

Seafarers, 1978 and U.S. Coast Guard Certifications;

(2) The working group will review and develop proposed recommendations for Task Statement 30; and

(3) Adjournment of meeting.

The agenda for the January 29, 2015, working group meeting is as follows:

(1) The working group will review and develop proposed recommendations concerning evaluating military education, training, and assessment for the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers, 1978 and U.S. Coast Guard Certifications;

(2) Public comment period;

(3) The working group will discuss and finalize proposed recommendations for the full committee to consider with regards to Task Statement 30, concerning evaluating military education, training, and assessment for the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers, 1978 and U.S. Coast Guard Certifications; and

(4) Adjournment of meeting.

Dated: December 29, 2014.

J.G. Lantz,

Director of Commercial Regulations and Standards.

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DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

[CIS No. 2548-14; DHS Docket No. USCIS-2013-0001]

RIN 1615-ZB35

Extension and Redesignation of the Syrian Arab Republic for Temporary Protected Status

AGENCY: U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, Department of Homeland Security.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: Through this Notice, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) announces that the Secretary of Homeland Security (Secretary) is extending the designation of the Syrian Arab Republic (Syria) for Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for 18 months, from April 1, 2015 through September 30, 2016, and redesignating Syria for TPS for 18 months, effective April 1, 2015 through September 30, 2016.

The extension allows currently eligible TPS beneficiaries to retain TPS

through September 30, 2016, so long as they otherwise continue to meet the eligibility requirements for TPS. The redesignation of Syria allows additional individuals who have been continuously residing in the United States since January 5, 2015 to obtain TPS, if otherwise eligible. The Secretary has determined that an extension of the current designation and a redesignation of Syria for TPS are warranted because the ongoing armed conflict and other extraordinary and temporary conditions that prompted the 2013 TPS redesignation have not only persisted, but have deteriorated, and because the ongoing armed conflict in Syria and other extraordinary and temporary conditions would pose a serious threat to the personal safety of Syrian nationals if they were required to return to their country.

Through this Notice, DHS also sets forth procedures necessary for nationals of Syria (or aliens having no nationality who last habitually resided in Syria) either to: (1) Re-register under the extension if they already have TPS and to apply for renewal of their Employment Authorization Documents (EADs) with U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS); or, (2) submit an initial registration application under the redesignation and apply for an EAD.

For individuals who have already been granted TPS under the 2012 original Syria designation or under the 2013 Syria redesignation, the 60-day re-registration period runs from January 5, 2015 through March 6, 2015. USCIS will issue new EADs with a September 30, 2016 expiration date to eligible Syria TPS beneficiaries who timely re-register and apply for EADs under this extension. Given the timeframes involved with processing TPS re-registration applications, DHS recognizes that not all re-registrants will receive new EADs before their current EADs expire on March 31, 2015. Accordingly, through this Notice, DHS automatically extends the validity of EADs issued under the TPS designation of Syria for 6 months, through September 30, 2015, and explains how TPS beneficiaries and their employers may determine which EADs are automatically extended and their impact on Employment Eligibility Verification (Form I-9) and E-Verify processes.

Under the redesignation, individuals who currently do not have TPS (or an initial TPS application pending) may submit an initial application during the 180-day initial registration period that runs from January 5, 2015 through July 6, 2015. In addition to demonstrating continuous residence in the United

States since January 5, 2015 and meeting other eligibility criteria, initial applicants for TPS under this redesignation must demonstrate that they have been continuously physically present in the United States since April 1, 2015, the effective date of this redesignation of Syria, before USCIS may grant them TPS.

TPS initial applications that were either filed during 2012 designation or during the 2013 Syria redesignation and remain pending on January 5, 2015 will be treated as initial applications under this 2015 redesignation. Individuals who have a pending initial Syria TPS application will not need to file a new Application for Temporary Protected Status (Form I-821). DHS provides additional instructions in this Notice for individuals whose TPS applications remain pending and who would like to obtain an EAD valid through September 30, 2016.

DATES: Extension of Designation of Syria for TPS: The 18-month extension of the TPS designation of Syria is effective April 1, 2015, and will remain in effect through September 30, 2016. The 60-day re-registration period runs from January 5, 2015 through March 6, 2015.

Redesignation of Syria for TPS: The redesignation of Syria for TPS is effective April 1, 2015, and will remain in effect through September 30, 2016, a period of 18 months. The 180-day initial registration period for new applicants under the Syria TPS redesignation runs from January 5, 2015 through July 6, 2015.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

- For further information on TPS, including guidance on the application process and additional information on eligibility, please visit the USCIS TPS Web page at <http://www.uscis.gov/tps>. You can find specific information about this extension and redesignation of Syria for TPS by selecting "TPS Designated Country: Syria" from the menu on the left side of the TPS Web page.

- You can also contact the TPS Operations Program Manager at the Family and Status Branch, Service Center Operations Directorate, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, Department of Homeland Security, 20 Massachusetts Avenue NW., Washington, DC 20529-2060; or by phone at (202) 272-1533 (this is not a toll-free number). Note: The phone number provided here is solely for questions regarding this TPS Notice. It is not for individual case status inquiries.

- Applicants seeking information about the status of their individual cases

can check Case Status Online, available at the USCIS Web site at <http://www.uscis.gov>, or call the USCIS National Customer Service Center at 800-375-5283 (TTY 800-767-1833).

- Further information will also be available at local USCIS offices upon publication of this Notice.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Table of Abbreviations

BIA—Board of Immigration Appeals
 DHS—Department of Homeland Security
 DOS—Department of State
 EAD—Employment Authorization Document
 FNC—Final Nonconfirmation
 Government—U.S. Government
 IJ—Immigration Judge
 INA—Immigration and Nationality Act
 ISIL—Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (also sometimes referred to as the Islamic State, ISIS, the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham, or the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria)
 OSC—U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Special Counsel for Immigration-Related Unfair Employment Practices
 SARG—Syrian Arab Republic Government
 SAVE—USCIS Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlements Program
 Secretary—Secretary of Homeland Security
 TNC—Tentative Nonconfirmation
 TPS—Temporary Protected Status
 TTY—Text Telephone
 UN—United Nations
 UNHCR—United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
 USAID—U.S. Agency for International Development
 USCIS—U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

What is Temporary Protected Status (TPS)?

- TPS is a temporary immigration status granted to eligible nationals of a country designated for TPS under the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA), or to eligible persons without nationality who last habitually resided in the designated country.

- During the TPS designation period, TPS beneficiaries are eligible to remain in the United States and may obtain work authorization, so long as they continue to meet the requirements of TPS.

- TPS beneficiaries may also be granted travel authorization as a matter of discretion.

- The granting of TPS does not result in or lead to permanent resident status.

- When the Secretary terminates a country's TPS designation, beneficiaries return to the same immigration status they maintained before TPS, if any (unless that status has since expired or been terminated), or to any other lawfully obtained immigration status they received while registered for TPS.

When was Syria designated for TPS?

On March 29, 2012, the Secretary designated Syria for TPS based on extraordinary and temporary conditions within that country that prevented Syrian nationals and those with no nationality who last resided in Syria from returning to Syria in safety. See *Designation of Syrian Arab Republic for Temporary Protected Status*, 77 FR 19026 (Mar. 29, 2012), and correction at 77 FR 20046 (Apr. 3, 2012); see also INA section 244(b)(1)(C), 8 U.S.C. 1254a(b)(1)(C). In 2013, the Secretary both extended Syria's designation and redesignated Syria for TPS for 18 months through March 31, 2015. See *Extension and Redesignation of Syria for Temporary Protected Status*, 78 FR 36223 (Jun. 17, 2013). The 2013 redesignation of Syria for TPS added the ongoing armed conflict in Syria as an additional basis for TPS. This announcement is the third designation of TPS for Syria and the first extension since the 2013 redesignation.

What authority does the Secretary have to extend the designation of Syria for TPS?

Section 244(b)(1) of the INA, 8 U.S.C. 1254a(b)(1), authorizes the Secretary, after consultation with appropriate U.S. Government (Government) agencies, to designate a foreign state (or part thereof) for TPS if the Secretary finds that certain country conditions exist.¹ 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). See INA section 244(a)(1)(A), 8 U.S.C. 1254a(a)(1)(A).

At least 60 days before the expiration of a country's TPS designation or extension, the Secretary, after consultation with appropriate Government agencies, must review the conditions in a foreign state designated for TPS to determine whether the conditions for the TPS designation continue to be met. See INA section 244(b)(3)(A), 8 U.S.C. 1254a(b)(3)(A). If the Secretary determines that a foreign state continues to meet the conditions for TPS designation, the designation may be extended for an additional period of 6, 12 or 18 months. See INA section 244(b)(3)(C), 8 U.S.C. 1254a(b)(3)(C). If the Secretary

determines that the foreign state no longer meets the conditions for TPS designation, the Secretary must terminate the designation. See INA section 244(b)(3)(B), 8 U.S.C. 1254a(b)(3)(B).

What is the Secretary's authority to redesignate Syria for TPS?

In addition to extending an existing TPS designation, the Secretary, after consultation with appropriate Government agencies, may redesignate a country (or part thereof) for TPS. See INA section 244(b)(1), 8 U.S.C. 1254a(b)(1); see also INA section 244(c)(1)(A)(i), 8 U.S.C. 1254a(c)(1)(A)(i) (requiring that "the alien has been continuously physically present since the effective date of the most recent designation of the state") (emphasis added). This is one of numerous instances in which the Secretary, and prior to the establishment of DHS, the Attorney General, has simultaneously extended a country's TPS designation and redesignated the country for TPS. See, e.g., *Extension and Redesignation of Syria for Temporary Protected Status*, 78 FR 36223 (Jun. 17, 2013); *Extension and Redesignation of Sudan for Temporary Protected Status*, 78 FR 1872 (Jan. 9, 2013); *Extension and Redesignation of Haiti for Temporary Protected Status*, 76 FR 29000 (May 19, 2011); *Extension of Designation and Redesignation of Liberia Under Temporary Protected Status Program*, 62 FR 16608 (Apr. 7, 1997) (discussing legal authority for redesignation of a country for TPS).

When the Secretary designates or redesignates a country for TPS, he also has the discretion to establish the date from which TPS applicants must demonstrate that they have been "continuously resid[ing]" in the United States. See INA section 244(c)(1)(A)(ii), 8 U.S.C. 1254a(c)(1)(A)(ii). This discretion permits the Secretary to tailor the "continuous residence" date to offer TPS to the group of eligible individuals that the Secretary deems appropriate.

The Secretary has determined that the "continuous residence" date for applicants for TPS under the redesignation of Syria shall be January 5, 2015. Initial applicants for TPS under this redesignation must also show they have been "continuously physically present" in the United States since April 1, 2015, which is the effective date of the Secretary's redesignation of Syria. See INA section 244(c)(1)(A)(i), 8 U.S.C. 1254a(c)(1)(A)(i). For each initial TPS application filed under the redesignation, the final determination of whether the applicant has met the "continuous physical presence"

¹ As of March 1, 2003, in accordance with section 1517 of title XV of the Homeland Security Act of 2002, Public Law 107-296, 116 Stat. 2135, any reference to the Attorney General in a provision of the INA describing functions transferred from the Department of Justice to DHS "shall be deemed to refer to the Secretary" of Homeland Security. See 6 U.S.C. 557 (codifying the Homeland Security Act of 2002, tit. XV, section 1517).

requirement cannot be made until April 1, 2015. USCIS, however, will issue EADs, as appropriate, during the registration period in accordance with 8 CFR 244.5(b).

Why is the Secretary extending the TPS designation for Syria and simultaneously redesignating Syria for TPS through September 30, 2016?

Over the past year, DHS and the Department of State (DOS) have continued to review conditions in Syria. Based on this review and after consulting with DOS, the Secretary has determined that an 18-month extension and redesignation is warranted because the ongoing armed conflict and other extraordinary and temporary conditions that prompted the June 17, 2013 redesignation continue to be met. Furthermore, the Secretary has decided the conditions warrant changing the "continuous residence" date so as to provide TPS protection to eligible Syrian nationals who arrived between June 17, 2013 and January 5, 2015. The "continuous physical presence" date must be the effective date of the redesignation, which the Secretary has established as April 1, 2015 so that individuals granted TPS under the redesignation will have TPS for the same 18-month period through September 30, 2016 as TPS beneficiaries re-registering under the extension. See INA section 244(c)(1)(A)(i); 8 U.S.C. 1254a(c)(1)(A)(i).

Violence in Syria is widespread and indiscriminate. The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights estimates that more than 191,000 people have been killed since the start of the civil unrest in Syria in March 2011. The situation is extremely dangerous for civilians throughout the country with the deterioration of public security, continued arbitrary and unlawful killings, and the near collapse of public institutions, including health, education, and sanitation. The Syrian Arab Republic Government (SARG) continues to target humanitarian outposts, hospitals, medical staff, schools, breadlines, and other civilian sites. The SARG also regularly disrupts the delivery of humanitarian assistance to those in need. In addition to the ongoing, high-level atrocities committed by the SARG, rebel factions, violent extremists, foreign fighters, and unidentified assailants have abducted and killed civilians, journalists, humanitarian workers, and United Nations (UN) personnel.

The UN reported in late September 2014 that approximately 6.4 million Syrians are internally displaced. Acts of violence and human rights abuses

continue in most major urban centers, and have significantly worsened in Aleppo, rural Damascus, Dar'a, Raqqa, northern Hasakah province, Deir al-Zour, and Latakia. Violent extremists openly surfaced among the armed opposition in the fight against the SARG, increasingly employing irregular tactics, including suicide bombings of security force targets, resulting in civilian casualties. The military continued to fight the opposition, responding with air strikes and heavy artillery, and harming civilians in the process.

A number of violent extremists have factored prominently in the conflict and pose a danger to civilians. In early 2014, the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) emerged as one of the most significant radical Islamist fighting forces. The al-Nusra Front (also known as the Jabhat al Nusra) represents the interests of al-Qaeda in Syria. These violent extremist groups have engaged in indiscriminate attacks including bombings and suicide attacks throughout Syria. Various other violent extremists have been actively engaged in armed resistance in Syria. Reports indicate that there may be as many as 5,000 foreign fighters in Syria.

Since 2011, the Syrian military has engaged in warfare against opposition forces, with fighting taking place throughout Syria. In June 2014, Amnesty International reported that SARG forces continue to carry out indiscriminate attacks, bombarding populated civilian areas, and that opposition fighters have also carried out indiscriminate attacks. The UN indicated that increasingly the attacks by SARG forces and the armed opposition have targeted civilians. There has been an increase in the reported use of barrel bombs (oil drums packed with crude explosives and shrapnel) by the SARG and mortars by opposition forces against residential neighborhoods, particularly in Aleppo, Dar'a, rural Damascus, and Deir al-Zour.

Chemical weapons have been used against civilian populations and soldiers. In December 2013, the UN stated that chemical weapons were used in Ghouta, Khan al-Assal, Jobar, Saraqueb and Ashrafiyah Sahnaya. The U.S. Government concluded the SARG used chemical weapons in the eastern suburbs outside Damascus in an August 2013 attack, killing more than 1,400 individuals. The regime has also employed the use of incendiary weapons and landmines in civilian areas, as well as ballistic missiles.

The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre noted that by the end of 2013, Syria's internal displacement crisis had

become the largest in the world. As of October 2014, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) reported that more than 3.2 million refugees from Syria have sought refuge in neighboring countries. Although the pace of refugee outflow has decreased since mid-year 2013, UNHCR projects an estimated 3.6 million Syrian refugees in the region by the end of 2014. The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian affairs reported that approximately 10.8 million Syrians remaining inside Syria were in need of humanitarian assistance as of June 2014. Access for delivery of humanitarian assistance to vulnerable people continues to be a serious challenge, with 4.7 million persons living in hard-to-reach areas with little or no access to assistance as of October 2014. The situation is extremely dangerous and precarious for civilians, including those who are internally displaced throughout the country.

Interethnic and sectarian violence is a severe problem and has resulted in civilian deaths and displacement. Armed groups are active in Syria, and several continue to threaten the long-term security of the region. Ongoing interethnic violence and the increasing role of violent extremist groups, including the ISIL and al-Nusra Front, are likely to perpetuate fighting for the foreseeable future.

In July 2014, the UN reported that siege tactics left many civilians trapped without food and subject to shelling and sniper attacks. Local NGOs and international humanitarian organizations such as UNHCR, the World Food Program, and the International Committee of the Red Cross face significant SARG-imposed obstacles to gaining access to areas under opposition control, particularly near Aleppo and the eastern suburbs of Damascus. Residents in Syria's northeastern provinces of Deir al-Zour, Hasakah, and Raqqa also are difficult to reach by humanitarian workers due to the presence of ISIL. Water and electricity supplies have been cut as a part of the conflict strategy. Due to lack of clean water, there has also been a rise in infectious and water-borne diseases. Illnesses such as measles and typhoid fever have grown exponentially since pre-war times and polio reemerged in Syria in 2013 for the first time since 1999, with 36 laboratory-confirmed cases.

Serious, persistent conflict continues to pose substantial risk throughout Syria. Tens of thousands have been killed by SARG forces and non-state armed groups. Concerns for safety have led to massive displacement within

Syria. The refusal of the SARG and certain armed groups to allow unfettered humanitarian access to vulnerable populations throughout the country, coupled with continued fighting, has caused a grave humanitarian crisis that continues to deteriorate. All of these factors together present an exceedingly dangerous security environment throughout most of the country. The high number of Syrian refugees and the continued escalation of the conflict within the country indicate that there is no immediate prospect for safe return.

Based upon this review and after consultation with appropriate Government agencies, the Secretary finds that:

- The conditions that prompted the June 17, 2013 redesignation of Syria for TPS continue to be met. *See* INA section 244(b)(3)(A) and (C), 8 U.S.C. 1254a(b)(3)(A) and (C).

- There continues to be ongoing armed conflict in Syria and, due to such conflict, requiring the return of Syrian nationals to Syria would pose a serious threat to their personal safety. *See* INA section 244(b)(1)(A), 8 U.S.C. 1254a(b)(1)(A).

- There continue to be extraordinary and temporary conditions in Syria that prevent Syrian nationals from returning to Syria in safety. *See* INA section 244(b)(1)(C), 8 U.S.C. 1254a(b)(1)(C).

- It is not contrary to the national interest of the United States to permit Syrian nationals (and persons who have no nationality who last habitually resided in Syria) who meet the eligibility requirements of TPS to remain in the United States temporarily. *See* INA section 244(b)(1)(C), 8 U.S.C. 1254a(b)(1)(C).

- The designation of Syria for TPS should be extended for an additional 18-month period from April 1, 2015 through September 30, 2016. *See* INA

section 244(b)(3)(C), 8 U.S.C. 1254a(b)(3)(C).

- Based on current country conditions, Syria should be simultaneously redesignated for TPS effective April 1, 2015 through September 30, 2016. *See* INA sections 244(b)(1)(A), (b)(1)(C), and (b)(2); 8 U.S.C. 1254a(b)(1)(A), (b)(1)(C), and (b)(2).

- TPS applicants must demonstrate that they have continuously resided in the United States since January 5, 2015.

- The date by which TPS applicants must demonstrate that they have been continuously physically present in the United States is April 1, 2015, the effective date of the redesignation of Syria for TPS.

- There are approximately 5,000 current Syrian TPS beneficiaries who are expected to apply for re-registration and may be eligible to retain their TPS under the extension.

- It is estimated that an additional 5,000 individuals may file initial applications for TPS under the redesignation of Syria.

Notice of Extension of the TPS Designation of Syria and Redesignation of Syria for TPS

By the authority vested in me as Secretary under INA section 244, 8 U.S.C. 1254a, I have determined, after consultation with the appropriate Government agencies, that the conditions that prompted the redesignation of Syria for TPS in 2013 not only continue to be met, but have significantly deteriorated. *See* INA section 244(b)(3)(A), 8 U.S.C. 1254a(b)(3)(A). On the basis of these determinations, I am simultaneously extending the existing TPS designation of Syria for 18 months from April 1, 2015 through September 30, 2016, and redesignating Syria for TPS for the same 18-month period. *See* INA sections 244(b)(1)(A), (b)(1)(C), and (b)(2); 8

U.S.C. 1254a(b)(1)(A), (b)(1)(C), and (b)(2). I have also determined that eligible individuals must demonstrate that they have continuously resided in the United States since January 5, 2015. *See* INA section 244(c)(1)(A)(ii), 8 U.S.C. 1254a(c)(1)(A)(ii).

Jeh Charles Johnson,
Secretary.

I am currently a Syria TPS beneficiary. What should I do?

If you filed a TPS application during the Syria TPS registration period that ran from June 17, 2013 through December 16, 2013, and that application was approved prior to January 5, 2015, then you need to file a re-registration application under the extension if you wish to maintain TPS benefits through September 30, 2016. You must use the Application for Temporary Protected Status (Form I-821) to re-register for TPS. The 60-day open re-registration period will run from January 5, 2015 through March 6, 2015.

I have a pending initial TPS application filed during the Syria TPS registration period that ran from June 17, 2013 through December 16, 2013. What should I do?

If your TPS application is still pending on January 5, 2015, then you do not need to file a new Application for Temporary Protected Status (Form I-821). Pending TPS applications will be treated as initial applications under this re-designation. Therefore, if your TPS application is approved, you will be granted TPS through September 30, 2016. If you have a pending TPS application *and* you wish to have an EAD valid through September 30, 2016, please refer to Table 1 to determine whether you should file a new Application for Employment Authorization (Form I-765).

TABLE 1—FORM AND EAD INFORMATION FOR PENDING TPS APPLICATIONS

If . . .	And . . .	Then . . .
You requested an EAD during the previous initial registration period for Syria TPS.	You received an EAD with Category C19 or A12	You must file a new Application for Employment Authorization (Form I-765) with fee (or fee waiver request) if you wish to have a new EAD valid through September 30, 2016.
	You did not receive an EAD with Category C19 or A12	You do not need to file a new Application for Employment Authorization (Form I-765). If your TPS application is approved, your Application for Employment Authorization (Form I-765) will be approved through September 30, 2016.
You did not request an EAD during the previous initial registration period for Syria TPS.	You wish to have an EAD valid through September 30, 2016..	You must file a new Application for Employment Authorization (Form I-765) with fee (or fee waiver request).
	You do not wish to have an EAD valid through September 30, 2016.	You do not need to file a new Application for Employment Authorization (Form I-765).

I am not a TPS beneficiary, and I do not have a TPS application pending. What are the procedures for initial registration for TPS under the Syria redesignation?

If you are not a Syria TPS beneficiary or do not have a pending TPS application with USCIS, you may submit your TPS application during the 180-day initial registration period that will run from January 5, 2015 through July 6, 2015.

Required Application Forms and Application Fees To Register or Re-Register for TPS

To register or re-register for TPS for Syria, an applicant must submit each of the following two applications:

1. Application for Temporary Protected Status (Form I-821).
 • If you are filing an initial application, you must pay the fee for the Application for Temporary Protected Status (Form I-821). See 8 CFR 244.2(f)(2) and 244.6 and information on initial filing on the USCIS TPS Web page at <http://www.uscis.gov/tps>.

• If you are filing an application for re-registration, you do not need to pay the fee for the Application for Temporary Protected Status (Form I-821). See 8 CFR 244.17. and

2. Application for Employment Authorization (Form I-765).

• If you are applying for initial registration and want an EAD, you must pay the fee for the Application for Employment Authorization (Form I-765) only if you are age 14 through 65. No fee for the Application for Employment Authorization (Form I-765) is required if you are under the age of 14 or are 66 and older and applying for initial registration.

• If you are applying for re-registration, you must pay the fee for the Application for Employment Authorization (Form I-765) only if you want an EAD, regardless of age.

• You do not pay the fee for the Application for Employment Authorization (Form I-765) if you are not requesting an EAD, regardless of whether you are applying for initial registration or re-registration.

You must submit both completed application forms together. If you are

unable to pay for the application and/or biometric services fee, you may apply for a fee waiver by completing a Request for Fee Waiver (Form I-912) or submitting a personal letter requesting a fee waiver, and by providing satisfactory supporting documentation. For more information on the application forms and fees for TPS, please visit the USCIS TPS Web page at <http://www.uscis.gov/tps>. Fees for the Application for Temporary Protected Status (Form I-821), the Application for Employment Authorization (Form I-765), and biometric services are also described in 8 CFR 103.7(b)(1)(i).

Biometric Services Fee

Biometrics (such as fingerprints) are required for all applicants 14 years of age or older. Those applicants must submit a biometric services fee. As previously stated, if you are unable to pay for the biometric services fee, you may apply for a fee waiver by completing a Request for Fee Waiver (Form I-912) or by submitting a personal letter requesting a fee waiver, and providing satisfactory supporting documentation. For more information on the biometric services fee, please visit the USCIS Web site at <http://www.uscis.gov>. If necessary, you may be required to visit an Application Support Center to have your biometrics captured.

Refiling an Initial TPS Application After Receiving a Denial of a Fee Waiver Request

If you request a fee waiver when filing your initial TPS application package and your request is denied, you may re-file your application packet before the initial filing deadline of July 6, 2015. If you submit your application with a fee waiver request before that deadline, but you receive a fee waiver denial and there are fewer than 45 days before the filing deadline (or the deadline has passed), you may still re-file your application within the 45-day period after the date on the USCIS fee waiver denial notice. Your application will not be rejected even if the filing deadline has passed, provided it is mailed within those 45 days and all other required information for the application is included. **Note:** If you wish, you may

also wait to request an EAD and pay the Application for Employment Authorization (Form I-765) fee after USCIS grants you TPS, if you are found eligible. If you choose to do this, you would file the Application for Temporary Protected Status (Form I-821) with the fee and the Application for Employment Authorization (Form I-765) without fee and without requesting an EAD.

Re-Filing a TPS Re-Registration Application After Receiving a Denial of a Fee Waiver Request

USCIS urges all re-registering applicants to file as soon as possible within the 60-day re-registration period so that USCIS can process the applications and issue EADs promptly. Filing early will also allow those applicants who may receive denials of their fee waiver requests to have time to re-file their applications before the re-registration deadline. If, however, an applicant receives a denial of his or her fee waiver request and is unable to re-file by the re-registration deadline, the applicant may still re-file his or her application. This situation will be reviewed to determine whether the applicant has established good cause for late re-registration. However, applicants are urged to re-file within 45 days of the date on their USCIS fee waiver denial notice, if at all possible. See INA section 244(c)(3)(C); 8 U.S.C. 1254a(c)(3)(C); 8 CFR 244.17(c). For more information on good cause for late re-registration, visit the USCIS TPS Web page at <http://www.uscis.gov/tps>. **Note:** As previously stated, although a re-registering TPS beneficiary age 14 and older must pay the biometric services fee (but not the initial TPS application fee) when filing a TPS re-registration application, the applicant may decide to wait to request an EAD, and therefore not pay the Application for Employment Authorization (Form I-765) fee, until after USCIS has approved the individual's TPS re-registration, if he or she is eligible.

Mailing Information

Mail your application for TPS to the proper address in Table 2.

TABLE 2—MAILING ADDRESSES

If . . .	Mail to . . .
You are applying through the U.S. Postal Service	USCIS, Attn: TPS Syria, P.O. Box 6943, Chicago, IL 60680-6943.
You are using a non-U.S. Postal Service delivery service	USCIS, Attn: TPS Syria, 131 S. Dearborn 3rd Floor, Chicago, IL 60603-5517.

If you were granted TPS by an Immigration Judge (IJ) or the Board of Immigration Appeals (BIA), and you wish to request an EAD, or are re-registering for the first time following a grant of TPS by an IJ or the BIA, please mail your application to the appropriate address in Table 2. Upon receiving a Notice of Action (Form I-797) from USCIS, please send an email to TPSijgrant.vsc@uscis.dhs.gov with the receipt number and state that you submitted a re-registration and/or request for an EAD based on an IJ/BIA grant of TPS. You can find detailed information on what further information you need to email and the appropriate email address on the USCIS TPS Web page at <http://www.uscis.gov/tps>.

E-Filing

You cannot electronically file your application when re-registering or submitting an initial registration for Syria TPS. Please mail your application to the mailing address listed in Table 2.

Employment Authorization Document (EAD)

May I request an interim EAD at my local USCIS office?

No. USCIS will not issue interim EADs to TPS applicants or re-registrants at local offices.

Am I eligible to receive an automatic 6-month extension of my current EAD through September 30, 2015?

Provided that you currently have TPS under the Syria designation, this Notice automatically extends your EAD by 6 months if you:

- Are a national of Syria (or an alien having no nationality who last habitually resided in Syria);
- Received an EAD under the last extension or redesignation of TPS for Syria; and
- Have an EAD with a marked expiration date of March 31, 2015, bearing the notation "A-12" or "C-19" on the face of the card under "Category."

Although this Notice automatically extends your EAD through September 30, 2015, you must re-register timely for TPS in accordance with the procedures described in this Notice if you would like to maintain your TPS.

When hired, what documentation may I show to my employer as proof of employment authorization and identity when completing Employment Eligibility Verification (Form I-9)?

You can find a list of acceptable document choices on the "Lists of Acceptable Documents" for Employment Eligibility Verification

(Form I-9). You can find additional detailed information on the USCIS I-9 Central Web page at <http://www.uscis.gov/I-9Central>. Employers are required to verify the identity and employment authorization of all new employees by using Employment Eligibility Verification (Form I-9). Within 3 days of hire, an employee must present proof of identity and employment authorization to his or her employer.

You may present any document from List A (reflecting both your identity and employment authorization), or one document from List B (reflecting identity) together with one document from List C (reflecting employment authorization). You may present an acceptable receipt for List A, List B, or List C documents as described in the Form I-9 Instructions. An EAD is an acceptable document under "List A." Employers may not reject a document based on a future expiration date.

If your EAD has an expiration date of March 31, 2015, and states "A-12" or "C-19" under "Category," it has been extended automatically for 6 months by virtue of this **Federal Register** Notice, and you may choose to present your EAD to your employer as proof of identity and employment authorization for Employment Eligibility Verification (Form I-9) through September 30, 2015 (see the subsection titled "*How do my employer and I complete the Employment Eligibility Verification (Form I-9) using an automatically extended EAD for a new job?*" for further information). To minimize confusion over this extension at the time of hire, you may also show your employer a copy of this **Federal Register** Notice confirming the automatic extension of employment authorization through September 30, 2015. As an alternative to presenting your automatically extended EAD, you may choose to present any other acceptable document from List A, or a combination of one selection from List B and one selection from List C.

What documentation may I show my employer if I am already employed but my current TPS-related EAD is set to expire?

Even though EADs with an expiration date of March 31, 2015, that state "A-12" or "C-19" under "Category" have been automatically extended for 6 months by this **Federal Register** Notice, your employer will need to ask you about your continued employment authorization once March 31, 2015, is reached to meet its responsibilities for Employment Eligibility Verification (Form I-9). However, your employer

does not need a new document to reverify your employment authorization until September 30, 2015, the expiration date of the automatic extension. Instead, you and your employer must make corrections to the employment authorization expiration dates in Section 1 and Section 2 of Employment Eligibility Verification (Form I-9) (see the subsection titled "*What corrections should my current employer and I make to Employment Eligibility Verification (Form I-9) if my EAD has been automatically extended?*" for further information). In addition, you may also show this **Federal Register** Notice to your employer to explain what to do for *Employment Eligibility Verification* (Form I-9).

By September 30, 2015, the expiration date of the automatic extension, your employer must reverify your employment authorization. At that time, you must present any document from List A or any document from List C on Employment Eligibility Verification (Form I-9) to reverify employment authorization, or an acceptable List A or List C receipt described in the Form I-9 Instructions. Your employer should complete either Section 3 of the Employment Eligibility Verification (Form I-9) originally completed for the employee or, if this Section has already been completed or if the version of Employment Eligibility Verification (Form I-9) has expired (check the date in the upper right-hand corner of the form), complete Section 3 of a new Employment Eligibility Verification (Form I-9) using the most current version. Note that your employer may not specify which List A or List C document employees must present, and cannot reject an acceptable receipt.

Can my employer require that I provide any other documentation to prove my status, such as proof of my Syrian citizenship?

No. When completing Employment Eligibility Verification (Form I-9), including re-verifying employment authorization, employers must accept any documentation that appears on the "Lists of Acceptable Documents" for Employment Eligibility Verification (Form I-9) that reasonably appears to be genuine and that relates to you, or an acceptable List A, List B, or List C receipt. Employers may not request documentation that does not appear on the "Lists of Acceptable Documents." Therefore, employers may not request proof of Syrian citizenship when completing Employment Eligibility Verification (Form I-9) for new hires or reverifying the employment authorization of current employees. If

presented with EADs that have been automatically extended, employers should accept such EADs as valid List A documents so long as the EADs reasonably appear to be genuine and to relate to the employee. Refer to the Note to Employees section of this Notice for important information about your rights if your employer rejects lawful documentation, requires additional documentation, or otherwise discriminates against you based on your citizenship or immigration status, or your national origin.

What happens after September 30, 2015, for purposes of employment authorization?

After September 30, 2015, employers may no longer accept the EADs that this **Federal Register** Notice automatically extended. Before that time, however, USCIS will issue new EADs to eligible TPS re-registrants who request them. These new EADs will have an expiration date of September 30, 2016, and can be presented to your employer for completion of Employment Eligibility Verification (Form I-9). Alternatively, you may choose to present any other legally acceptable document or combination of documents listed on the Employment Eligibility Verification (Form I-9).

How do my employer and I complete Employment Eligibility Verification (Form I-9) using an automatically extended EAD for a new job?

When using an automatically extended EAD to complete Employment Eligibility Verification (Form I-9) for a new job prior to September 30, 2015, you and your employer should do the following:

1. For Section 1, you should:
 - a. Check "An alien authorized to work";
 - b. Write your alien number (USCIS number or A-number) in the first space (your EAD or other document from DHS will have your USCIS number or A-number printed on it; the USCIS number is the same as your A-number without the A prefix); and
 - c. Write the automatically extended EAD expiration date (September 30, 2015) in the second space.
2. For Section 2, employers should record the:
 - a. Document title;
 - b. Document number; and
 - c. Automatically extended EAD expiration date (September 30, 2015).

By September 30, 2015, employers must reverify the employee's employment authorization in Section 3 of the Employment Eligibility Verification (Form I-9).

What corrections should my current employer and I make to Employment Eligibility Verification (Form I-9) if my EAD has been automatically extended?

If you are an existing employee who presented a TPS-related EAD that was valid when you first started your job, but that EAD has now been automatically extended, you and your employer should correct your previously completed Employment Eligibility Verification (Form I-9) as follows:

1. For Section 1, you should:
 - a. Draw a line through the expiration date in the second space;
 - b. Write "September 30, 2015" above the previous date;
 - c. Write "TPS Ext." in the margin of Section 1; and
 - d. Initial and date the correction in the margin of Section 1.
2. For Section 2, employers should:
 - a. Draw a line through the expiration date written in Section 2;
 - b. Write "September 30, 2015" above the previous date;
 - c. Write "TPS Ext." in the margin of Section 2; and
 - d. Initial and date the correction in the margin of Section 2.

By September 30, 2015, when the automatic extension of EADs expires, employers must reverify the employee's employment authorization in Section 3.

If I am an employer enrolled in E-Verify, what do I do when I receive a "Work Authorization Documents Expiration" alert for an automatically extended EAD?

If you are an employer who participates in E-Verify and you have an employee who is a TPS beneficiary who provide a TPS-related EAD when he or she first started working for you, you will receive a "Work Authorization Documents Expiring" case alert when this EAD is about to expire. Usually, this message is an alert to complete Section 3 of the Employment Eligibility Verification (Form I-9) to reverify an employee's employment authorization. For existing employees with TPS-related EADs that have been automatically extended, employers should dismiss this alert by clicking the red "X" in the "dismiss alert" column and follow the instructions above explaining how to correct the Employment Eligibility Verification (Form I-9). By September 30, 2015, employment authorization must be reverified in Section 3. Employers should never use E-Verify for reverification.

Note to All Employers

Employers are reminded that the laws requiring proper employment eligibility

verification and prohibiting unfair immigration-related employment practices remain in full force. This Notice does not supersede or in any way limit applicable employment verification rules and policy guidance, including those rules setting forth re-verification requirements. For general questions about the employment eligibility verification process, employers may call USCIS at 888-464-4218 (TTY for the hearing impaired is at 877-875-6028) or email USCIS at I-9Central@dhs.gov. Calls and emails are accepted in English and many other languages. For questions about avoiding discrimination during the employment eligibility verification process (I-9 and E-Verify), employers may also call the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Special Counsel for Immigration-Related Unfair Employment Practices (OSC) Employer Hotline at 800-255-8155 (TTY 800-237-2515), which offers language interpretation in numerous languages, or email OSC at oscrcr@usdoj.gov.

Note to Employees

For general questions about the employment eligibility verification process, employees may call USCIS at 888-897-7781 (TTY for the hearing impaired is at 877-875-6028) or email at I-9Central@dhs.gov. Calls are accepted in English, Spanish and many other languages. Employees or applicants may also call the OSC Worker Information Hotline at 800-255-7688 (TTY 800-237-2515) for information regarding employment discrimination based upon citizenship status, immigration status, or national origin related to Employment Eligibility Verification (Form I-9) and E-Verify. The OSC Worker Information Hotline provides language interpretation in numerous languages.

To comply with the law, employers must accept any document or combination of documents from the List of Acceptable Documents if the documentation reasonably appears to be genuine and to relate to the employee, or an acceptable List A, List B, or List C receipt as described in the *Employment Eligibility Verification* (Form I-9) Instructions. Employers may not require extra or additional documentation beyond what is required for Employment Eligibility Verification (Form I-9) completion. Further, employers participating in E-Verify who receive an E-Verify case result of "Tentative Nonconfirmation" (TNC) must promptly inform employees of the TNC and give such employees an opportunity to contest the TNC. A TNC case result means that the information

entered into E-Verify from Employment Eligibility Verification (Form I-9) differs from federal or state government records. Employers may not terminate, suspend, delay training, withhold pay, lower pay or take any adverse action against an employee based on the employee's decision to contest a TNC or because the case is still pending with E-Verify. A Final Nonconfirmation (FNC) case result is received when E-Verify cannot verify an employee's employment eligibility. An employer may terminate employment based on a case result of FNC. Work-authorized employees who receive an FNC may call USCIS for assistance at 888-897-7781 (TTY for the hearing impaired is at 877-875-6028). To report an employer that discriminates against an employee in the E-Verify process based on citizenship or immigration status, or based on national origin, contact OSC's Worker Information Hotline at 800-255-7688 (TTY 800-237-2515). Additional information about proper nondiscriminatory Employment Eligibility Verification (Form I-9) and E-Verify procedures is available on the OSC Web site at <http://www.justice.gov/crt/about/osc/> and the USCIS Web site at <http://www.dhs.gov/E-verify>.

Note Regarding Federal, State, and Local Government Agencies (Such as Departments of Motor Vehicles)

While Federal government agencies must follow the guidelines laid out by the Federal government, state and local government agencies establish their own rules and guidelines when granting certain benefits. Each state may have different laws, requirements, and determinations about what documents you need to provide to prove eligibility for certain benefits. Whether you are applying for a Federal, state, or local government benefit, you may need to provide the government agency with documents that show you are a TPS beneficiary and/or show you are authorized to work based on TPS. Examples of such documents are:

- (1) Your unexpired EAD that has been automatically extended, or your EAD that has not expired;
- (2) A copy of this **Federal Register** Notice if your EAD is automatically extended under this Notice;
- (3) A copy of your Application for Temporary Protected Status Notice of Action (Form I-797) for this re-registration;
- (4) A copy of your past or current Application for Temporary Protected Status Notice of Action (Form I-797), if you received one from USCIS; and/or
- (5) If there is an automatic extension of work authorization, a copy of the fact

sheet from the USCIS TPS Web site that provides information on the automatic extension.

Check with the government agency regarding which document(s) the agency will accept. You may also provide the agency with a copy of this **Federal Register** Notice.

Some benefit-granting agencies use the USCIS Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlements Program (SAVE) to verify the current immigration status of applicants for public benefits. If such an agency has denied your application based solely or in part on a SAVE response, the agency must offer you the opportunity to appeal the decision in accordance with the agency's procedures. If the agency has received and acted upon or will act upon a SAVE verification and you do not believe the response is correct, you may make an InfoPass appointment for an in-person interview at a local USCIS office. Detailed information on how to make corrections, make an appointment, or submit a written request can be found at the SAVE Web site at <http://www.uscis.gov/save>, then by choosing "How to Correct Your Records" from the menu on the right.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

[FWS-R2-ES-2014-N245;
FXES11130200000-156-FF02ENEH00]

Endangered and Threatened Species Permit Applications

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of receipt of applications; request for public comment.

SUMMARY: We, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, invite the public to comment on the following applications to conduct certain activities with endangered or threatened species. The Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (Act), prohibits activities with endangered and threatened species unless a Federal permit allows such activities. Both the Act and the National Environmental Policy Act require that we invite public comment before issuing these permits.

DATES: To ensure consideration, written comments must be received on or before February 4, 2015.

ADDRESSES: Susan Jacobsen, Chief, Division of Classification and Restoration, by U.S. mail at Division of

Classification and Recovery, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, P.O. Box 1306, Albuquerque, NM 87103; or by telephone at 505-248-6920. Please refer to the respective permit number for each application when submitting comments.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Susan Jacobsen, Chief, Division of Classification and Restoration, by U.S. mail at P.O. Box 1306, Albuquerque, NM 87103; or by telephone at 505-248-6665.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Public Availability of Comments

The Act (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*) prohibits activities with endangered and threatened species unless a Federal permit allows such activities. Along with our implementing regulations in the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) at 50 CFR part 17, the Act provides for permits, and requires that we invite public comment before issuing these permits. A permit granted by us under section 10(a)(1)(A) of the Act authorizes applicants to conduct activities with U.S. endangered or threatened species for scientific purposes, enhancement of survival or propagation, or interstate commerce. Our regulations regarding implementation of section 10(a)(1)(A) permits are found at 50 CFR 17.22 for endangered wildlife species, 50 CFR 17.32 for threatened wildlife species, 50 CFR 17.62 for endangered plant species, and 50 CFR 17.72 for threatened plant species.

Applications Available for Review and Comment

We invite local, State, Tribal, and Federal agencies and the public to comment on the following applications. Please refer to the appropriate permit number (*e.g.*, Permit No. TE-123456) when requesting application documents and when submitting comments.

Documents and other information the applicants have submitted with these applications are available for review, subject to the requirements of the Privacy Act (5 U.S.C. 552a) and Freedom of Information Act (5 U.S.C. 552).

Permit TE-022190

Applicant: Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum, Tucson, Arizona.

Applicant requests an amendment to a current permit for research and recovery purposes to collect from the wild and conduct pollination research on 24 Kearney's bluestar (*Amsonia kearneyana*) from the wild in Arizona.

Permit TE-123070

Applicant: Susana Morales, Tucson, Arizona.