

# *Ecuador Asks Washington to Grant Citizens Temporary Legal Status*

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Quito, May 20 (RHC)-- The Ecuadorean government has asked the United States for Temporary Protected Status, or TPS, for its citizens after last month's devastating earthquake.

The Ecuadorean government has formally asked the United States to grant Ecuadoreans already in the U.S. permission to remain there while their country recovers from the massive April 16 earthquake that left nearly 700 people dead, thousands injured and homeless.

Such permission is part of a U.S. humanitarian policy known as Temporary Protected Status, or TPS, which a president may grant to nationals of a country that has experienced a crisis from natural disasters or conflict. The TPS would be granted by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

The U.S. department's website says the Secretary of Homeland Security "may designate a foreign country for TPS due to conditions in the country that temporarily prevent the country's nationals from returning safely, or in certain circumstances, where the country is unable to handle the return of its nationals adequately."

According to government figures, there are more than 200,000 undocumented Ecuadoreans in the U.S. among the one million Ecuadoreans residing in the country. Many of those would benefit from the TPS if granted.

The U.S. does currently provide this legal status to citizens from several countries in South America due to armed conflicts and natural causes. In fact, more than 200,000 Salvadorans benefit from TPS that the U.S. government granted their country after a devastating earthquake struck in 2001.

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