



अधिकार
adhikaar

71-01 Woodside Ave.
Woodside, NY 11377

(718) 937-1117

www.adhikaar.org
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October 30, 2017

**Testimony for Maya Gurung on behalf of Adhikaar
New York City Council Committee on Immigration
Scheduled for October 30, 2017**

Good afternoon Chairman Menchaca and Committee Members.

My name is Maya Gurung and I am a Temporary Protected Status (TPS) recipient. I am also a Case Coordinator at Adhikaar, a worker's center and community center based in Woodside, Queens that serves the Nepali-speaking community. We are here today to express our resounding support for Resolution 1638, calling upon the Homeland Security Secretary to extend TPS for all current TPS-designated countries.

On April 25, 2015, my family in Nepal -- and hundreds of thousands of others -- was directly impacted by the devastating earthquake. Everyone in my family was in shock, my uncles' homes were broken and the entire country was in chaos. My family urged me against going back, saying it was more helpful for me to remain here in the States to support their and Nepal's recovery.

Adhikaar worked with community members, along with Nepali and other non-Nepali partner organizations, to fight for TPS. In June of 2015, Department of Homeland Security granted TPS for Nepali citizens. In 2016, TPS was renewed for a second year. I am one of the 8,950 recipients. TPS helped me continue my job at Adhikaar while supporting my family in Nepal on their long, ongoing road to recovery.

At Adhikaar, we provided direct services to around two thousand people for TPS in 2015 and 2016. We organized TPS clinics with different legal service providers in New York City and supported people from all around the country with their questions.

TPS has given thousands of individuals and their families a sense of security regarding their immigration status, and work permits helping people contribute to the U.S. economy, and income to support family back in Nepal. Many now also have driver's licenses, bank accounts, and health insurance - all important aspects of building a stable, productive life. College graduates have been able to get jobs to support the U.S. and Nepal's economy. TPS recipients are taxpaying families whose homes and lives are now rooted here in the U.S.

When the decision for Haiti and Sudan were announced, I was scared for myself and all the people with TPS. In this current climate where immigrants are under attack, our futures seem like a mere political game for people in Washington. Nepal is still struggling with recovery from the earthquake which struck during the recovery from civil war. The City of New York is no stranger to long roads of recovery -- yesterday was the five-year anniversary of Superstorm Sandy, and many families here are *still* in the process of recovering. And now after the massive floods in southern Nepal, more people are facing life-threatening conditions. Going back to Nepal is simply not an option.

My life is here. I have lived in the United States for over 6 years, and my home is here in Adhikaar, my community is here in New York. Every day, I and thousands like me worry about whether we will be able to stay, and what will become of our families if we are displaced and forced back to Nepal. The uncertainty is a terribly precarious and unstable way of life.

Due to recent natural and political disasters, we need Nepal to be re-designated for TPS. We hope the New York City Council will support immigrant families by passing Resolution 1638. We would offer two suggestions to the Resolution: 1) an amendment to the whereas clause on Nepal that includes the recovery from the ten-year civil war and the recent mass floods in southern Nepal; and 2) a pathway to citizenship for TPS recipients whose homes and lives are grounded here in the U.S.

Thank you for your considerations of our suggestions to Resolution 1638, and for your support.

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Maya Gurung

Address: 5165 Codwise Place, Elmhurst

I represent: TPS recipients from Nepal

Address: _____

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