



July 23, 2019

## Amnesty International USA Recommends **VOTE YES** on the Venezuela TPS Act of 2019 (H.R. 549)

On behalf of Amnesty International USA and our over two million members and supporters in the United States, we recommend you **VOTE YES** on H.R. 549, which would grant Venezuelan nationals in the United States Temporary Protected Status (TPS). TPS is a necessary response to a human rights crisis and is critical to demonstrating the U.S. government's solidarity with the Venezuelan people and our regional neighbors.

- **Venezuela is undergoing a major human rights crisis.**

Venezuela is currently undergoing a major crisis which has had a devastating impact on the human rights of its people. The skyrocketing rate of inflation – which currently stands at over one million percent – has left Venezuelans unable to afford even basic goods, and the shortage of food products and essential medicines has left many Venezuelans both starving and sick. As of 2018, the country lacked 85% of essential medicines, and nearly two-thirds of the population reported involuntary weight loss. The government's refusal to act in the face of these severe shortages of medicine and food jeopardizes Venezuelans' lives and violates their human rights. Venezuelans who have been brave enough to stand up for change have faced deadly crackdowns by the Maduro regime, which has overseen the deaths of hundreds of political dissidents and the arbitrary detention of thousands more.

- **TPS for Venezuelans is a necessary measure to demonstrate our solidarity with the Venezuelan people and our regional neighbors.**

The ongoing crisis in Venezuela has impelled four million people living within its borders to flee – that is *over one in every ten Venezuelans*. The Organization of American States [estimates](#) that up to 8 million people may flee Venezuela by the end of 2020, far outpacing the even the Syrian refugee crisis. Yet while aid dollars for Syrian refugees hit \$5,000 per person in 2018, displaced Venezuelans [received only](#) \$100 per person.

Venezuela's [regional neighbors](#) have shouldered most of the burden of response. Colombia has taken in over 1.2 million Venezuelans since the onset of the crisis and has implemented an “open-door” policy allowing Venezuelans to access its territory. Other neighboring countries, notably Peru and Ecuador, have also received hundreds of thousands of Venezuelans.

In the United States, over 70,000 Venezuelans [had applied for asylum](#) as of June 2018, and advocacy groups estimate that upwards of [150,000 Venezuelan people](#) in the United States could benefit from TPS. This is a fraction of the numbers Venezuela's neighboring countries are receiving.

Alarmingly, despite its repeated acknowledgment of the gravity of the crisis in Venezuela, the United States has [refused to extend](#) protections to Venezuelans. The administration wrote on July

11 that it would not extend TPS to Venezuelans at this time, claiming it needed to “continue to monitor the situation.” Meanwhile, the U.S. government [has continued](#) to detain and deport Venezuelans to certain danger throughout 2018. It has [even subjected them](#) to the illegal “Migrant Protection Protocols” program, commonly known as “Remain in Mexico,” returning them to dangerous and precarious conditions for indefinite periods of time.

**Congress must act to designate TPS for Venezuelans now. Amnesty International USA recommends all Members of the House VOTE YES on H.R. 549.**

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