**07KATHMANDU1227**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Reference ID** | **Created** | **Released** | **Classification** | **Origin** |
| 07KATHMANDU1227 | 2007-06-21 11:37 | 2011-08-30 01:44 | CONFIDENTIAL | Embassy Kathmandu |

VZCZCXRO1760 OO RUEHCI DE RUEHKT #1227/01 1721137 ZNY CCCCC ZZH O 211137Z JUN 07 FM AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6352 INFO RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING PRIORITY 5871 RUEHLM/AMEMBASSY COLOMBO PRIORITY 6176 RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA PRIORITY 1417 RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD PRIORITY 4202 RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 5475 RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY 1618 RUEHNY/AMEMBASSY OSLO PRIORITY 0290 RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA PRIORITY 0398 RUEHOT/AMEMBASSY OTTAWA PRIORITY 0216 RUEHCP/AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN PRIORITY 0359 RUEHCI/AMCONSUL KOLKATA PRIORITY 3609 RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA PRIORITY 1732 RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 2791 RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC PRIORITY RHMFISS/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI PRIORITY RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 KATHMANDU 001227 SIPDIS SIPDIS E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/20/2017 TAGS: PREF PREL PGOV BT NP SUBJECT: NEPAL GOVERNMENT AND UNHCR MUST ACT QUICKLY ON BHUTANESE REFUGEES Classified By: Ambassador James F. Moriarty. Reasons 1.4 (b/d). Summary ------- [Â¶](http://www.bhutan-research.org/us-diplomatic-cables-on-bhutan/07kathmandu1227#par1) 1. (SBU) In a briefing for donors on June 18, visiting UNHCR Field Security Advisor Leigh Hollingsworth lamented that the Government of Nepal (GON) had failed to communicate to local officials and security forces in Jhapa District its policy to support third-country resettlement of Bhutanese refugees. Although many refugees were ready for resettlement, a small but violent anti-resettlement group was having a powerful impact on the security in the camps, intimidating those expressing interest in resettlement. The GON has agreed that more security in the camps was needed, but had not yet taken concrete steps in that direction, Hollingsworth noted. UNHCR had halted its information campaign on durable solutions after the GON requested UNHCR not to discuss resettlement in the refugee camps, a UNHCR communication consultant added. The Kathmandu-based Core Group agreed June 21 to urge Prime Minister Koirala to communicate the GON resettlement policy down to the district and camp level as well as to increase security in the camps. GON Resettlement Policy Not Reaching the Local Level --------------------------------------------- ------- [Â¶](http://www.bhutan-research.org/us-diplomatic-cables-on-bhutan/07kathmandu1227#par2) 2. (SBU) Leigh Hollingsworth, visiting UNHCR Field Security Advisor who had been posted to the UNHCR sub-office in Damak from February 2005 to February 2007, reported to the donors June 18 that the Chief District Officer (CDO) in Jhapa had told him that no instructions had been sent from Kathmandu regarding the GON policy on third-country resettlement of Bhutanese refugees. As a result, local officials were not able to move forward with outreach and planning. (Note: When UN High Commissioner for Refugees Antonio Guterres visited Jhapa District in May, the same CDO said publicly that the GON, including his office, supported resettlement. End Note.) To reestablish law and order in the refugee camps, Hollingsworth said, the GON needed to clearly convey its support for resettlement to the refugees, local administrators, and security forces. Hard-Line Anti-Resettlement Group Threatening Refugees --------------------------------------------- --------- [Â¶](http://www.bhutan-research.org/us-diplomatic-cables-on-bhutan/07kathmandu1227#par3) 3. (SBU) Hollingsworth stated that the majority of refugees would return to Bhutan if they could do so under favorable conditions, such as compensation for land seized and guarantees of civil rights. Recognizing that the Royal Government of Bhutan would not likely meet either of these conditions, many of the refugees were open to resettlement as an option. A small but violent anti-resettlement group, however, was having a powerful impact on the security in the camps. Some reports indicated that militant refugees were running around the camps at night with masks and knives, intimidating refugees who had expressed interest in resettlement. The militant groups, Hollingsworth noted, viewed resettlement as an obstacle to their ultimate goal of, and recruitment for, revolution in Bhutan. Still No Action After Three Weeks --------------------------------- [Â¶](http://www.bhutan-research.org/us-diplomatic-cables-on-bhutan/07kathmandu1227#par4) 4. (SBU) According to Hollingsworth, a GON-nominated committee tasked to investigate recent violence in the camps had been in place for over three weeks, but has not yet released any findings or convicted any perpetrators -- despite the fact that those who committed acts of violence are known to the refugees. The lack of accountability sent a powerful and negative message to the refugees, Hollingsworth bemoaned. Following the May 27 - 29 riots in Beldangi 1 camp, the police had vacated these camps. Home Ministry KATHMANDU 00001227 002 OF 003 officials and UNHCR had agreed that a larger security presence was needed, perhaps by employing up to 25 police officers per camp. UNHCR believed that the GON needed to maintain a security presence in the camps at night and to patrol the camps by day. The Ambassador concurred, stating that the violent elements in the camps had to be isolated to ensure that the majority of refugees could freely express their interest with respect to resettlement. UNCHR Information Campaign Halted --------------------------------- [Â¶](http://www.bhutan-research.org/us-diplomatic-cables-on-bhutan/07kathmandu1227#par5) 5. (SBU) A UNHCR communications consultant told the donors that a three-phase communication strategy was needed to address the perception among refugees that UNHCR was offering resettlement unilaterally. The three phases included: 1) messages that reassured refugees that law and order would be restored and perpetrators of violence brought to justice; 2) an information campaign focused on UNHCR's mandate to find durable solutions for refugees; and 3) a detailed outreach effort on the resettlement process for the Bhutanese refugees. UNHCR planned to use radio broadcasts and other information dissemination options to reach as broadly as possible within the camps. She said that all communications would emphasize that the GON and UNCHR were on the same side. UNHCR Resident Representative Abraham Abraham said that UNCHR would not distribute information on resettlement until the security situation in the camps improved. The Ambassador concurred, but added that rejectionist elements should not be given a veto over future progress toward resettlement. Core Group Agrees To Urge Prime Minister To Take Action --------------------------------------------- ---------- [Â¶](http://www.bhutan-research.org/us-diplomatic-cables-on-bhutan/07kathmandu1227#par6) 6. (SBU) At a meeting June 21, Australian Ambassador and Kathmandu-based Core Group Chairman Graeme Lade recommended that the Core Group urge the Prime Minister to improve security in the refugee camps and instruct the GON bureaucracy to convey its resettlement policy to the refugees. Ambassador Moriarty and RefCoord attended along with Danish Ambassador Finn Thilsted, Norwegian Charge d'Affairs Kikkan Haugen, Canadian Cooperation Officer Ed Doe, UNHCR Resident Representative Abraham Abraham, and WFP Country Director Richard Ragan. Thilsted noted that, despite Prime Minister Koirala's commitment to allow third-country resettlement, the message had not trickled down to the bureaucrats. Thilsted agreed that a meeting with the Prime Minister was needed. He did not believe the problem was lack of political will, but rather the Home Ministry's failure to secure law and order in the camps. Lade noted that, in his last meeting, the Prime Minister had asked why resettlement could not move forward more quickly. Lade believed the Core Group needed to explain to the Prime Minister that insecurity in the camps would prevent rapid progress on resettlement. Thilsted requested UNHCR to provide the Core Group a list of concrete steps the GON needed to take to allow resettlement to proceed. The Core Group could then urge the GON, through the Prime Minister's office, to take action. Maoists Must Be Warned To Back Off ---------------------------------- [Â¶](http://www.bhutan-research.org/us-diplomatic-cables-on-bhutan/07kathmandu1227#par7) 7. (C) The Ambassador expressed concern that Nepal's Maoists were influencing the Communist Party of Bhutan (CPB), whose members were threatening refugees favoring resettlement. He requested UNHCR to engage the militant refugee youth in constructive dialogue to make them understand that violent action would close doors of opportunity. Norwegian Charge Haugen noted that senior Maoist leader Baburam Bhattarai would travel to Oslo the week of June 25 and agreed to add third-country resettlement of Bhutanese refugees to the bilateral agenda. Lade expressed reluctance about giving the Maoists an opportunity to block the resettlement program. KATHMANDU 00001227 003 OF 003 The Ambassador agreed that the Norwegians should not open the issue for debate, but should stress to Bhattarai that the Maoists must not treat the refugee camps as a recruitment ground to export their revolution to Bhutan. Possible To Hire Security For Camps? ------------------------------------ [Â¶](http://www.bhutan-research.org/us-diplomatic-cables-on-bhutan/07kathmandu1227#par8) 8. (C) The Ambassador asked whether there was a precedent within UNHCR to hire security guards for refugee camps. Abraham acknowledged that UNHCR, with donor support, had employed security forces in Zaire and Tanzania. WFP's Ragan suggested that the GON and UNHCR could agree to hire ex-British Gurkhas for security, similar to what had been done for the Maoist cantonment sites. The Core Group members agreed to request their capitals to consider this possibility. Comment: Next Steps ------------------- [Â¶](http://www.bhutan-research.org/us-diplomatic-cables-on-bhutan/07kathmandu1227#par9) 9. (SBU) For the U.S. resettlement program to proceed, UNHCR must be able to seek expressions of interest in resettlement from the refugees. Once the GON conveys its resettlement policy to the refugees, Post believes UNHCR will be able to open its doors in Damak and in Kathmandu to accept expressions of interest. UNHCR will only be able to continue its information campaign and hold mass meetings about resettlement in the camps after security forces are reintroduced -- a process which could take months. We anticipate, however, that a joint Core Group demarche urging the Prime Minister to accomplish these tasks, and perhaps offering financial support, may speed up the process. We also might encourage UNHCR to take a more proactive approach in engaging the militant refugee youth in dialogue to forestall further violence until the GON is able to provide sufficient security. MORIARTY