

From the Hearts of Syrian TPS Beneficiaries:

We must continue to uplift the voices of Syrian nationals who will be forced out of the United States if Temporary Protected Status (TPS) is not re-designated. Syrian TPS beneficiaries will be directly impacted by the decision made at the end of January 2018 by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and U.S. Department of State.

Through this collection of stories and documented personal accounts, the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC) intends to create dialogue about country conditions and ensure government decisions that impact the lives of 6,900 people are not made with consideration from the Syrian people themselves.

The brave group of persons whom have entrusted their story with ADC share: who they are, where they are from, what caused them to flee Syria, how they have contributed to the United States community, and why they need Temporary Protected Status?

Mona K.



I am from Damascus, Syria. I came to the United States in April 2013, after two years of war in Syria.

American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC)

I lost my house in Syria. My house was hit by bombs and gun fire. After I lost my house, I had to come to the United States to live with my sister. At the airport, the government officers told me that I could apply for Temporary Protected Status, and that this will allow me to work and stay in the United States. After I got Temporary Protected Status I felt secure. I started working right away. I need TPS to help provide for my sister who is 75 years old and sick. My sister is the only close family I have left. I will like to stay here and make a good life for myself. I work in the restaurant industry in Washington DC, where I prepare traditional Syrian food. It allows me to share my story with the community through my food, and gives me the opportunity to bring joy to other's lives. The United States is now my second home. All Syrian people need TPS to live in peace.

Dania D.*

In 2013, we left our beloved country not by choice rather by force because of the war zone situation. We were not part of it and we did not choose sides. We just wanted peace for our family. But now Syrians are unable to return home at this time. During our time in the United States, we have proven to be good, productive, educated and peaceful citizens. It is not fair for the United States government to leave us in the middle of nowhere. If we do not have TPS, we have nothing. For me to wait on this decision is heartbreaking, as I have no stability. Temporary Protected Status helped us to work and survive with minimum wages. How can we survive without work? How can we support our families without work? Where do they want us to go? This is now our home.

* pseudonym to protect individual's privacy, confidentiality and safety

Adil A.*

I will be under siege if I go back to Syria. My family and I are from Damascus, Syria and we live in Arlington, Virginia. My mother passed away and I was unable to go back to Syria to say goodbye because Syria is unsafe. It would have been too dangerous. The war in Syria not only forced me to flee my home, but prevented me from honoring my mother as she deserved and as her son. In the United States, the simple things like playing soccer and cooking with my children mean so much to me because this is not a reality in Syria today.

Temporary Protected Status provided me with a life line to be able to support my family. The ability to work is life changing, because my wife has breast cancer. I am a doctor and the financial provider for the family. I do not know what we are going to do if TPS terminated. My son is 10 years old and my daughter is 14 years old. But my son has severe asthma, and is constantly under medical care here in the United States. Neither my wife nor son would be able to receive the medical care that they need if we are forced to go back to Syria.

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Hussam B.

I am a medical doctor from Latakia, Syria. I was there when activists hit the streets demanding freedom and their rights. I was there when activists came into the hospital injured and wounded. Civilians, women, children, and students poured into the hospitals suffering from tear gas exposure, bullet wounds and limbs fractured, broken or gone. It was a never ending line of thousands of people in need. I provided medical care and upheld my oath as a doctor. Then doctors came under attack. The government and opposition groups took over hospitals, threatened doctors, refused health care access to patients, bombed and raided medical facilities, and beat and tortured injured patients, and. In spite of this, thousands of doctors stayed in a war zone because we were needed, we had an

obligation and duty. But then doctors became a weapon of war. Doctors were arrested, kidnapped, interrogated, tortured and some just went missing and were never seen again. They were trying to turn the hospitals into prisons. I fled Syria in 2013 and I cannot go back. TPS is the only protection I have.

Rania H.



I met husband at a church festival 2005, and we got married in 2005. My husband has Temporary Protected Status. My husband cannot go back to Syria. We have a 5 year old son, 6 year old son and 11 year old son. He cannot leave me and the boys. If he goes back to Syria, he will be killed. I worked as a certified nursing assistant in Pennsylvania at Sacred Heart hospital in Allentown and Michigan at Saint Mary Mercy Hospital. In Syria, I graduated with a pharmacy associate degree. I worked until I was diagnosed with cancer in 2013. Now I am unable to work. My boys are very smart in school and one day they can be someone important and good for this country. That is why I feel sorry for my boys. My husband has TPS. I am praying, hoping that they extend it. I have no choice. Until March, I do not know what we going to do. We don't have any future without my husband. He is my life. He is my husband; he is everything in my life. If he is forced to leave, we will all be in misery. He is my husband, I cannot let him go. I love him more than I love myself. What is happening in Syria is

a tragedy. I am from Homs, Syria, and people do not have heat, no water, and sometimes no food.

Mohammed D.



I did not think for a second that not extending my TPS here in the United States would be even a probability; definitely not in the near future while there is still an ongoing brutal war taking place in Syria. There is no other safe refuge to seek other than the United States. Now I am starting to ask myself concerning questions every day before I go to sleep, like what will happen tomorrow and the day after, and the day after. As the expiration for TPS approaches without an extension announcement, I know for certain that I cannot go back to Syria. I would be either arrested for absurd political reasons or drafted to the military to fight a war of injustice. In either case, my life would be in danger. Not extending TPS in the United States is a death sentence not an immigration decision. The United States is my home even though I wasn't born here. I was born in Damascus, the capital of Syria; to a middle class family, with big dreams and ambitions. I had always dreamed about coming to the United States, the land of opportunity and freedom. I continued to work hard and worked in Riyadh, Saudi as an architect for a small interior design office. I was finally granted a visa interview in 2010. During my visa interview to come to the United States, I told my interviewee that home is not a land nor a race nor a culture that one affiliate with, but it is a set of values that one belongs to,

where one has the right to be, and express themselves freely under the umbrella of a just law where everyone feels protected and safe with no regards to their religion, race nor authenticity; and for that the United States was my home before I even step a foot on its land. My life has changed dramatically since I came here. In Syria I worked as an architect, and in the United States I was able to graduate from one of the top schools here in the United States with a Master's Degree in Architecture, and I have worked for top architectural companies in the world. That's exactly what living on the land of opportunity means, honoring the opportunities by working hard and paying back by helping people around the communities we live in. My life and the lives of thousands of young Syrians would be in jeopardy if the TPS was not to be extended. TPS has given us hope in the present and the future, it has given us the opportunity to study, work, succeed, and become part of the American fabric. Most of all, it has given us the basic human rights of living and being safe that would've been otherwise taken away from us in Syria.

