



IMMIGRATION UPDATE - AUGUST 21, 2023

Posted on August 21, 2023 by Cyrus Mehta

Headlines:

[DHS, USCIS Reopen Field Office in Havana, Cuba](#) – The Havana office will assist with U.S. immigration benefits and services. Services at the Havana Field Office will be available only by appointment.

[Ukraine TPS Extended, Redesignated; Special Student Relief Announced](#) – The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) is extending and redesignating Ukraine for Temporary Protected Status. DHS also announced special student relief for Ukraine.

[Sudan TPS Extended, Redesignated; Special Student Relief Announced](#) – The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) is extending and redesignating Sudan for Temporary Protected Status. DHS also announced special student relief for Sudan.

[F-1 EADs May Take One to Two Weeks to Process After Adjudication, CIS Ombudsman Says](#) – The CIS Ombudsman is reminding stakeholders that premium processing times are separate from work permit production timelines.

Details:

DHS, USCIS Reopen Field Office in Havana, Cuba

On August 17, 2023, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), through U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), announced the reopening of an international field office in Havana, Cuba.

According to a DHS news release, "USCIS' renewed presence in Cuba is part of an effort to restore USCIS' footprint outside the United States. These efforts are

consistent with the Biden-Harris Administration's commitment to facilitate safe, legal, and orderly migration while discouraging irregular and dangerous maritime migration." Under the previous administration, DHS explained, USCIS closed the Havana Field Office on December 10, 2018, due to a reallocation of agency resources and the long-term suspension of operations in 2017 after the Department of State ordered all non-essential personnel and families to leave Cuba.

The Havana office will assist with U.S. immigration benefits and services, including conducting interviews and processing cases for pending Cuban Family Reunification Parole (CFRP) cases and refugee/asylee relative petitions. The USCIS Havana Field Office also will provide other limited services, which may include refugee processing and other limited appointment-only services such as collecting biometrics for U visa applications. Services at the Havana Field Office will be available only by appointment.

Details:

- [DHS notice](#) (Aug. 17, 2023).
- [USCIS notice](#) (Aug. 17, 2023).

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Ukraine TPS Extended, Redesignated; Special Student Relief Announced

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) is extending and redesignating Ukraine for Temporary Protected Status (TPS). The extension allows approximately 26,000 current beneficiaries to retain TPS through April 19, 2025, if they continue to meet TPS eligibility requirements. An estimated 166,700 additional individuals may be eligible for TPS under the redesignation of Ukraine. This population includes nationals of Ukraine (and individuals without nationality who last habitually resided in Ukraine) in the United States in nonimmigrant status or without lawful immigration status, DHS said. DHS also announced special student relief for Ukraine.

The **extension** is for 18 months, beginning on October 20, 2023, and ending on April 19, 2025. Existing TPS beneficiaries who wish to extend their status through April 19, 2025, must re-register during the 60-day re-registration period (August 21, 2023, through October 20, 2023). Recognizing that not all re-registrants may receive a new Employment Authorization Document (EAD)

before their current EAD expires, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) is automatically extending previously issued Ukraine TPS-related EADs through October 19, 2024.

The **redesignation** of Ukraine allows additional Ukraine nationals (and individuals having no nationality who last habitually resided in Ukraine) who have been continuously residing in the United States since August 16, 2023, to apply for TPS for the first time during the initial registration period (August 21, 2023, through April 19, 2025).

The Federal Register notice explains the eligibility criteria, timelines, and procedures necessary for current beneficiaries to re-register and renew their employment authorization documents (EADs), and for new applicants to submit an initial application under the redesignation and apply for an EAD.

Also, effective October 20, 2023, through April 19, 2025, DHS is **suspending certain regulatory requirements for F-1 nonimmigrant students** whose country of citizenship is Ukraine, regardless of country of birth (or individuals having no nationality who last habitually resided in Ukraine), and who are experiencing severe economic hardship as a result of the current war in Ukraine. Such students may request employment authorization, work an increased number of hours while school is in session, and reduce their course loads while continuing to maintain their F-1 nonimmigrant student status. DHS said it will deem an F-1 nonimmigrant student granted such employment authorization to be engaged in a "full course of study" for the duration of the employment authorization, if the nonimmigrant student satisfies the minimum course load requirement described in the notice.

Details:

- [Federal Register TPS notice](#) (advance copy; to be published August 21, 2023).
- [Federal Register special student relief notice](#) (advance copy; to be published August 21, 2023).
- [DHS news release](#) (Aug. 18, 2023).

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Sudan TPS Extended, Redesignated; Special Student Relief Announced

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) is extending and redesignating

Sudan for Temporary Protected Status (TPS). The extension allows approximately 1,200 current beneficiaries to retain TPS through April 19, 2025, if they continue to meet TPS eligibility requirements. An estimated 2,750 additional individuals may be eligible for TPS under the redesignation of Sudan. This population includes nationals of Sudan (and individuals without nationality who last habitually resided in Sudan) in the United States in nonimmigrant status or without lawful immigration status, DHS said. DHS also announced special student relief for Sudan.

The **extension** is for 18 months, beginning on October 20, 2023, and ending on April 19, 2025. Existing TPS beneficiaries who wish to extend their status through April 19, 2025, must re-register during the 60-day re-registration period (August 21, 2023, through October 20, 2023).

The **redesignation** of Sudan allows additional Sudanese nationals (and individuals having no nationality who last habitually resided in Sudan) who have been continuously residing in the United States since August 16, 2023, to apply for TPS for the first time during the initial registration period, which begins on the date of publication in the Federal Register and is effective through April 19, 2025.

The Federal Register notice explains the eligibility criteria, timelines, and procedures necessary for current beneficiaries to re-register and renew their Employment Authorization Documents (EADs), and for new applicants to submit an initial application under the redesignation and apply for an EAD.

Also, effective October 20, 2023, through April 19, 2025, DHS is **suspending certain regulatory requirements for F-1 nonimmigrant students** whose country of citizenship is Sudan, regardless of country of birth (or individuals having no nationality who last habitually resided in Sudan), and who are experiencing severe economic hardship as a direct result of the current crisis in Sudan. Such students may request employment authorization, work an increased number of hours while school is in session, and reduce their course loads while continuing to maintain their F-1 nonimmigrant student status. DHS said it will deem an F-1 nonimmigrant student granted such employment authorization to be engaged in a "full course of study" for the duration of the employment authorization, if the nonimmigrant student satisfies the minimum course load requirement described in the notice.

Details:

- [Federal Register TPS notice](#) (advance copy; to be published August 21, 2023).
- [Federal Register student relief notice](#) (advance copy; to be published August 21, 2023).
- [DHS news release](#) (Aug. 18, 2023).

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F-1 EADs May Take One to Two Weeks to Process After Adjudication, CIS Ombudsman Says

Earlier this year, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) rolled out premium processing for F-1 students seeking optional practical training (OPT) or science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) OPT extensions. As students began to file premium processing requests, stakeholders informed the Citizenship and Immigration Services (CIS) Ombudsman that they were experiencing delays in receiving their Employment Authorization Documents (EADs). The CIS Ombudsman is reminding stakeholders that premium processing times are separate from work permit production timelines.

Specifically, the 30-day premium processing timeframe does not include the time it takes to produce an EAD. When an F-1 student files Form I-907, Request for Premium Processing Service, for a work authorization application (Form I-765), the EAD may take one to two weeks to be produced after U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) approves the Form I-765 application. USCIS will then mail the EAD via U.S. Postal Service "Informed Delivery." Wait times may vary depending on USPS delivery times.

Details:

- [CIS Ombudsman email broadcast](#) (Aug. 15, 2023).

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