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A Venezuelan man lies in bed with his daughters in Aurora, Colo., Jan. 30, 2025, before getting ready to sleep in their apartment amid a time when, despite having legal documentation to reside in the U.S., they fear reports that U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents may come to detain immigrants for deportation. (OSV News/Reuters/Kevin Mohatt)

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Catholic immigration advocates said they were "disturbed" by a Supreme Court order allowing the Trump administration to end legal protections from deportation for about 350,000 Venezuelan immigrants. The Venezuelans, a typically Catholic population, were permitted to remain in the United States without risk of deportation due to dangerous conditions in their homeland.

The high court's May 19 order paused a ruling by a federal judge in San Francisco that had blocked Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem from terminating the protections granted under a program known as Temporary Protected Status.

Anna Gallagher, executive director of the Catholic Legal Immigration Network, also known as CLINIC, said in a May 20 statement, "We have said it before: arbitrarily revoking the legal status of hundreds of thousands of vulnerable people who expected to be able to remain safely in the United States is cruel and unwarranted."

Earlier in May, the Trump administration asked the Supreme Court to revoke TPS for the group of Venezuelan immigrants. Noem "vacated" a renewal of their TPS status in January, but those plans were blocked by a judge when those impacted by the decision argued proper procedures were not followed by the government.

At the time, U.S. District Judge Edward Chen said the administration's actions also appeared "motivated at least in part by animus," in part thanks to statements by Noem. The secretary, in announcing the move in January, had referred to Venezuelan migrants as "dirtbags."

The Supreme Court's brief order pausing that ruling was unsigned and did not explain the high court's reasoning, which is typical when the justices rule on emergency applications. Although it did not specify a vote count among justices, the order said Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson would have denied the administration's request.

Gallagher argued Venezuela "remains highly unsafe, as our own State Department acknowledges in warning U.S. citizens not to travel there."

A travel advisory posted May 12 by the State Department warns U.S. citizens and legal residents to depart Venezuela immediately: "Do not travel to or remain in Venezuela due to the high risk of wrongful detention, torture in detention, terrorism, kidnapping, arbitrary enforcement of local laws, crime, civil unrest, and poor health infrastructure."

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"We urge the administration to change course and create legal pathways to safety for Venezuelans who fled an oppressive regime and deteriorated economy," she said. "As a Catholic organization, we call for mercy and integrity in our systems, and for the prioritization of protecting human life and dignity."

"The Supreme Court's surprising decision to issue this order on the emergency docket creates immediate uncertainty for Venezuelans and legal practitioners aiding them," Ilissa Mira, CLINIC senior attorney, added. "Across the CLINIC network, legal practitioners will be scrambling to assist Venezuelan clients who may soon lose legal status and work authorization and who greatly fear returning to Venezuela."

Gallagher said the U.S. "must not abandon our Venezuelan brothers and sisters who live among us in our communities and who ask for our country's protection in this time of great need."

"We join many others in calling for a just solution for hundreds of thousands of Venezuelans currently relying on TPS," she said.

In a separate case on May 16, the justices criticized the Trump administration for seeking to give only one day's notice to a different group of Venezuelan immigrants in Texas it is attempting to deport under the Alien Enemies Act, a wartime law. The Trump administration has accused that group of migrants of being members of the gang Tren de Aragua.

The justices, however, noted both that the Venezuelan migrants in that case faced the prospect of indefinite detention to a notorious prison in El Salvador, and that the government claimed it was unable to return Kilmar Armando Abrego Garcia, a

Salvadoran with a U.S. wife and 5-year-old child, who was wrongfully deported to that prison despite a court order.

They remanded the case back to the 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, ruling that "notice roughly 24 hours before removal, devoid of information about how to exercise due process rights to contest that removal, surely does not pass muster."

This story appears in the **Trump's Second Term** feature series. View the full series.