | N/A | data.worldbank.org/indicator/VC.IHR.PSRG.P5?end=2015&locations=US-SV-HN&start=1995&view=chart | 26 Sep 2017 | The World Bank displays open license data from international data bases, including the United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime (UNODC) Intentional Homicide Statistics |]

⁶⁸ [Online Publication | World Bank Group | Systematic Country Diagnostic | Honduras: Unlocking Economic Potential for Greater Opportunities | 2016 | 13 | www.worldbank.org | 20 Sep 2017 |]

⁶⁹ [Online Publication | World Bank Group | Systematic Country Diagnostic | Honduras: Unlocking Economic Potential for Greater Opportunities | 2016 | 13 | www.worldbank.org | 20 Sep 2017 |]

⁷⁰ [Online Publication | World Bank Group | Systematic Country Diagnostic | Honduras: Unlocking Economic Potential for Greater Opportunities | 2016 | 13 | www.worldbank.org | 20 September 2017 |]

⁷¹ (U) [Internet Site | CIA | The World Factbook | 13 June 2017 | 08 Sep 2017 | | https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ha.html | 21 Sep 2017 |]

⁷² [OSE | LAR2017060382932260 | GUIDE ID: 1002/44944fb-513e-432d-bcf8-7024d148b4b | 5 Aug 2017 | | (U) Deportations Loom in Dominican Republic for Haitian Migrants | | (UNCLASSIFIED) | (UNCLASSIFIED) |]

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[REDACTED]
[OSE | LAW2017090487058773 | GUIDE ID: 1002/fa9cc2bf-5609-4058-aa41-e15e7540e954 | 5 Sep 2017 | | (U) Haitian Government Increases Efforts To Extend Temporary Protected Status | | (UNCLASSIFIED) | (UNCLASSIFIED) |]

[REDACTED]
[OSE | LAR2017052278342241 | GUIDE ID: 1002/4e6f4d36-e20e-4c1e-9dde-6f96496119d7 | 23 May 2017 | | (U) Haitian Government Request Temporary Protection Status Renewal in Washington | | (UNCLASSIFIED) | (UNCLASSIFIED) |]

[U] [Journal | Robert Warren and Donald Kerwin - Center for Migration Studies | Journal on Migration and Human Security | A Statistical and Demographic Profile of the US Temporary Protected Status Populations from El Salvador, Honduras, and Haiti | July 2017 | 578-592 | | 21 Sep 2017 |]

[REDACTED]
[U] [Journal | Robert Warren and Donald Kerwin - Center for Migration Studies | Journal on Migration and Human Security | A Statistical and Demographic Profile of the US Temporary Protected Status Populations from El Salvador, Honduras, and Haiti | July 2017 | 578-592 | | 21 Sep 2017 |]

[REDACTED]
[OSE | LAR2017052278342241 | GUIDE ID: 1002/4e6f4d36-e20e-4c1e-9dde-6f96496119d7 | 23 May 2017 | | (U) Haitian Government Request Temporary Protection Status Renewal in Washington | | (UNCLASSIFIED) | (UNCLASSIFIED) |]

[REDACTED]
[OSE | LAR2017052278342241 | GUIDE ID: 1002/4e6f4d36-e20e-4c1e-9dde-6f96496119d7 | 23 May 2017 | | (U) Haitian Government Request Temporary Protection Status Renewal in Washington | | (UNCLASSIFIED) | (UNCLASSIFIED) |]

[REDACTED]
[OSE | LAR2017082182410584 | GUIDE ID: 1002/340dfb0a-7880-4712-9c90-35abe002c112 | 25 August 2017 | | (U) Haiti: Economist Labossiere Labels 2017-2018 Budget "Decalaf" | | (UNCLASSIFIED) | (UNCLASSIFIED) |]

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- ¹⁰¹ [OSE | LAR2017071774194169 | GUIDE ID: 1002/1cfc76ce-2d01-4889-bc53-6e5906a01302 | 18 July 2017 | | (U) Haiti: Editorial Criticizes Bigger Budget for National Assembly Than for Health | | (UNCLASSIFIED) | (UNCLASSIFIED) |]
- ¹⁰² [OSE | LAW2017090487804683 | GUIDE ID: 1002/73d6716a-88f9-4540-8348-706311587270 | 5 September 2017 | | (U) Haiti: PHTK Senator Joseph Strongly Criticizes Moise Over Draft Budget | | (UNCLASSIFIED) | (UNCLASSIFIED) |]

- ¹⁰⁴ [OSE | LAR2017071771876888 | GUIDE ID: 1002/691c8314-1763-4697-b69b-56fa2cb48175 | 18 July 2017 | | (U) Haiti: Hospitals Remain Paralyzed As Health Workers Continue Strike Unsatisfied With Wage Increase | | (UNCLASSIFIED) | (UNCLASSIFIED) |]

- ¹⁰⁹ [OSE | LAR2017061268106511 | GUIDE ID: 1002/5b04248d-9b02-4d7c-857a-e268aebd88a8 | 14 June 2017 | | (U//FOUO) Haiti: Promise of New Cabinet Members | | (U//FOUO) | (U//FOUO) |]
- ¹⁰⁷ [OSE | LAR2017042775832921 | GUIDE ID: 1002/ad86cb36-0523-4729-b097-05e4e841193a | 28 April 2017 | | (U) Editorial Says Guy Philippe Pleads Guilty Highlighting Haiti's Weak Judicial Institutions | | (UNCLASSIFIED) | (UNCLASSIFIED) |]
- ¹⁰⁸ [OSE | LAR2017071772736671 | GUIDE ID: 1002/bac1045-cd6c-4aaa-897c-1715b5a58a0e | 18 July 2017 | | (U) Haiti: Former Prime Minister Lamoigne Rejects Unfounded Accusations in Senator Latortue's Report | | (UNCLASSIFIED) | (UNCLASSIFIED) |]

- ¹⁰⁹ (U) [Journal | Robert Warren and Donald Kerwin - Center for Migration Studies | Journal on Migration and Human Security | A Statistical and Demographic Profile of the US Temporary Protected Status Populations from El Salvador, Honduras, and Haiti | July 2017 | 578-592 | | 21 Sep 2017 |]

- ¹¹³ [OSE | LAW2017091260887916 | GUIDE ID: 1002/b27bf6ce-33af-4c55-9452-8f0afb7d5fdh | 15 September 2017 | | (U) Experts Say Mara Salvatrucha Organization Does Not Operate in Nicaragua | | (UNCLASSIFIED) | (UNCLASSIFIED) |]
- ¹¹⁴ [OSE | LAW2017090858687710 | GUIDE ID: 1002/27eef148-75c7-4dda-9f67-81c258950fde | 6 September 2017 | | (U) Revision: Nicaragua: Report Asserts Existence of Large-Scale Drug Trafficking Operations | | (UNCLASSIFIED) | (UNCLASSIFIED) |]

- ¹¹⁷ [OSE | LAR2017072466818957 | GUIDE ID: 1002/55f8500-1745-4b6f-b130-9117c094f8a8 | 27 July 2017 | | (U) Nicaragua: Thousands of Migrants On Edge Over Possible Expiration of TPS | | (UNCLASSIFIED) | (UNCLASSIFIED) |]

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**Evangelical
Immigration
Table**

Council for Christian Colleges
and Universities

Ethics and Religious Liberty
Commission of the Southern
Baptist Convention

Korean Churches for
Community Development/Faith
and Community Empowerment

National Association of
Evangelicals

National Hispanic Christian
Leadership Conference

The Wesleyan Church

World Relief

November 1, 2017

Acting Secretary of Homeland Security Elaine Duke
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
3801 Nebraska Ave. NW
Washington, DC 20016

Dear Acting Secretary Duke,

As leaders serving and representing millions of evangelical Christians through our respective denominations, churches, colleges, universities, and ministries, we are writing to respectfully ask you to consider extending the Temporary Protected Status (TPS) designation that has been granted by past administrations for nationals of several countries, including Honduras, Nicaragua, Haiti, and El Salvador, each of which requires your decision to renew or terminate the status within the coming weeks or months. **We believe that reform of the TPS program is needed and warranted. Accordingly, we urge you to extend the TPS designation for Honduras, Nicaragua, Haiti, and El Salvador to provide Congress time to provide needed reforms to the TPS program.**

Our concern is driven by our Christian faith and our commitment to the Scriptures, which speak clearly and frequently to God's concern for those who are vulnerable, specifically including immigrants and the poor. Each of these individuals, from a biblical perspective, is endowed with inherent dignity as a person made in God's image, and each is a neighbor whom Jesus commands us to love. The Bible also teaches us that God has established families as the fundamental building block of healthy societies, and we are concerned with the separation of families that withdrawing TPS at this time would likely entail.

The roughly 300,000 individuals from these four countries who currently are lawfully present under TPS protections each voluntarily came forward at the invitation of the federal government, passed a criminal background check (and in many cases multiple subsequent background checks with each renewal), and have demonstrated that they are economically self-sufficient, as they do not qualify for federal means-test public benefits. They contribute significantly to our national economy, including contributing roughly \$7 billion in Social Security and Medicare taxes over the past decade and much more as consumers, employees in critical sectors of our economy, and entrepreneurs.

These individuals are now firmly established parts of our communities, including many who are members of our local churches and students within our colleges. Most Central Americans granted TPS have been present in the United States for twenty years or more, and they have put down roots here. Most are parents of one or more U.S. citizen children; if these parents were to be deported or simply no longer be authorized to work, it would create a significant strain on these U.S. citizen children and other immediate family members—and on both public and private social support systems for which these citizen children would qualify.

Withdrawal of TPS at this time—without a long-term, legislative resolution of these individuals' situation—would also have a significantly negative impact on the countries to which these immigrants would potentially be returned. Several of

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The Wesleyan Church

World Relief

our organizations operate or support ministries in Central America and/or Haiti, and our colleagues there are deeply concerned about the impact of a withdrawal of TPS on the country as a whole, each of which is facing challenges of poverty and violence.

While the Central American countries were initially designated with TPS status because of natural disasters more than 15 years ago, El Salvador and Honduras have competed in recent years for the ignominious title of the highest civilian homicide rate of any country in the world. Haiti, initially designated with TPS after the horrific earthquake of 2010, has recently been hit by several severe hurricanes. In each of these cases, the countries face chronic unemployment and underemployment, dynamics that would likely be exacerbated by a sudden insertion of residents who have lived abroad for many years, harming the poorest of the poor.

When Congress created the TPS program in 1990, it was envisioned as a way for the federal government to provide safe haven on a temporary basis in situations when returning individuals to a country devastated by natural disaster or manmade violence would be inhumane. Regrettably, many of these countries remain unsafe even after many years. In any case, we are working with Congress to make needed reforms to the TPS program. The situations of long-term recipients of TPS status are complex and demand a legislative solution. We urge you to renew the TPS designation for Honduras, Nicaragua, Haiti, and El Salvador to allow Congress to develop such a solution.

Sincerely,

Leith Anderson, President, National Association of Evangelicals

Scott Arbeiter, President, World Relief

Shirley V. Hoogstra, President, Council for Christian Colleges and Universities

Hyepin Im, President & CEO, Korean Churches for Community Development

Jo Anne Lyon, Ambassador, General Superintendent Emerita, The Wesleyan Church

Russell Moore, President, Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention

Samuel Rodríguez, President, National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference

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Only Deciding Honduras and Nicaragua

- I do not agree with rendering a decision on all 4 countries (Honduras, Nicaragua, Haiti and El Salvador) at one time is appropriate. Instead, each country should be viewed individually when their current extension expires.
- The decision on Haiti is not due until November 23 and El Salvador is due January 5, 2018.
- Haiti TPS is dramatically different from the other three countries due to the limited duration of TPS. Haiti – 7 years; Honduras and Nicaragua – 19 years.

Nicaragua – Terminate with 18 months

- It's clear from the Department of State's country assessment that the TPS conditions NO LONGER EXIST
 - Original conditions from Hurricane Mitch do not exist
 - There is no armed conflict preventing folks from returning
 - Nicaragua is capable to adequately handle the return of their nationals (5,349)
 - Nicaragua has not requested an extension
- Similar input – from intelligence and economic reports – have lead me to the same conclusion

Honduras – No Determination/Auto Extension for 6 months

- By not affirmatively extending, I'm stating that I'm NOT satisfied that the country conditions remain – sending a clear signaling that TPS is coming to a close.
- While the Department of State indicated that the original conditions related to the Hurricane do not exist, they also stated that Honduras is UNABLE at this time to adequately handle the return of their nationals (86,163). There is currently no plan in place.
- I am also not convinced that the partnership between Honduras and the US would not be severely damaged – thereby impacting our work with them on TCOs and illegal immigration efforts.
- Thus, I am making a determination that I currently do not have all of the necessary information to make a determination in an appropriately deliberate manner.
- I plan to make it very clear that TPS for Honduras is drawing to a close and that DHS and USG need to develop a plan for the successful assimilation of TPS beneficiaries back to Honduras.
- This is the same approach and message sent during the extension of Haiti's TPS in May 2017 by then Secretary Kelly.

- do all 4 countries together?
- no real reason to expand
- where did the Decima come from?
whose recommendation? It was someone's
John's first thought it was someone's
polled crowd of shift parties

Planned Congress
break up of Grits
for orderly transition
aspirational

John Sullivan

- Congress doesn't want TPS extension
foreign policy issues - important partners
hard to absorb large number
Honduras Nov 26 pres. election

Kelly wants
to give "advice"
about
transition in
Honduras
elections

- when I met w/ Kelly, stated he was not
feminist

Marcy (Piper film)

- Separate Haiti from central americans
- don't want to get into close bond
of 2019 political or mid terms
immigration allows merit based
system
we want then to be on a path to naturalize
Congress

Sassano

- push time in law exposed
under law can't keep certifying
can't concede the law
if Congress wants to deal w/ them ok
don't imply they've been mistreated
not worried about dates
problematic to recertify
just bite the bullet
dangerous to separate Haiti out - prelude against
the Haitians

2

Sessions

how do you let this happen is
what the people will say
no one has got to pull the trigger
can't control

Sullivan

who gets to stay needs to be deliberated
unanimously

Andrew

Dec 18 is best chance to get a bill
Sessions disagrees

Sessions

- we go to Speaker & get things
get bill and House that is strong person
get Senate to support House &
- until we end the illegality
amnesty vote is more stark
- Congressional Pressure
Campaign

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U.S. Department of Homeland Security
U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services
Office of the Director (MS 2000)
Washington, DC 20529-2000



U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
Services

October 26, 2017

DECISION MEMORANDUM FOR THE ACTING SECRETARY

FROM: L. Francis Cissna
Director

27AC

SUBJECT: Nicaragua's Designation for Temporary Protected Status

Purpose: Nicaragua's existing designation for Temporary Protected Status (TPS) will expire on January 5, 2018. At least 60 days before the expiration of a TPS designation, the Secretary, after consultation with appropriate U.S. Government agencies, must review the conditions in a country designated for TPS to determine whether the conditions supporting the designation continue to be met. If the Secretary determines that the country no longer meets the statutory conditions for designation, she shall terminate the designation. If the Secretary does not determine, however, that the conditions for designation are no longer met, the TPS designation will be extended for 6 months, or in the Secretary's discretion, 12, or 18 months.¹

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) has completed a review of the conditions in Nicaragua and is presenting options and a recommendation for your consideration. In summary, USCIS assesses that, although Nicaragua continues to face development challenges, the country suffers few remaining residual effects of Hurricane Mitch, which formed the basis of Nicaragua's designation for TPS in 1999. Accordingly, USCIS recommends that you terminate Nicaragua's TPS designation.

As part of the review process, USCIS staff has consulted with the Department of State (DOS). However, to date, Secretary Tillerson has not weighed in and DOS has not provided any recommendation.

Nicaragua's TPS Designation: On January 5, 1999, then Attorney General Reno designated Nicaragua for TPS on environmental disaster grounds, specifically, because of the devastation caused by Hurricane Mitch in October of 1998.²

The reason for Nicaragua's designation for TPS stated in the Federal Register at the time of the initial designation was that "*Hurricane Mitch swept through Central America causing severe flooding and associated damage in Nicaragua. ...[D]ue to the environmental disaster and*

¹ See Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) § 244(b)(3)(A-C), 8 U.S.C. § 1254a(b)(3)(A-C); see also Attachment A: Temporary Protected Status Legal Authority.

² See Designation of Nicaragua Under Temporary Protected Status, 64 FR 529 (Jan. 5, 1999).

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substantial disruption of living conditions caused by Hurricane Mitch, Nicaragua is unable, temporarily, to handle adequately the return of Nicaraguan nationals."

At the time, the Attorney General estimated that there would be no more than 45,000 to 70,000 nationals of Nicaragua in the United States who would be eligible for TPS.

Nicaragua's designation has been continuously extended since the 1999 designation, with the most recent extension announced on May 16, 2016.³

To be eligible for TPS under Nicaragua's designation, along with meeting the other eligibility requirements, individuals must have continuously resided in the United States since December 30, 1998, and have been continuously physically present in the United States since January 5, 1999. There are approximately 5,300 Nicaraguan TPS beneficiaries. Approximately 2,300 individuals re-registered for TPS under Nicaragua's last extension.⁴

Current Country Conditions

USCIS has conducted an in-depth review of conditions in Nicaragua. The country condition report, upon which USCIS' assessment and recommendation are based, can be found in Attachment B.

Hurricane Mitch killed over 3,000, and affected nearly 868,000 Nicaraguans. Landslides and floods destroyed villages and caused extensive damage to the country's infrastructure and agricultural sector.

Nicaragua received a significant amount of international aid to assist in its Hurricane Mitch-related recovery efforts, and many reconstruction projects have now been completed. Although Nicaragua reportedly continues to have one of the highest housing deficits in Central America, hundreds of homes destroyed by the storm have been rebuilt. The Second Land Administration Project covers 6 of the 15 Departments in the country and has helped over 430,000 people benefit from better property rights regulations. More than 67,000 families have received legal documents for their properties, of which more than 43,000 are new land titles.⁵ Significant aid was dedicated to repairing roads, and access to drinking water and sanitation has improved. Over 200 kilometers of roads have been constructed, benefitting around 460,000 people. More than 168,000 people have benefitted from access to reliable water supplies and sanitation services as a result of international aid-based projects.

The Second Educational Sector Support Project—an International Development Assistance (IDA) project—provided 1.4 million textbooks to 225,000 primary students of the poorest regions of the country, which represent 25percent of the national enrollment in primary education.⁶ All 'afro-

³ See Extension of the Designation of Nicaragua for Temporary Protected Status, 81 FR 30325 (May 16, 2016).

⁴ The total number of beneficiaries represents all individuals who have been granted TPS since Nicaragua's designation in 1999 and who have not had their TPS withdrawn. Not all of these individuals continue to re-register because they have adjusted to another valid immigration status (e.g., over 1,600 have become lawful permanent residents or U.S. citizens), have left the United States, are no longer eligible for TPS, or have failed to re-register for other reasons. As a result, the number of beneficiaries that re-register for TPS under extensions is lower than the total number of beneficiaries.

⁵ World Bank, "World Bank in Nicaragua", available at: <http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/nicaragua/overview>

⁶ World Bank, "World Bank in Nicaragua", available at: <http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/nicaragua/overview>

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descendant and indigenous primary students in the Caribbean Coast received textbooks in their native languages for the first time ever.

The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in Nicaragua reached an all-time high of \$13.23 billion (USD) in 2016 and is expected to reach \$13.48 billion by the end of this quarter. Within a long-term context, the GDP in Nicaragua is projected to increase to about \$15.67 in 2020.⁷ Additionally, the World Bank reported that, despite global economic turbulence, Nicaragua has stood out for maintaining growth levels above the average for Latin America and the Caribbean as a result of disciplined macroeconomic policies, combined with a steady expansion of exports and foreign direct investment. Nicaragua ranks second among countries in Central America with favorable prospects for foreign direct investment and trade.⁸ In August 2017, the Nicaraguan government reported that 96 percent of the population was employed.⁹

Recovery from Hurricane Mitch has, however, been slow and encumbered by subsequent environmental challenges. A regional drought has recently impacted Nicaragua, causing crop losses, food insecurity, water shortages, and income loss in affected areas. By June of 2016, over 300,000 people were in need of food assistance. The 2017 growing season has demonstrated slightly improved conditions, allowing normal development of basic grain crops. Nicaragua has also been affected recently by a regional coffee rust epidemic, which has caused crop loss and declining coffee production throughout Central America since 2012, leading to job loss and food insecurity. Additionally, in recent years, Nicaragua has experienced an outbreak of thousands of cases of mosquito-borne illnesses, including chikungunya, dengue, and Zika.

In addition, in stark contrast to its neighbors to the north, Nicaragua also lacks high levels of crime and violence. Nicaragua's homicide rate declined to 7 homicides per 100,000 inhabitants in 2016, slightly higher than the worldwide average of 5.3 homicides per 100,000 inhabitants in 2015 (the most recent year available), and significantly lower than El Salvador's rate of 81.2 per 100,000 in 2016 and Honduras' rate of 59 per 100,000. There has been some significant, but isolated, violence along Nicaragua's Caribbean coast since 2015 relating to conflict over land between indigenous communities and settlers, and violence against women remains widespread. However, on the whole, crime rates are low, police are viewed positively and focus on preventing crime and violence, and transnational gangs and drug trafficking are largely absent from the country.

The U.S. Department of State does not have a current travel warning for Nicaragua, and the United Kingdom states that "most visits to Nicaragua are trouble free."

Finally, the U.S. Government works to repatriate individuals back to Nicaragua. During the Obama administration's second term alone, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) removed over 4,300 individuals to Nicaragua.¹⁰ The U.S. removed, on average, over 2,300 individuals to Nicaragua each year in FY2010-2012.

⁷ *Trading Economics*, "Nicaragua GDP", available at: <https://tradingeconomics.com/nicaragua/gdp>

⁸ *World Bank*, "World Bank in Nicaragua", available at: <http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/nicaragua/overview>

⁹ Alvarez Hidalgo, Wendy, *Crecimiento económico mella poco en el subempleo*, La Prensa (Ni.), Aug. 8, 2017.

¹⁰ From 2013-2016, 4,311 individuals were removed to Nicaragua. This total is the cumulative number of removals found in the following reports: <https://www.ice.gov/sites/default/files/documents/Report2016/removal-stats-2016.pdf>; <https://www.ice.gov/sites/default/files/documents/Report2016/fy2015removalstats.pdf>; <https://www.ice.gov/doclib/about/offices/ero/pdf/2014-ice-immigration-removals.pdf>; <https://www.ice.gov/doclib/about/offices/ero/pdf/2013-ice-immigration-removals.pdf>

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Options1) *Extend Nicaragua's Designation for TPS*

Under the TPS statute, if you determine that the statutory conditions for TPS designation are met, then TPS designation will be extended for an additional period of 6 months, or in your discretion 12, or 18 months. Nicaragua was initially designated for TPS in 1999 as a result of the damage caused by Hurricane Mitch. The review of conditions in Nicaragua indicates that reconstruction and recovery efforts relating to the storm have largely been completed. Although subsequent environmental challenges hampered Nicaragua's recovery and development, Nicaragua's current challenges cannot be directly tied to destruction stemming from Hurricane Mitch. Therefore, USCIS assesses that, on balance, conditions in Nicaragua no longer support its TPS designation on the basis of Hurricane Mitch.

Although USCIS assesses otherwise, an argument could be made that the subsequent and, in some cases, ongoing environmental challenges – in particular, the prolonged, severe drought, coffee rust epidemic, and mosquito-borne disease outbreak – have sufficiently hindered recovery that a substantial disruption in living conditions endures. Under this assessment, Nicaragua continues to be unable to handle the return of its nationals, and extension is justified. USCIS is not aware of a request for extension of Nicaragua's TPS designation from the Government of Nicaragua.

From an operational perspective, extension periods of less than 18 months are challenging given the significant workload and timeframes involved in receiving and adjudicating re-registration applications and issuing new employment authorization documents. Additionally, the deliberative review process to support TPS decision making, including consultation with DOS, typically begins 10 months before the expiration date of a country's current designation. A 12- or 18-month extension of Nicaragua's designation for TPS would permit Nicaraguan TPS beneficiaries to re-register for TPS and remain in the United States with work authorization through January or July 5, 2019, respectively.

2) *Terminate Nicaragua's Designation for TPS*

If you determine that Nicaragua no longer continues to meet the statutory requirements for its TPS designation, you must terminate TPS for Nicaragua. Termination would end TPS benefits for existing Nicaraguan TPS beneficiaries. Upon the termination of TPS benefits, former beneficiaries without another immigration status or authorization to remain would no longer have permission to work and remain in the United States. They may, however, apply for any other immigration benefits for which they may be otherwise eligible (e.g., asylum, lawful permanent residence). As explained above, USCIS assesses that termination is warranted because recovery and reconstruction efforts relating to Hurricane Mitch have largely been completed and current challenges cannot be directly tied to damage from the storm.

If you decide to terminate Nicaragua's designation, you may determine the appropriate effective date of the termination. In doing so, you have the option to provide for an orderly transition period (e.g., 6, 12, or 18 months) after which TPS documentation will end. Delaying the effective

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date would provide those beneficiaries without any other immigration status a reasonable amount of time following the announcement of termination of the designation to plan and prepare for their departure from the United States, of particular importance for this population given the extended length of time Nicaraguan TPS beneficiaries have been living in the United States. Delaying the effective date would also allow Nicaragua time to prepare for and absorb its nationals in a more orderly fashion. Note: the effective date of termination may not be earlier than 60 days after the date the *Federal Register* notice announcing the termination is published or, if later, the expiration of the most recent previous extension.

3) *Redesignate Nicaragua for TPS*

In addition to making a decision to terminate or extend Nicaragua's TPS designation, you could also consider redesignating the country for TPS. A decision to redesignate a country for TPS, unlike termination or extension, is entirely at your discretion; if the statutory conditions are met, you may, but do not have to, redesignate a country for TPS. Nicaragua has experienced numerous environmental challenges in recent years, including hurricanes, tropical storms, floods, volcanic and seismic activity, drought, mosquito-borne illnesses, and a coffee rust epidemic that continue to pose challenges for Nicaragua. However, the scale and effects of these events do not appear to be on par with those that would typically support a country's designation for TPS. Additionally, Nicaragua is not experiencing the same high levels of violence and citizen insecurity as its northern neighbors. In light of these considerations, USCIS does not assess there to be a strong basis for redesignating Nicaragua for TPS.

4) *No Decision/Automatic Extension*

If you do not make a determination about whether Nicaragua's TPS designation should be extended or terminated at least 60 days prior to its expiration date, by statute, its period of designation will be automatically extended for 6 additional months (or, in your discretion, a period of 12 or 18 months). You could affirmatively choose not to make a decision about whether the conditions supporting Nicaragua's designation continue to be met and announce the automatic extension of 6 (or 12 or 18) months, noting that you or your successor will then review conditions prior to the expiration of that extension.

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Timeliness: You are required to provide timely notice of whether existing TPS designations will be extended or terminated through publication in the *Federal Register*.¹¹ Your earliest decision will facilitate publication of notice in the *Federal Register* sufficiently in advance of the January 5, 2018 expiration of Nicaragua's designation, providing predictability and clarity to beneficiaries and their employers. By statute, if you do not make a decision at least 60 days before the expiration of the current designation (i.e., by November 6, 2017), then Nicaragua's designation will automatically be extended for a minimum of 6 months.¹²

Recommendation: USCIS recommends that you terminate Nicaragua's designation for TPS with an effective date delayed by 6, 12, or 18 months to permit an orderly transition. This would permit current Nicaraguan TPS beneficiaries to continue to remain and work in the United States through July 5, 2018; January 5, 2019; or July 5, 2019, respectively.

Decision:

1. Extend: *Extend Nicaragua's existing designation for (circle one):*

6 months

12 months

18 months

Approve/date _____

2. Terminate: *Terminate Nicaragua's designation with an orderly transition period of (circle one or specify period):*

6 months

12 months

18 months

Other _____

Approve/date _____

3. Terminate and Redesignate: *Terminate Nicaragua's existing designation and simultaneously redesignate Nicaragua:*

Specify duration of redesignation (6-18 months): _____

Specify continuous residence date for eligibility under redesignation (currently December 30, 1998): _____

Approve/date _____

4. No Decision/Automatic Extension: *Delay a decision on Nicaragua's designation, resulting in an extension of (circle one):*

6 months

12 months

18 months

Approve/date _____

¹¹ See INA § 244(b)(3)(A).

¹² See INA § 244(b)(3)(A), (C).

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Attachments:

Attachment A: Temporary Protected Status Legal Authority

Attachment B: April 2017 USCIS RAIO Research Unit Report on Conditions in Nicaragua

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U.S. Department of Homeland Security

U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
Services

TEMPORARY PROTECTED STATUS CONSIDERATIONS: NICARAGUA APRIL 2017

Hurricane Mitch: Damages and Recovery

Hurricane Mitch made landfall in Nicaragua in October 1998. The storm killed 3,045 people, and 885 were reported missing.¹ The devastation caused by Hurricane Mitch affected nearly 868,000 people.² Landslides and floods destroyed entire villages and caused extensive damage to the transportation network, housing, medical and educational facilities, water supply and sanitation facilities, and the agricultural sector.³ Overall damage estimates ranged between \$1.3 to \$1.5 billion.⁴

As of May 1999, the Government of Nicaragua estimated that Hurricane Mitch destroyed 23,854 homes and damaged an additional 17,566.⁵ Housing reconstruction costs were estimated at \$143.7 million.⁶ Damages to roads and bridges accounted for approximately 60% of Hurricane Mitch-related reconstruction costs.⁷ Approximately 1,500 kilometers of paved and 6,500

¹ *Nicaragua: Huracán Mitch Daños, Costos, Acciones de Rehabilitación del Gobierno y la Cooperación Internacional*, Reunión del Grupo Consultivo, May 25-28, 1999.

² *Ibid.* (Past Refugee, Asylum and International Operations (RAIO) reports stated that two million people were affected by Hurricane Mitch, citing to a URL hosted by the National Climatic Data Center. This report, however, cites to a figure produced by the Government of Nicaragua at the Consultative Group Meeting for the Reconstruction and Transformation of Central America held in Stockholm, Sweden in May 1999. The purpose of the Consultative Group Meeting was to raise aid for countries devastated by Hurricane Mitch. In its efforts to obtain aid, the Government of Nicaragua produced a precise figure further broken down by region. For example, the storm affected 867,752 people, with 448,209 of the victims residing in Region II (comprised of León and Chinandega departments) and 190,577 residing in Region VI (comprised of Matagalpa and Jinotega departments). The government estimated that 50.1% of those affected were women, and 45.7% were minors under age 14. This RAIO report cites to the Government of Nicaragua figure). See also: *Mitch: The Deadliest Atlantic Hurricane Since 1780*, National Climatic Data Center, <http://www.ncdc.noaa.gov/oa/reports/mitch/mitch.html> (last visited Apr. 14, 2017).

³ *Nicaragua: Huracán Mitch Daños, Costos, Acciones de Rehabilitación del Gobierno y la Cooperación Internacional*.

⁴ *Nicaragua Overview*, U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), <http://web.archive.org/web/20110606154339/http://www.usaid.gov/pubs/bj2001/lac/ni/> (last visited Apr. 14, 2017). According to a USAID source, overall damages were US\$1.5 billion. The Government of Nicaragua assessed damages at US\$1.3 billion. See *Nicaragua: Huracán Mitch Daños, Costos, Acciones de Rehabilitación del Gobierno y la Cooperación Internacional*.

⁵ *Nicaragua: Huracán Mitch Daños, Costos, Acciones de Rehabilitación del Gobierno y la Cooperación Internacional*.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ *Ibid.*

Temporary Protected Status Considerations: Nicaragua
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kilometers of unpaved roads were damaged, while 3,800 meters of bridges were damaged or destroyed.⁸ As a result, the country's main cities were physically disconnected from smaller towns and communities.⁹ Road and bridge reconstruction and rehabilitation costs were estimated at \$804 million.¹⁰

Estimates of schools damaged vary. The Government of Nicaragua reported that Hurricane Mitch destroyed 296 schools and damaged 216 more.¹¹ More than 294,000 textbooks were destroyed and 555 teachers were left homeless or injured, contributing to damages totaling \$43.7 million.¹² An alternate source, however, indicated that approximately 340 schools were damaged.¹³

Likewise, estimates of damages to health infrastructure vary. According to the Government of Nicaragua, a total of 102 health units were damaged or destroyed by Hurricane Mitch, including one hospital, 30 health centers, and 71 health posts.¹⁴ However, an alternate source reports that 90 health centers, 40 health posts, and six hospitals suffered damages.¹⁵

Damages from Hurricane Mitch to the agricultural sector, comprised of the internal consumption and export markets, impacted the agricultural economy and local food access.¹⁶ The bean, corn, and rice crops, all destined for domestic consumption, suffered estimated losses of 71%, 51%, and 28%, respectively.¹⁷ Similarly, crops destined for the export market, including sesame, peanuts, and bananas, saw losses of 65%, 27%, and 18%, respectively.¹⁸ In addition, an estimated 77,000 cattle, 21,509 horses, 97,121 pigs, and 222,736 poultry were lost in the storm, contributing to a decrease in the overall food supply.¹⁹

The hurricane also damaged 79 potable water and nine sewage treatment systems.²⁰ In the urban sector, 24 water uptake systems, 20 wells, 67 water pump stations, and 52 kilometers of pipes were damaged.²¹ In the rural sector, approximately 634 wells were damaged.²² Overall, damage

⁸ Ibid. 1,500 kilometers and 6,500 kilometers account for 83% and 39% of all paved and unpaved roads in Nicaragua at the time of Hurricane Mitch, respectively.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Christoplos, Ian, et al., *Learning From Recovery After Hurricane Mitch: Experience From Nicaragua*, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, p. 14, 2009.

¹⁴ *Nicaragua: Huracán Mitch Daños, Costos, Acciones de Rehabilitación del Gobierno y la Cooperación Internacional*.

¹⁵ Christoplos, et. al, p.14.

¹⁶ *Nicaragua: Huracán Mitch Daños, Costos, Acciones de Rehabilitación del Gobierno y la Cooperación Internacional*.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

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from Hurricane Mitch caused a 40% reduction in water service, affecting close to a million people.²³

The international community and the Government of Nicaragua helped to repair the damage and destruction left behind by Hurricane Mitch. For example, the Canadian Red Cross and the United Nations Development Programme collaborated to build 1,300 homes,²⁴ and local authorities, with the assistance of various small Spanish non-governmental organizations (NGOs), built 300 homes in the municipality of Ocotal.²⁵ These programs, however, represent a mere fraction of the more than 41,000 homes that were damaged or destroyed.²⁶ Nicaragua reportedly has one of the highest housing deficits in Central America, with a need for “957,000 new houses and home improvements”—only 50% of which is covered by the private and public sectors.²⁷

A significant amount of aid was dedicated to repairing and improving road infrastructure, including various projects to rehabilitate, maintain and improve roads funded by the Inter-American Development Bank and the World Bank.²⁸ However, transportation infrastructure in Nicaragua remains “poor and often suffers damage from tropical storms and hurricanes,” with public protests related to poor road conditions occasionally occurring.²⁹

Despite the impact of Hurricane Mitch, access to drinking water and sanitation has increased in Nicaragua in the long-term.³⁰ Nicaragua has benefited from various loans from the Inter-

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ *Rebuilding after Hurricane Mitch: Housing reconstruction in Honduras and Nicaragua*, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, p.3, 2007.

²⁵ *Reconstrucción post-Mitch en Nicaragua*, EcoSur, Aug. 2009, <http://www.ecosur.org/ediciones-antiguas/105/455-reconstruccion-post-mitch-en-nicaragua>. (last visited Apr. 14, 2017).

²⁶ Gómez, Rosa Julia, *Salud en la Vivienda en los Países que Conforman la Red Interamericana de Centros de Salud en la Vivienda: El Caso de Nicaragua*, Organización Panamericana de la Salud, p.22, Mar. 2000. The pre-Mitch housing shortage in Nicaragua was estimated at 594,000 housing units, affecting 3.6 million people, or eight out of 10 Nicaraguans.

²⁷ *Habitat for Humanity in Nicaragua*, Habitat for Humanity, <https://www.habitat.org/where-we-build/nicaragua>. (last visited Apr. 6, 2017).

²⁸ *NI0099: Panamerican Highway Rehabilitation*, Inter-American Development Bank, <http://www.iadb.org/en/projects/project-description-title.1303.html?id=NI0099> (last visited Apr. 14, 2017); *NI0146: Road Rehabilitation San Lorenzo-Muhan*, Inter-American Development Bank, <http://www.iadb.org/en/projects/project-description-title.1303.html?id=NI0146> (last visited Apr. 14, 2017); *NI0170: PPP Road Program for Competitiveness*, Inter-American Development Bank, <http://www.iadb.org/en/projects/project-description-title.1303.html?id=NI0170> (last visited Apr. 14, 2017); *Nicaragua: Third Roads Rehabilitation and Maintenance Project*, World Bank, Dec. 18, 2000; *Nicaragua: Fourth Roads Rehabilitation and Maintenance Project*, World Bank, Mar. 27, 2015 (see complete report).

²⁹ *Nicaragua > Infrastructure*, Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment - Central America And The Caribbean, Feb. 3, 2017, <http://janes.ssa.com/Janes/Display/1302302> (last visited Apr. 6, 2017).

³⁰ *Estimates on the use of water sources and sanitation facilities – Nicaragua*, WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme for Water Supply and Sanitation, Jun. 2015, http://www.wasinfo.org/documents/?tx_displaycontroller%5Bregion%5D=&tx_displaycontroller%5Bsearch_word%5D=nicaragua&tx_displaycontroller%5Btype%5D=country_files. (last visited Apr. 14, 2017).

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American Development Bank to improve its water and sanitation systems.³¹ According to the World Health Organization/United Nations Children's Fund (WHO/UNICEF) Joint Monitoring Programme for Water Supply and Sanitation, as of 2015, an estimated 87% of the Nicaraguan population had access to an improved drinking water source, while an estimated 68% had access to improved sanitation facilities; in 1995—the last year of survey data before Hurricane Mitch—76% had access to an improved drinking water source, while only 49% had access to improved sanitation facilities.³²

Post-Hurricane Mitch Environmental Disasters

Nicaragua is “vulnerable to recurrent natural disasters,”³³ including hurricanes, severe storms and flooding, landslides, significant volcanic activity, and destructive earthquakes.³⁴ According to the 2017 Global Climate Risk Index, Nicaragua ranked as the 4th most affected country in the world by extreme weather events from 1996 to 2015; during this time, Nicaragua averaged \$234.7 million in damages per year, and witnessed over 3,200 total fatalities from extreme weather events.³⁵ Per the World Food Programme, Nicaragua's vulnerability to natural disasters hinders its progress in addressing both poverty and food security.³⁶ Both strong seasonal rains

³¹ NI0097: *Modernization Potable Water/Sanitation*, Inter-American Development Bank, <http://www.iadb.org/en/projects/project-description-title.1303.html?id=NI0097>, (last visited Apr. 14, 2017); NI0142: *Implementation Sanitation Measures Managua Lake*, Inter-American Development Bank, <http://www.iadb.org/en/projects/project-description-title.1303.html?id=NI0142>, (last visited Apr. 14, 2017); Lockwood, Harold et al., *Activity Report 106, Nicaragua: Rural Water Supply, Sanitation, and Environmental Health Program*, U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) Environmental Health Project, p. 15-16, Dec. 2001; NI-L1017: *Potable Water and Sanitation Investment Program*, Inter-American Development Bank, <http://www.iadb.org/en/projects/project-description-title.1303.html?id=NI-L1017> (last visited Apr. 14, 2017); *Water and sanitation company extends services and increases efficiency*, Inter-American Development Bank, <http://www.iadb.org/en/mapamericas/nicaragua/water-and-sanitation-company-extends-services-and-increases-efficiency.5597.html> (last visited Apr. 14, 2017); *Nicaragua will improve water and sanitation services with IDB support*, Inter-American Development Bank, Dec. 3, 2010.

³² *Estimates on the use of water sources and sanitation facilities – Nicaragua*.

³³ *WFP Nicaragua Country Brief*, World Food Programme, p.2, Jun. 2016; *The World Factbook – Nicaragua*, CIA, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/na.html>, (last visited Apr. 18, 2017).

³⁴ *Foreign Travel Advice – Nicaragua: Natural Disasters*, GOV.UK, <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/nicaragua/natural-disasters> (last visited Apr. 16, 2017).

³⁵ Kreft, Sönke, Eckstein, David and Melchior, Inga, *Global Climate Risk Index 2017*, Germanwatch, p. 5-6, Nov. 2016.

³⁶ *WFP Nicaragua Country Brief*, World Food Programme, p.2, Feb. 2017.

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and a prolonged drought in the section of Nicaragua located in Central America's "Dry Corridor"³⁷ have plagued the country in recent years.³⁸

Since Hurricane Mitch, various hurricanes, tropical depressions, and tropical storms have made landfall in Nicaragua—a country which is prone to flooding.³⁹ In November 2001, Hurricane Michelle damaged or destroyed 3,349 houses, seven bridges, and 7,000 hectares of crops;⁴⁰ in September 2007, Hurricane Felix, a category 5 storm, killed over 100 and damaged or destroyed an estimated 16,400 houses;⁴¹ in May 2008, Tropical Storm Alma damaged seven Pacific coast departments, leaving three people dead and 10 missing, and damaging "most major roads, water wells and latrines" in the department of Leon in western Nicaragua;⁴² in October 2008, Tropical Depression 16 brought intense rains that left four people dead and affected 10,633 people in eight departments;⁴³ and in November 2009, Hurricane Ida, a category 1 storm, brought heavy rains and winds to the northern coast of Nicaragua, causing damage to 875 homes, contaminating 300 wells, and affecting over 13,000 people.⁴⁴

More recently, in October 2011, heavy rains linked to Tropical Depression 12E produced flooding and landslides throughout the country.⁴⁵ An assessment carried out by the Government of Nicaragua found that 87 of 153 municipalities⁴⁶ suffered damages, and nearly 149,000 people were affected by damages to their property, crops, and other livelihoods.⁴⁷ A total of 8,924

³⁷ According to a report published by the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO) on Central America's "Dry Corridor": "The term dry corridor, although it points to a climatic phenomenon, has an ecological basis: it defines a group of ecosystems that combine in the ecoregion of dry tropical forest in Central America, which starts in Chiapas, Mexico, and in a strip of land, contains the lowlands of the Pacific slope and much of the central pre-mountain region of Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, and part of Costa Rica (up to Guanacaste); in Honduras, it also includes fragments which approach the Caribbean coast." See van der Zee Arias, Amparo, et. al, *Estudio de caracterización del Corredor Seco Centroamericano*, FAO, p.8, Dec. 2012. Another FAO report defines the "Dry Corridor" as: "an imprecise geographical demarcation defined by a zone with climatic characteristics of dry tropical forest, with a marked and prolonged dry season (*verano*), and where there is a latent risk of recurring drought during the reduced rainy season (*invierno*), which could occur due to the late arrival of the rainy season, an extension of the dry season, or a premature end of the rainy season." See Peralta Rodríguez, Orlando, et. al, *Buenas prácticas para la seguridad alimentaria y la gestión de riesgos*, FAO, p.8, Feb. 2012.

³⁸ *From Words to Facts: Acting on Climate Change in Central America, Action and Financing, Now!*, Oxfam, p.3, Nov. 2014.

³⁹ *Central America - Drought in El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua*, ACAPS, p.5, Sep. 29, 2015.

⁴⁰ *Hurricane Michelle - Honduras / Nicaragua OCHA Situation Report No. 11*, UNOCHA, Nov. 19, 2001.

⁴¹ *Emergency Operation, Nicaragua 10700*, World Food Programme, p.1.

⁴² http://one.wfp.org/operations/current_operations/project_docs/107000.pdf, (last visited Apr. 17, 2017); *Latin America and the Caribbean - Hurricane Season 2007, Fact Sheet #8*, USAID, p.1, Sept. 12, 2007.

⁴³ *Costa Rica and Nicaragua: Tropical Storm Alma*, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, Jun. 5, 2009.

⁴⁴ *Final Report - Central America: Floods*, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, Oct. 29, 2009.

⁴⁵ *Nicaragua: Floods*, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, Nov. 11, 2009.

⁴⁶ *Nicaragua: Flash Appeal Revision*, UNOCHA, p.1, 2011.

⁴⁷ Nicaragua is divided administratively into 15 departments and two autonomous regions, which are sub-divided into 153 municipalities. See *Artículo 16 de Ley No. 503, Reforma a la Ley No. 59, Ley de División Política Administrativa*, Asamblea Nacional de la República de Nicaragua, Feb. 3, 2005.

⁴⁸ *Nicaragua: Flash Appeal Revision*, UNOCHA, p.1, 2011.

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homes were flooded; 1,235 were partially destroyed, and 335 were completely destroyed.⁴⁸ Damages and losses associated with Tropical Depression 12E totaled \$445 million, or 6.8% of gross domestic product in 2010.⁴⁹ In June and July of 2013, tropical storms and heavy seasonal rain resulted in 15 deaths, widespread flooding, and 12,000 people affected.⁵⁰

During 2014 and 2015, a series of storms producing heavy rain and flooding caused significant damage and loss of life in Nicaragua. In July 2014, heavy rains and flooding in the center and Caribbean regions of the country affected 1,015 people, caused the death of three others, and damaged or destroyed 205 homes.⁵¹ Prolonged rain and flooding in October 2014 impacted close to 65,000 people, causing 33 deaths, destroying 4,500 homes, and leaving 33,000 people homeless.⁵² Heavy rains and flooding also affected 1,075 people and damaged 215 homes in May 2015,⁵³ and caused even more damage in June, when rain and flooding impacted 11 of 17 departments, affecting over 35,000 people and causing six deaths.⁵⁴ At least 20 people were killed during the 2015 rainy season.⁵⁵

In 2016, heavy rains and wind once again caused damage and flooding in Nicaragua.⁵⁶ In July, more than 8,900 people were affected, 3,900 people were evacuated, and nearly 1,700 homes were flooded due to heavy rains and flooding.⁵⁷ In November 2016, Hurricane Otto—a category 2 storm—damaged 817 and destroyed 120 homes, and necessitated the evacuation of over 11,600 people.⁵⁸

⁴⁸ Ibid, p.7.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ *Nicaragua: Floods – June 2013*, ReliefWeb, <http://reliefweb.int/disaster/floods-2013-000085-nic> (last visited Apr. 17, 2017).

⁵¹ *Tres muertos y 1,015 personas afectadas por fuertes lluvias en Nicaragua*, El Nuevo Diario (Nic.), Jul. 14, 2014.

⁵² *Afectados por las fuertes lluvias ascienden a 64,360*, Redhum, Nov. 11, 2014; *Global Emergency Overview – November 2014*, ACAPS, p.120, Nov. 11, 2014; *Nicaragua flooding leaves 24 dead*, Agence France-Presse, Oct. 19, 2014.

⁵³ *Más de mil afectados por lluvias*, Nuevo Diario (Nic.), May 1, 2015.

⁵⁴ *Heavy rains in Nicaragua leave six dead*, Agence France-Presse, Jun. 15, 2015.

⁵⁵ *Al menos 20 muertos por temporada de lluvias en Nicaragua*, Government of Nicaragua, Oct. 24, 2015.

⁵⁶ *Gobierno atiende a familias afectadas por fuertes vientos en Malpaisillo*, Government of Nicaragua, Apr. 27, 2016; *REDLAC Weekly Note on Emergencies Latin America & The Caribbean - Year 9 - Volume 451*, UNOCHA, May 10, 2016; *Monitoring Emergencies: Nicaragua - 06/01/2016: 509 people affected by rain*, Pan American Health Organization, Jun. 1, 2016; *Ríos crecidos y zonas incomunicadas por las lluvias*, El Nuevo Diario (Nic.), Jun. 6, 2016; *Monitoring Emergencies: Nicaragua - 07/12/2016: 1,781 families have been affected in 9 municipalities due to flooding - Update*, Pan American Health Organization, Jul. 12, 2016; *Monitoring Emergencies: Nicaragua - 12/13/2016: Strong rains affect the Southern Caribbean region*, Pan American Health Organization, Dec. 13, 2016; *Más de 900 familias afectadas por lluvias*, Redhum, Oct. 22, 2016.

⁵⁷ *Monitoring Emergencies: Nicaragua - 07/12/2016: 1,781 families have been affected in 9 municipalities due to flooding - Update*, World events - ECHO Daily Map | 12/07/2016, European Commission Humanitarian Aid Office, Jul. 12, 2016.

⁵⁸ *Humanitarian Bulletin - Latin America and the Caribbean*, UNOCHA, p.2, Nov-Dec. 2016; *Huracán Otto provoca daños en 817 viviendas*, Redhum, Nov. 29, 2016; *Rosario presenta informe sobre respuesta a familias afectadas por el huracán Otto*, Redhum, Nov. 28, 2016.

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Consecutive years of drought (from November 2013 to April 2016)⁵⁹ have negatively impacted agriculture, fishing, and hydroelectric energy production in Nicaragua.⁶⁰ Linked to the El Niño Southern Oscillation (ESNO),⁶¹ the drought has had the most significant impact in the country's "so-called 'dry corridor'—an arid region in the northeast and centre of Nicaragua encompassing 33 of the country's 153 municipalities, characterized by low rainfall and high poverty levels" with a population of over one million people.⁶²

In 2014, the impact of the drought extended beyond the country's Dry Corridor, as an estimated 112 of 156 municipalities in Nicaragua reported damages or losses to crops.⁶³ By November 2014, over 268,000 families in the Dry Corridor were affected by crop loss,⁶⁴ and the drought was affecting the food security of 100,000 people in the country.⁶⁵

By February 2015, the drought had contributed to the loss of 1 million bushels of rice and maize, and the death of 5,000 cattle.⁶⁶ Despite having the most abundant water sources in Central America, in the summer of 2015 Nicaragua was reportedly facing a nationwide water shortage due to the impact of the drought, a lack of investment in its water system, poor water management, soil erosion, deforestation, and climate change.⁶⁷ By November 2015, Nicaragua had lost between 50 and 75 percent of its production of basic grains in the Dry Corridor, while an estimated 23% of all cattle in the country were at risk of being impacted by the drought.⁶⁸

The impact of the multi-year drought continued to be felt in 2016. The Dry Corridor remained the most impacted area of Nicaragua; in March 2016, Inter Press Service cited a study indicating that the region had lost 100 percent of its harvests and 90 percent of its water sources due to the drought.⁶⁹ Declining food production "led to food insecurity and a decline in household incomes in the region's rural areas."⁷⁰ By June 2016, over 302,000 people were in need of food assistance in Nicaragua.⁷¹ While Nicaragua received more rainfall in 2016 in comparison to previous years, the increase was reportedly insufficient to support a full recovery of surface and subterranean

⁵⁹ Situación "muy grave" con 40 pozos comunitarios secos en Occidente, La Prensa (Nic.), Feb. 16, 2017.

⁶⁰ Rios, Julia, *In drought-hit central Nicaragua, water 'is like looking for gold'*, Agence France-Presse, Apr. 7, 2016; Silva, José Adán, *Cambio climático seca a Nicaragua*, Inter Press Service, Mar. 30, 2016.

⁶¹ The El Niño Southern Oscillation, more commonly known as El Niño, is a "weather cycle that periodically causes drought on the western Pacific seaboard and the centre of the country, in contrast with seasonal flooding in the north and the eastern Caribbean coast." See Silva, José Adán, *El Niño Triggers Drought, Food Crisis in Nicaragua*, Inter Press Service, Jul. 10, 2014.

⁶² Silva, José Adán, *Thirsty in Nicaragua, the Country Where 'Agua' Is Part of Its Name*, Inter Press Service, Jun. 4, 2015.

⁶³ *Global Emergency Overview – November 2014*, p.120.

⁶⁴ *From Words to Facts: Acting on Climate Change in Central America, Action and Financing, Now!*, p.6.

⁶⁵ *From Words to Facts: Acting on Climate Change in Central America, Action and Financing, Now!*, p.15.

⁶⁶ *Global Emergency Overview – March 2015*, ACAPS, p.112, Mar. 24, 2015.

⁶⁷ Silva, *Thirsty in Nicaragua*.

⁶⁸ *Latin America and the Caribbean - Weekly Note on Emergencies*, UNOCHA, p.2, Nov. 2, 2015.

⁶⁹ Silva, *Cambio climático seca a Nicaragua*.

⁷⁰ IFAD to provide \$20.5 million to boost sustainable agriculture in Dry Corridor in Nicaragua, International Fund for Agricultural Development, Nov. 29, 2016.

⁷¹ WFP Nicaragua Country Brief - June 2016, World Food Programme, Jun. 2016.

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water sources impacted by the drought.⁷² As a result, at the start of the dry season in February 2017, certain communities in the Dry Corridor were already feeling the impact of the scarcity of water.⁷³

Damages resulting from other natural disasters, such as volcanic and seismic activity, have also affected Nicaragua. In September 2012, the eruption of the San Cristobal volcano—one of the most active in the country—prompted the evacuation of hundreds of residents from surrounding areas.⁷⁴ Between early May and late July 2015, the Telica volcano erupted 426 times;⁷⁵ residents of neighboring communities—over 2,000 of whom were affected—reported respiratory problems due to the release of volcanic gas and ash, and expressed fears of larger eruptions.⁷⁶ Six of the country's 18 volcanoes were active in 2016, including the Momotombo volcano, which—after more than 110 years of inactivity—erupted more than 400 times from December 2015 to April 2016, and remained constantly active through November.⁷⁷

In June 2013, a 6.6 magnitude earthquake off the coast of Nicaragua triggered a tsunami warning and caused structural damage near its epicenter.⁷⁸ On April 10, 2014, a significant 6.2 magnitude earthquake, originating in Lake Managua, struck the country, followed by subsequent 6.2 and 6.7 magnitude earthquakes the next day; in total, there were over 535 seismic events in less than two weeks following the original earthquake on April 10.⁷⁹ The earthquakes affected 24,025 people and damaged 2,952 homes.⁸⁰ In response to a 7.4 magnitude earthquake in October 2014, 100,000 people were evacuated from coastal areas.⁸¹ A 6.1 magnitude earthquake in June 2016 caused landslides, power outages, and damaged over 3,000 homes.⁸²

Nicaragua has also been impacted by a regional coffee rust⁸³ epidemic, which has caused crop loss and declining coffee production throughout Central America in recent years.⁸⁴ By October

⁷² Situación “muy grave” con 40 pozos comunitarios secos en Occidente.

⁷³ Corredor Seco otra vez afectado por sequía, La Prensa (Nic.), Feb. 17, 2017.

⁷⁴ Thousand evacuated as Nicaragua volcano spews ash, ABC News, Sep. 8, 2012.

⁷⁵ Inster: el Volcán Concepción retoma sus explosiones, La Jornada (Nic.), Jul. 28, 2015.

⁷⁶ Más de 2 mil afectados por cenizas y gases del Telica, El Nuevo Diario (Nic.), May 12, 2015.

⁷⁷ En Nicaragua vulcanólogos estadounidenses para estudiar el Momotombo, Government of Nicaragua, Apr. 10, 2016; Inster pronostica baja probabilidad de actividad sísmica relevante, Government of Nicaragua, Mar. 2, 2016; Nicaragua sin sismos volcánicos, Government of Nicaragua, Mar. 7, 2016; Monitoring Emergencies: Nicaragua-11/18/2016: Momotombo Volcano presents abundant gas emissions, Pan American Health Organization, Nov. 18, 2016.

⁷⁸ Sismos dejan personas lesionadas y daños leves en Nicaragua, La Prensa (Pan.), Jun. 13, 2013.

⁷⁹ Nicaragua, Terremoto. Reporte de Situación N° 7, UNOCHA, p.1-3, Apr. 25, 2014.

⁸⁰ Ibid, p.1.

⁸¹ Global Emergency Overview – November 2014, p.120.

⁸² REDLAC Weekly Note on Emergencies Latin America & The Caribbean - Year 9 - Volume 456, UNOCHA, June 13, 2016.

⁸³ According to an academic study of the coffee rust crises in Colombia and Central America: “Coffee rust is caused by the fungus *Hemileia vastatrix*, an obligate parasite that affects the living leaves of the genus *Coffea*... The disease causes defoliation that, when acute, can lead to the death of branches and heavy crop losses.” See J. Avelino et. al., *The coffee rust crises in Colombia and Central America (2008–2013): impacts, plausible causes and proposed solutions*, Food Security, Vol. 7, Iss. 2, p.304, April 2015.

⁸⁴ Maikin, Elisabeth, *Coffee Crop Withers: Fungus Cripples Coffee Production Across Central America*, New York Times, May 3, 2014.

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2014, an estimated 655,000 people in Honduras, Nicaragua, and El Salvador were considered food insecure due to the coffee rust epidemic.⁸⁵ As of March 2016, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) reported that coffee production in Nicaragua continued to recover from the outbreak.⁸⁶

In recent years, Nicaragua has been impacted by various mosquito-borne diseases, including Zika, dengue fever, and chikungunya.⁸⁷ In August 2015, Nicaraguan authorities declared a “state of emergency and health alert for the increase of cases of chikungunya and dengue.”⁸⁸ In 2016, there were “88,320 probable dengue cases (incidence rate of 1,411 cases per 100,000 population), including 6,599 confirmed cases.”⁸⁹ Through the first half of 2016, Nicaragua reported 4,675 suspected and 682 confirmed case of chikungunya.⁹⁰ Since first being detected in the country in early 2016, there have been 2,055 confirmed cases of Zika in Nicaragua as of early January 2017.⁹¹

Violence and Conflict

Nicaragua lacks the high levels of crime and violence which are evident in El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala. In general, Nicaragua “has a relatively low crime rate, an absence of transnational gangs and a generally trusted police force that focuses on crime prevention.”⁹²

In 2016, Nicaragua’s homicide rate slightly declined to 7 murders per 100,000 inhabitants—its lowest rate in over 15 years, and slightly higher than the 2013 global average of 6.2 per 100,000.⁹³ According to InSight Crime, much of Nicaragua was “virtually violence-free” in 2016, as “65 percent of the country’s 153 municipalities registered either one or zero homicides” during the year.⁹⁴ Regions along Nicaragua’s Caribbean coast have higher homicide rates than the rest of the country due to the presence of organized crime and drug trafficking in these areas.⁹⁵

Since 2015, violence has increased along Nicaragua’s Caribbean coast due to conflict over land between indigenous communities and *mestizo* (Nicaraguans of mixed Spanish and Native

⁸⁵ *Global Emergency Overview – November 2014*, p.120.

⁸⁶ *El Niño: Overview of Impact, Projected Humanitarian Needs, and Responses*, UNOCHA, p.18, Mar. 9, 2016.

⁸⁷ *Latin America and the Caribbean: Weekly Note on Emergencies*, UNOCHA, Jul. 4, 2016.

⁸⁸ *Latin America and the Caribbean: Weekly Note on Emergencies*, UNOCHA, Aug. 17, 2015.

⁸⁹ *Zika - Epidemiological Report: Nicaragua*, Pan-American Health Organization, Feb. 27, 2017.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

⁹² Replegle, Jill, *Why Nicaraguan Kids Aren't Fleeing To U.S.*, KPBS, Jul. 29, 2014.

⁹³ *Global Study on Homicide 2013*, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, p.13, March 2014; Gagne, David, *InSight Crime's 2015 Latin America Homicide Round-up*, InSight Crime, Jan. 14, 2016; Gagne, David, *InSight Crime's 2016 Homicide Round-up*, InSight Crime, Jan. 16, 2017.

⁹⁴ Gagne, *InSight Crime's 2016 Homicide Round-up*.

⁹⁵ Lohmuller, Michael, *Is Nicaragua as Effective at Deterring Drug Trafficking as it Claims?*, InSight Crime, Apr. 3, 2014.

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American descent) settlers from other areas of the country.⁹⁶ Driven by cheap land, the promise of timber and gold, and drought in other parts of the country, thousands of non-indigenous Nicaraguans have moved into the ancestral lands of indigenous communities in recent years.⁹⁷ The influx of settlers has “unleashed a deadly conflict” over the territory of the indigenous Miskito people,⁹⁸ who argue that their land has been illegally sold or taken by settlers.⁹⁹ Murders, rapes, abductions, beatings, beheadings, the burning of villages, and forced displacement have all been reported.¹⁰⁰ Hundreds have reportedly been killed,¹⁰¹ and more than 3,000 Miskitos have reportedly been displaced¹⁰²—many of whom fled to informal refugee camps in Honduras “where they live without any official humanitarian aid.”¹⁰³ Both the Miskitos and the settlers feel that the Nicaraguan government “has abandoned them,”¹⁰⁴ allowing both the “the settling and the violence to continue unabated.”¹⁰⁵ In addition, both sides claim that there “has been no investigation into the crimes, and police often refuse to register their complaints.”¹⁰⁶

While the U.S. Department of State’s Bureau of Diplomatic Security has reported that Nicaragua has “low overall reported crime rates,” particularly in comparison to neighboring countries like Honduras, general crime is nevertheless “a persistent risk for residents and visitors alike.”¹⁰⁷ However, less than 5% of Nicaraguans view crime as the most pressing problem in the country.¹⁰⁸

Nicaragua has been generally free from the high levels of gang violence afflicting El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras.¹⁰⁹ While Nicaragua has a “significant presence of local gangs,” there are relatively few members of Barrio 18 and Mara Salvatrucha in the country in comparison to El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala.¹¹⁰ Gangs in Nicaragua are comparatively smaller and more localized, and “there’s virtually no extortion in Nicaragua from criminal gangs of the kind

⁹⁶ *Deadly Nicaragua Land Conflict Displaces Hundreds*, Associated Press, Sep. 30, 2015; Carrere, Michelle, *Nicaragua’s hidden war*, IRIN, Oct. 4, 2016; Robles, Frances, *Nicaragua Dispute Over Indigenous Land Erupts in Wave of Killings*, New York Times, Oct. 16, 2016; Galanova, Mira, *Lush heartlands of Nicaragua’s Miskito people spark deadly land disputes*, The Guardian, Mar. 1, 2017.

⁹⁷ *Deadly Nicaragua Land Conflict Displaces Hundreds*, Carrere; Robles; Galanova.

⁹⁸ Carrere.

⁹⁹ Robles; Carrere.

¹⁰⁰ *Deadly Nicaragua Land Conflict Displaces Hundreds*, Carrere; Robles; Galanova.

¹⁰¹ Robles.

¹⁰² Carrere.

¹⁰³ Galanova.

¹⁰⁴ Carrere.

¹⁰⁵ Robles.

¹⁰⁶ Galanova.

¹⁰⁷ *Nicaragua 2014 Crime and Safety Report*, Bureau of Diplomatic Security, U.S. Department of State, May 12, 2014. See also *Nicaragua 2015 Crime and Safety Report*, Bureau of Diplomatic Security, U.S. Department of State, June 12, 2015; *Nicaragua 2016 Crime & Safety Report*, Bureau of Diplomatic Security, U.S. Department of State, April 15, 2016.

¹⁰⁸ Gagne, David, *Why Is Nicaragua 7 Times Less Violent Than Honduras?*, InSight Crime, Aug. 29, 2016.

¹⁰⁹ *Freedom in the World 2016 - Nicaragua*, Freedom House, Jun. 26, 2016.

¹¹⁰ Ribando Seelke, Clare, *Gangs in Central America*, Congressional Research Service, p.3-4, Aug. 29, 2016.

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rampant in the Central American nations to the north.”¹¹¹ Community policing and other government efforts have been effective in limiting the impact and growth of local gangs.¹¹²

Violent drug trafficking organizations—pervasive in a country like Honduras—are “largely absent” in Nicaragua.¹¹³ Nevertheless, Nicaragua remains an important transit route for drug trafficking, particularly the North and South Caribbean Autonomous Regions, which have higher crime and unemployment rates than the country at large.¹¹⁴

Police in Nicaragua focus on community policing and work with neighborhood watch groups, citizens, and community organizations to prevent crime and violence and help at-risk youth.¹¹⁵ Security forces are generally less corrupt than their counterparts in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras.¹¹⁶ The police even have a positive image amongst the population, with a 79% approval rate.¹¹⁷ In addition, the national police director has consistently ranked as the most popular public figure in the country, with an approval rating of 80% in a 2014 poll.¹¹⁸

Nevertheless, the U.S. Department of State has cited reports that “police frequently abused suspects during arrest, used excessive force, and engaged in degrading treatment.”¹¹⁹ Police presence is extremely limited outside of major urban areas, particularly in regions along the Caribbean coast.¹²⁰ Police also lack the necessary resources to effectively respond to crimes in progress.¹²¹

The U.S. Department of State reported that, according to Nicaraguan non-governmental organizations, violence against women remained high in 2016.¹²² Casa Alianza, an organization working with street children and sex workers, has reported that one in three women in Nicaragua have suffered physical abuse.¹²³ Per Amnesty International, “rape and sexual abuse are widespread in Nicaragua, and the majority of victims are young.”¹²⁴ Underreporting and the failure to enforce existing laws against rape have contributed to widespread impunity for this crime.¹²⁵

¹¹¹ Replogle; Wilkinson, Tracy, *Few Nicaraguans among Central America's exodus to U.S.*, Los Angeles Times, Aug. 30, 2014; Johnson, Tim, *Nicaraguans, safe at home, feel little reason to flee to U.S.*, McClatchy, Aug. 18, 2014.

¹¹² Replogle.

¹¹³ Gagne, *Why Is Nicaragua 7 Times Less Violent Than Honduras?*

¹¹⁴ *2016 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report (INCSR) – Nicaragua*, U.S. Department of State, Mar. 2016.

¹¹⁵ Replogle.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁷ Replogle; Gagne, *Why Is Nicaragua 7 Times Less Violent Than Honduras?*

¹¹⁸ Replogle.

¹¹⁹ *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2016: Nicaragua*, U.S. Department of State, Mar. 2016.

¹²⁰ *Nicaragua 2016 Crime & Safety Report*.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*

¹²² *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2016: Nicaragua*.

¹²³ Klibinoff, Eleanor, *Nicaragua: These Women Had Dreams*, The Pulitzer Center, Aug. 16, 2013.

¹²⁴ *Listen to their Voice and Act: Stop the Rape and Sexual Abuse of Girls in Nicaragua*, Amnesty International, Nov. 25, 2010.

¹²⁵ *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2016: Nicaragua*.

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Summary

Hurricane Mitch devastated Nicaragua in 1998, causing over a billion dollars in damages to the country's infrastructure, economic activities, and people. While the international community responded to the disaster with an unprecedented amount of aid, and reconstruction projects have been completed, Nicaragua remains vulnerable to recurrent natural disasters and environmental concerns—many of which have occurred in recent years; these include hurricanes and tropical storms, floods and seasonal rains, volcanic and seismic activity, drought, mosquito-borne illnesses, coffee rust, and other extreme weather events. These and other environmental issues continue to pose challenges for Nicaragua as it seeks to promote economic development for its citizens and minimize the humanitarian impact of natural disasters like Hurricane Mitch. While Nicaragua has lower homicide and crime rates, a general lack of transnational gangs, and less corrupt security forces than its northern neighbors, it is nevertheless facing various security challenges, including armed conflict over land and high rates of violence against women.

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TPS Addendum – Updates

Last Updated: October 19, 2017

According to the World Bank, Nicaragua “has stood out for maintaining growth levels above the average for Latin America and the Caribbean” in recent years.¹²⁶ Although poverty declined from 2009 to 2014, it nevertheless “remains high,” and Nicaragua is “still one of Latin America’s least developed countries, where access to basic services is a daily challenge.”¹²⁷ In August 2017, the Nicaraguan government reported that 96% of the population was employed, and 42.6% of the population was underemployed as of the first quarter of 2017.¹²⁸ A Nicaraguan news outlet claimed that these statistics could not be verified because the Nicaraguan government had not published the underlying quarterly data on unemployment since the end of 2012.¹²⁹

The U.S. Department of State does not currently have an active travel alert or travel warning for Nicaragua.¹³⁰ In a 2017 report, the World Economic Forum ranked Nicaragua 92nd out of 136 countries in its travel and tourism competitiveness index, including 65th in regards to safety and security.¹³¹ In 2015, Nicaragua ranked 92nd out of 141 countries in the overall rankings.¹³²

- (1) Any updates on crime/violence in 2017 for each of the three countries. Also, in particular, the El Salvador report gives statistics for January-April of 2017, noting the number of homicides was half what it was for the same period the year prior. Would be helpful to know whether that reduction has held;**

According to Salvadoran government authorities, from January 1 to August 31, 2017, there were 2,434 murders in El Salvador—a 36.5% reduction from the same period in 2016, when 3,836 people were killed.¹³³ During the first three months of the year, there was an average of 9 homicides per day.¹³⁴ Between January 1 and August 20, there was an average of 10.05

¹²⁶ Nicaragua Overview, The World Bank, Oct. 10, 2017, <http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/nicaragua/overview> (last visited Oct. 19, 2017).

¹²⁷ Nicaragua Overview, The World Bank, Oct. 10, 2017, <http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/nicaragua/overview> (last visited Oct. 19, 2017).

¹²⁸ Alvarez Hidalgo, Wendy, Crecimiento económico mella poco en el subempleo, La Prensa (Ni.), Aug. 8, 2017.

¹²⁹ Alvarez Hidalgo, Wendy, Crecimiento económico mella poco en el subempleo, La Prensa (Ni.), Aug. 8, 2017.

¹³⁰ Safety & Security Messages, U.S. Embassy in Nicaragua, <https://ni.usembassy.gov/u-s-citizen-services/security-and-travel-information/> (last visited Oct. 19, 2017).

¹³¹ The Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Report 2017, World Economic Forum, 2017.

¹³² The Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Report 2017, World Economic Forum, 2017.

¹³³ Morales, Napoleón, Ramírez Landaverde: “Al mes de agosto los homicidios se han reducido en un 36.5%”, Diario la Pagina (El Sal.), Sep. 2, 2017.

¹³⁴ Morales, Napoleón, 10.05 salvadoreños mueren a diario en El Salvador, Diario la Pagina (El Sal.), Aug. 21, 2017.

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homicides per day.¹³⁵ In June 2017, InSight Crime reported that, despite a declining homicide rate, “gangs in El Salvador continue to wield significant control in many areas of the country, despite a heavy-handed, years-long campaign aimed at wiping out these criminal groups.”¹³⁶ In addition, El Salvador has also “repeatedly suffered from short spikes in homicides linked to temporary escalations in gang-related violence.”¹³⁷

In Honduras, from January 1 to August 23, 2017, there were a reported 2,548 murders—a 24% reduction from the same time period in 2016, when 3,356 people were killed.¹³⁸ In May 2017, the Thomson Reuters Foundation reported that, “With one of the world’s highest murder rates, Honduras is struggling to contain drug-fueled gang violence and organized crime.”¹³⁹ In September 2017, Nicaragua’s police chief reported that the country’s homicide rate from August 2016 to July 2017 was 6 homicides per 100,000 people—the lowest rate in the last 16 years.¹⁴⁰

(2) Any updates on the drought conditions for the three countries;

In July 2017, the World Food Programme (WFP) reported the following on food security in Central America:

Four years of consecutive drought (2014-2017) in parts of Central America (the zone known as Dry Corridor) have negatively affected food production and income opportunities for vulnerable people, with increased food insecurity among subsistence farmers, day labourers and their families.

The cumulative effect has reduced productive assets, disrupted livelihoods and caused irregular emigration to the USA, as the preliminary results of a recent WFP study reveals. Over the past four years, households in the Dry Corridor have had to increasingly rely on negative consumption and livelihood coping strategies with increasing levels of emergency coping strategies...

In Honduras, the cumulative effects of four years of drought have significantly undermined the food security of the most vulnerable subsistence farmers and agricultural laborers in the dry corridor...On 19 June 2017, the Government of Honduras declared state of emergency, up to 31 December 2017, to the national

¹³⁵ Morales, Napoleón, 10.05 salvadoreños mueren a diario en El Salvador, Diario la Pagina (El Sal.), Aug. 21, 2017.

¹³⁶ Goi, Leonardo, Barrio 18 Extortion Scheme Casts Doubt on El Salvador Govt Security Narrative, InSight Crime, Jun. 19, 2017.

¹³⁷ Clavel, Tristan, Spike in Attacks on Security Force Families as El Salvador Violence Declines, InSight Crime, Jun. 13, 2017.

¹³⁸ Hencharas, Van, 808 homicidios menos que 2016, La Prensa (Hon.), Aug. 26, 2017.

¹³⁹ Moloney, Anastasia, Hundreds flee gang warfare in Honduras' murder city, Thomson Reuters Foundation, May 15, 2017.

¹⁴⁰ La tasa de homicidios en Nicaragua baja de 8 a 6 por cada 100.000 habitantes, Agencia EFE, Sep. 12, 2017.

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agricultural productive sector and has identified 77 municipalities in urgent need for assistance.¹⁴¹

An August 2017 study conducted by a group of international organizations “found a correlation between prolonged droughts in El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras – exacerbated by El Niño phenomenon from 2014 to 2016 – and the increase in irregular migration from these countries to the United States.”¹⁴² The aforementioned study focused on El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras, particularly the parts of these countries located in the Dry Corridor.¹⁴³

In an August 2017 report on El Salvador, Honduras, and Nicaragua, the Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET) reported that:

Despite below average accumulated rainfall in parts of southern Honduras and El Salvador, and northeastern Nicaragua during the *Primera* [April-September]¹⁴⁴ growing season, the consistent distribution and lack of an extended period of drought has allowed normal development of basic grain crops in almost all of the region, including for small farmers in areas of the dry corridor affected by low production during various years.¹⁴⁵

(3) Updates on the coffee rust epidemic. We noted “continues to recover” language, which seems to imply it’s concluded or is concluding or improving, at least?

In an August 2017 report on El Salvador, Honduras, and Nicaragua, the Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET) reported that:

The prevalence of coffee rust is at its lowest point since the rust outbreak in 2012. However, the production and generation of employment in El Salvador and Nicaragua has not fully recovered, due to the impact of the rust during several years and the low prices of coffee during the same period, limiting the incentives for investment in the sector. In addition, there exists the risk of an increase in the prevalence of rust during the remainder of the year, due to favorable climatic conditions for this pest.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴¹ World Food Programme Food Security Update Central America—July 2017, The World Food Programme, Jul. 2017.

¹⁴² Emigration and food insecurity in Central American ‘dry corridor’ focus of new UN-backed study, UN News Centre, Aug. 23, 2017.

¹⁴³ Food Security and Emigration: Why people flee and the impact on family members left behind in El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras, International Organization for Migration, International Fund for Agricultural Development, Inter-American Development Bank, Organization of American States, World Food Programme, p.5, Aug. 2017.

¹⁴⁴ Central America and Caribbean Price Bulletin, Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET), p.1, Aug. 2017.

¹⁴⁵ El Salvador, Honduras y Nicaragua: Actualización de monitoreo remoto, Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET), p.1, Aug. 2017.

¹⁴⁶ El Salvador, Honduras y Nicaragua: Actualización de monitoreo remoto, Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET), p.1, Aug. 2017.

(4) Any updates on the mosquito-borne disease outbreak?

In late August 2017, Salvadoran government officials reported that there had been a “noticeable” decrease in the number of cases of dengue, chikungunya and Zika in 2017.¹⁴⁷ As of early September 2017, there had been a 96% reduction in suspected cases of Zika (from 7,370 through early September 2016 to 335 during the same time period in 2017); a 92% reduction in suspected cases of chikungunya (from 5,745 to 437); and a 60% reduction in suspected cases of dengue (from 7,177 to 2,902).¹⁴⁸

Honduras witnessed a decline in the number of cases of Zika, chikungunya, and dengue through late June 2017 compared to the same period of time in 2016.¹⁴⁹ During this time period, Zika cases were down 97% (from 25,401 to 280), chikungunya cases declined 96% (from 12,053 to 249), and cases of dengue declined 81% (from 15,259 to 2,894).¹⁵⁰

The Pan American Health Organization/World Health Organization reported in late June 2017 that “During 2017, transmission of Zika continues in Nicaragua with less intensity compared to the large outbreak reported in 2016.”¹⁵¹ Through mid-May 2017, there were 389 suspected cases and 5 confirmed cases of Zika, compared to 546 suspected and 192 confirmed cases during the same period in 2016.¹⁵² In addition, by mid-May 2017, there were 22,963 suspected and 1,047 confirmed cases of dengue—“a 14% increase in suspected cases and a 52% decrease in confirmed cases compared to the same period in 2016.”¹⁵³ Finally, through mid-May 2017, there had been a total of 337 suspected and 8 confirmed cases of chikungunya, compared to 5,437 suspected and 403 confirmed cases during the same period the previous year.¹⁵⁴

(5) Finally, could we get some basic economic data/trends for the three countries? There is always interest in that from higher levels, we’ve found.

¹⁴⁷ Reportan un descenso de casos de dengue, zika y chikungunya, La Prensa Gráfica (El Sal.), Aug. 23, 2017.

¹⁴⁸ Boletín Epidemiológico Semana 36 i (del 03 al 09 de Septiembre de 2017), Ministerio de Salud (El Sal.), Sep. 15, 2017.

¹⁴⁹ Disminuyen los casos de zika, dengue y chikungunya, Secretaría de Salud (Hon.), Jul. 7, 2017.

¹⁵⁰ Disminuyen los casos de zika, dengue y chikungunya, Secretaría de Salud (Hon.), Jul. 7, 2017.

¹⁵¹ Zika - Epidemiological Report Nicaragua, Pan American Health Organization / World Health Organization, p.1, Jun. 2017.

¹⁵² Zika - Epidemiological Report Nicaragua, Pan American Health Organization / World Health Organization, p.1-2, Jun. 2017.

¹⁵³ Zika - Epidemiological Report Nicaragua, Pan American Health Organization / World Health Organization, p.2, Jun. 2017.

¹⁵⁴ Zika - Epidemiological Report Nicaragua, Pan American Health Organization / World Health Organization, p.2, Jun. 2017.

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GDP growth (annual %)¹⁵⁵

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
El Salvador	1.9	1.8	1.4	2.3	2.4
Honduras	4.1	2.8	3.1	3.6	3.6
Nicaragua	6.5	4.9	4.8	4.9	4.7

Select Economic Indicators

	El Salvador	Honduras	Nicaragua
GDP Per Capita (current US\$) (2016) ¹⁵⁶	\$4,224	\$2,361	\$2,151
Poverty headcount ratio at national poverty lines (% of population) (2014) ¹⁵⁷	31.8%	62.8%	29.6%
Unemployment, total (% of total labor force) (modeled ILO estimate) (2016) ¹⁵⁸	6.3%	6.3%	5.9%
Personal remittances, received (% of GDP) (2016) ¹⁵⁹	17.1%	17.9%	9.6%

¹⁵⁵ GDP growth (annual %). World Development Indicators, The World Bank, 2017.

<http://databank.worldbank.org/data/reports.aspx?source=2&series=NY.GDP.PCAP.CD&country=NIC,SLV,HND#>
(last visited Sep. 19, 2017).

¹⁵⁶ GDP Per Capita (current US\$). World Development Indicators, The World Bank.

<http://databank.worldbank.org/data/reports.aspx?source=2&series=NY.GDP.PCAP.CD&country=NIC,SLV,HND#>
(last visited Sep. 19, 2017).

¹⁵⁷ Poverty headcount ratio at national poverty lines (% of population). World Development Indicators, The World Bank, 2017.

<http://databank.worldbank.org/data/reports.aspx?source=2&series=SI.POV.NAHC&country=HND,SLV,NIC> (last visited Sep. 19, 2017).

¹⁵⁸ Unemployment, total (% of total labor force) (modeled ILO estimate). World Development Indicators, The World Bank, 2017.

<http://databank.worldbank.org/data/reports.aspx?source=2&series=NY.GDP.PCAP.CD&country=NIC,SLV,HND#>
(last visited Sep. 19, 2017).

¹⁵⁹ Personal remittances, received (% of GDP). World Development Indicators, The World Bank, 2017.

<http://databank.worldbank.org/data/reports.aspx?source=2&series=BX.TRF.PWKR.DT.GD.ZS&country=NIC,SLV,HND> (last visited Sep. 19, 2017).

