design and development of an integrated, automated entry and exit system. The Task Force will be discussing, in detail, issues related to United States national security, border security and existing and proposed information technology systems. The discussion will include recommendations on data collection and use, facility and infrastructure issues and information and technology issues. None of this information has been previously disclosed publicly.

Public participation: The meeting is closed to the public, however the Task Force will accept written comments from the public for discussion. Only written comments receive on or before September 16, 2003, will be considered for discussion at the meeting. Written comments may be faxed or e-mailed to the contact persons indicated below.

Contact person: Michael Defensor or Deborah Hemmes, Department of Homeland Security, 425 I Street, NW., Room 7257, Washington, DC 20536; telephone (202) 305–9863; fax: (202) 305–9871; e-mail: *michael.defensor@dhs.gov* or *deborah.hemmes@dhs.gov.*

Dated: August 25, 2003.

Asa Hutchinson,

Under Secretary for Border Transportation and Security.

[FR Doc. 03–22431 Filed 9–2–03; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4410–10–M

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services

[CIS No. 2292–03]

RIN 1650–AB06

Extension of the Designation of Burundi Under Temporary Protected Status Program

AGENCY: Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services, Homeland Security.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The designation of Burundi under the Temporary Protected Status (TPS) Program will expire on November 2, 2003. This notice extends the Secretary of Homeland Security's designation of Burundi for 12 months until November 2, 2004, and sets forth procedures necessary for nationals of Burundi (or aliens having no nationality who last habitually resided in Burundi) with TPS to re-register and to apply for an extension of their employment authorization documentation for the additional 12-month period. Re-registration is limited to persons who registered no later than November 3, 1998 under the initial designation and also timely re-registered under each subsequent extension of the designation, or who registered under the re-designation no later than November 2, 2000 and also timely re-registered under the extension of the re-designation. Certain nationals of Burundi (or aliens having no nationality who last habitually resided in Burundi) who previously have not applied for TPS may be eligible to apply under the late initial registration provisions.

EFFECTIVE DATES: The extension of Burundi's TPS designation is effective November 2, 2003, and will remain in effect until November 2, 2004. The 60-day re-registration period begins September 3, 2003 and will remain in effect until November 3, 2003.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Jonathan Mills, Residence and Status Services, Office of Programs and Regulations, Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services, Department of Homeland Security, 425 ''I'' Street, NW., Room 3040, Washington, DC 20536, telephone (202) 514–4754.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

What Authority Does the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security Have To Extend the Designation of Burundi Under the TPS Program?

On March 1, 2003, the functions of the Immigration and Naturalization Service (Service) transferred from the Department of Justice to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) pursuant to the Homeland Security Act of 2002, Pub. L. 107–296. The responsibilities for administering the TPS program held by the Service were transferred to the Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services (BCIS).

Under section 244 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (Act), 8 U.S.C. 1254a, the Secretary of DHS, after consultation with appropriate agencies of the Government, is authorized to designate a foreign state or (part thereof) for TPS. The Secretary of DHS may then grant TPS to eligible nationals of that foreign state (or aliens having no nationality who last habitually resided in that state).

Section 244(b)(3)(A) of the Act requires the Secretary of DHS to review, at least 60 days before the end of the TPS designation or any extension thereof, the conditions in a foreign state designated under the TPS program to determine whether the conditions for a TPS designation continue to be met and, if so, the length of an extension of TPS. 8 U.S.C. 1254a(b)(3)(A). If the Secretary of DHS determines that the foreign state no longer meets the conditions for TPS designation, he shall terminate the designation, as provided in section 244(b)(3)(B) of the Act. 8 U.S.C. 1254a(b)(3)(B). Finally, if the Secretary of DHS does not determine that a foreign state (or part thereof) no longer meets the conditions for designation at least 60 days before the designation or extension is due to expire, section 244(b)(3)(C) of the Act provides for an automatic extension of TPS for an additional period of 6 months (or, in the discretion of the Secretary of DHS, a period of 12 or 18 months). 8 U.S.C. 1254a(b)(3)(C).

Why Did the Secretary of DHS Decide To Extend the TPS Designation for Burundi?

On November 4, 1997, the Attorney General published a notice in the **Federal Register** designating Burundi under the TPS program based upon ongoing armed conflict occurring within the country. 62 FR 59735. The Attorney General extended this TPS designation annually and re-designated Burundi by publishing a notice on November 9, 1999, determining in each instance that the conditions warranting such designation continued to be met. 64 FR 61123.

Since the date of the last extension, the Departments of Homeland Security and State have continued to review conditions in Burundi. It is determined that a 12-month extension is warranted due to ongoing armed conflict within Burundi that would pose a serious threat to the personal safety of returning nationals of Burundi (or aliens having no nationality who last habitually resided in Burundi). 8 U.S.C. 1254a(b)(1)(A).

The BCIS Resource Information Center (RIC) notes that, although there have been important advances in the Burundi peace process, fighting between the government and rebel forces has intensified. RIC Report (June 26, 2003). Both sides are still committing serious human rights violations. *Id.* The humanitarian situation remains dire. *Id.*

Burundi has seen some progress. *Id.* The transitional government of Burundi and two of the three main rebel forces signed ceasefire agreements in December 2002. *Id.* In addition, there has been some headway in implementing the Burundian peace accords. *Id.* Cooperation between the major Hutu and Tutsi political parties has improved, laws have been enacted to address past human rights violations and prevent future abuses, and civil service and provincial administration

reforms have been initiated. *Id.* Most significantly, there was a smooth transition of power in May 2003 from a Tutsi to a Hutu president to lead the second half of the three-year transitional power-sharing government set forth in the peace accords. *Id.*

The Department of State (DOS) notes that, despite these advances, the December 2002 ceasefire has been largely ignored. DOS Recommendation (June 19, 2003). The conflict between the government forces and rebel groups continues unabated in many areas of the country. *Id.* Rebel attacks on the military are followed by army reprisals against civilians suspected of cooperating with the insurgents. *Id.* Rebels reportedly often kill persons for suspected collaboration with the government and for their refusal to pay ''taxes'' to the rebels. *Id.*

The prospects for a sustained halt to the armed conflict are uncertain. *Id.* While the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is currently facilitating voluntary repatriations to the northern provinces of Burundi, much of the country remains unsafe for repatriation. *Id.* UNHCR has yet to begin facilitated returns to the southern and central provinces of Burundi because those regions have not yet been deemed secure. *Id.*

Based upon this review, the Secretary of DHS, after consultation with appropriate government agencies, finds that the conditions that prompted designation of Burundi under the TPS program continue to be met. 8 U.S.C. 1254a(b)(3)(A). There is an ongoing armed conflict within Burundi and, due to such conflict, requiring the return of aliens who are nationals of Burundi (or aliens having no nationality who last habitually resided in Burundi) would pose a serious threat to their personal safety. 8 U.S.C. 1254a(b)(1). On the basis of these findings, the Secretary of DHS concludes that the TPS designation for Burundi should be extended for an additional 12-month period. 8 U.S.C. 1254a(b)(3)(C).

If I Currently Have TPS Through the Burundi TPS Program, Do I Still Re-register for TPS?

Yes. If you already have received TPS benefits through the Burundi TPS program, your benefits will expire on November 2, 2003. Accordingly, individual TPS beneficiaries must comply with the re-registration requirements described below in order to maintain their TPS benefits through November 2, 2004. TPS benefits include temporary protection against removal from the United States, as well as employment authorization, during the TPS designation period and any extension thereof. 8 U.S.C. 1254a(a)(1).

If I Am Currently Registered for TPS, How Do I Re-Register for an Extension?

All persons previously granted TPS under the Burundi program who wish to maintain such status must apply for an extension by filing (1) a Form I–821, Application for Temporary Protected Status, without the filing fee; (2) a Form I–765, Application for Employment Authorization; and (3) two identification photographs (1½ inches × 1½ inches). See the chart below to determine whether you must submit the one hundred and twenty dollar ($120) filing fee with Form I–765. Applicants for an extension of TPS benefits do not need to be re-fingerprinted and thus need not pay the $50 fingerprint fee. Children beneficiaries of TPS who have reached the age of fourteen (14) but were not previously fingerprinted must pay the fifty dollar ($50) fingerprint fee with the application for extension.

An application submitted without the required fee and/or photos will be returned to the applicant. Submit the completed forms and applicable fee, if any, to the BCIS District Office having jurisdiction over your place of residence during the 60-day re-registration period that begins September 3, 2003 and ends November 3, 2003.

If	Then
You are applying for employment authorization until November 2, 2004	You must complete and file the Form I–765, Application for Employment Authorization, with the $120 fee.
You already have employment authorization or do not require employment authorization.	You must complete and file Form I–765 with no fee.[1]
You are applying for employment authorization and are requesting a fee waiver.	You must complete and file: 1) Form I–765 and 2) a fee waiver request and affidavit (and any other information) in accordance with 8 CFR 244.20.

[1] An applicant who does not seek employment authorization documentation does not need to submit the $120 fee, but must still complete and submit Form I–765 for data gathering purposes.

How Does an Application for TPS Affect My Application for Asylum or Other Immigration Benefits?

An application for TPS does not affect an application for asylum or any other immigration benefit. Denial of an application for asylum or any other immigration benefit does not affect an applicant's TPS eligibility, although the grounds for denying one form of relief may also be grounds for denying TPS. For example, a person who has been convicted of a particularly serious crime is not eligible for asylum or TPS. 8 U.S.C. 1158(b)(2)(A)(ii); 8 U.S.C. 1254a(c)(2)(B)(ii).

Does This Extension Allow Nationals of Burundi (or Aliens Having No Nationality Who Last Habitually Resided in Burundi) Who Entered the United States After November 9, 1999, To File for TPS?

No. This is a notice of an extension of TPS, not a notice of re-designation of Burundi under the TPS program. An extension of TPS does not change the required dates of continuous residence and continuous physical presence in the United States. This extension does not expand TPS availability to those who do not meet the current eligibility requirements for Burundi. To be eligible for benefits under this extension, nationals of Burundi (or aliens having no nationality who last habitually resided in Burundi) must have been continuously physically present and continuously resided in the United States since November 9, 1999.

What Is Late Initial Registration?

Some persons may be eligible for late initial registration under 8 U.S.C. 1254a(c)(1)(A) and 8 CFR 244.2(f)(2). To apply for late initial registration an applicant must:

(1) Be a national of Burundi (or alien who has no nationality and who last habitually resided in Burundi);

(2) Have been continuously physically present in the United States since November 9, 1999;

(3) Have continuously resided in the United States since November 9, 1999; and

(4) Be both admissible as an immigrant, except as provided under section 244(c)(2)(A) of the Act, and not ineligible under section 244(c)(2)(B) of the Act.

Additionally, the applicant must be able to demonstrate that during the registration period for the initial designation (from November 4, 1997 to November 3, 1998), or during the registration period for the redesignation (from November 9, 1999 to November 2, 2000), he or she:

(1) Was a nonimmigrant or had been granted voluntary departure status or any relief from removal;

(2) Had an application for change of status, adjustment of status, asylum, voluntary departure, or any relief from removal or change of status pending or subject to further review or appeal;

(3) Was a parolee or had a pending request for reparole; or

(4) Was the spouse or child of an alien currently eligible to be a TPS registrant.

An applicant for late initial registration must file an application for late registration no later than 60 days after the expiration or termination of the conditions described above. 8 CFR 244.2(g).

What Happens When This Extension of TPS Expires on November 2, 2004?

At least 60 days before this extension of TPS expires on November 2, 2004, the Secretary of DHS will review conditions in Burundi and determine whether the conditions for designation under the TPS program continue to be met at that time, or whether the TPS designation should be terminated. Notice of that determination, including the basis for the determination, will be published in the **Federal Register**.

If the TPS designation is extended at that time, an alien who has received TPS benefits must re-register under the extension in order to maintain TPS benefits. If, however, the Secretary of DHS terminates the TPS designation, TPS beneficiaries will maintain the immigration status they had before TPS (unless that status had since expired or been terminated) or any other status they may have acquired while registered for TPS. Accordingly, if an alien had no lawful immigration status prior to receiving TPS and did not obtain any status during the TPS period, he or she will revert to that unlawful status upon termination of the TPS designation.

Notice of Extension of Designation of Burundi Under the TPS Program

By the authority vested in me as Secretary of DHS under sections 244(b)(1)(A), (b)(3)(A), and (b)(3)(C) of the Act, I have consulted with the appropriate government agencies and determine that the conditions that prompted designation of Burundi for TPS continue to be met. 8 U.S.C. 1254a(b)(3)(A). Accordingly, I order as follows:

(1) The designation of Burundi under section 244(b)(1)(A) of the Act is extended for an additional 12-month period from November 2, 2003, to November 2, 2004. 8 U.S.C. 1254a(b)(3)(C).

(2) There are approximately 30 nationals of Burundi (or aliens having no nationality who last habitually resided in Burundi) who have been granted TPS and who are eligible for re-registration.

(3) To maintain TPS, a national of Burundi (or an alien having no nationality who last habitually resided in Burundi) who was granted TPS during the initial designation period or redesignation period must re-register for TPS during the 60-day re-registration period from September 3, 2003 until November 3, 2003.

(4) To re-register, the applicant must file the following: (1) Form I–821, Application for Temporary Protected Status; (2) Form I–765, Application for Employment Authorization; and (3) two identification photographs (1½ inches by 1½ inches). Applications submitted without the required fee and/or photos will be returned to the applicant. There is no fee for filing a Form I–821 for re-registration application. If the applicant requests employment authorization, he or she must submit one hundred and twenty dollars ($120) or a properly documented fee waiver request, pursuant to 8 CFR 244.20, with the Form I–765. An applicant who does not request employment authorization must nonetheless file Form I–765 along with Form I–821, but is not required to submit the fee. The fifty-dollar ($50) fingerprint fee is required only for children beneficiaries of TPS who have reached the age of 14 but were not previously fingerprinted. Failure to re-register without good cause will result in the withdrawal of TPS. 8 CFR 244.17(c). Some persons who had not previously applied for TPS may be eligible for late initial registration under 8 CFR 244.2.

(5) At least 60 days before this extension terminates on November 2, 2004, the Secretary will review the designation of Burundi under the TPS program and determine whether the conditions for designation continue to be met. 8 U.S.C. 1254a(b)(3)(A). Notice of that determination, including the basis for the determination, will be published in the **Federal Register**. 8 U.S.C. 1254a(b)(3)(A).

(6) Information concerning the extension of designation of Burundi under the TPS program will be available at local BCIS offices upon publication of this notice and on the BCIS Web site at *http://www.bcis.gov.*

Dated: August 28, 2003.

Tom Ridge,

Secretary of Homeland Security.

[FR Doc. 03–22508 Filed 8–29–03; 12:00 pm]

BILLING CODE 4410–10–P

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services

[CIS No. 2294–03]

RIN 1650–AB06

Termination of the Designation of Sierra Leone Under the Temporary Protected Status Program; Extension of Employment Authorization Documentation

AGENCY: Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services, Homeland Security.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The designation of Sierra Leone under the Temporary Protected Status (TPS) Program will expire on November 2, 2003. After reviewing country conditions and consulting with the appropriate Government agencies, the Secretary of Homeland Security has determined that conditions in Sierra Leone no longer support TPS designation and is therefore terminating the TPS designation of Sierra Leone. This termination is effective May 3, 2004, six months from the end of the current extension. To provide for an orderly transition, nationals of Sierra Leone (and aliens having no nationality who last habitually resided in Sierra Leone) who have been granted TPS under the Sierra Leone designation or redesignation will automatically retain their temporary protected status and have their current Employment Authorization Documents (EADs) extended until the termination date. However, an individual's TPS may still be withdrawn because of ineligibility for TPS, prior failure to timely re-register if there was not good cause for such failure, or failure to maintain continuous physical presence in the United States. On May 3, 2004, nationals of Sierra Leone (and aliens having no nationality who last habitually resided in Sierra Leone) who have been granted TPS under the Sierra