**07KATHMANDU338**

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VZCZCXRO3069 PP RUEHCI RUEHCN DE RUEHKT #0338/01 0401201 ZNY CCCCC ZZH P 091201Z FEB 07 FM AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4908 INFO RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 4980 RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA PRIORITY 0843 RUEHLM/AMEMBASSY COLOMBO PRIORITY 5652 RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING PRIORITY 5351 RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD PRIORITY 3661 RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY 0975 RUEHCN/AMCONSUL CHENGDU PRIORITY 0342 RUEHCI/AMCONSUL KOLKATA PRIORITY 3114 RHMFISS/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI PRIORITY RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC PRIORITY RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA PRIORITY 1513 RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 2409

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KATHMANDU 000338 SIPDIS SIPDIS E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/09/2017 TAGS: PREF PREL PGOV BT NP SUBJECT: CORE GROUP ON BHUTANESE REFUGEES EAGER TO MOVE AHEAD REF: A. KATHMANDU 317 [Â¶](http://www.bhutan-research.org/us-diplomatic-cables-on-bhutan/07kathmandu338#parB) B. KATHMANDU 222 Classified By: Ambassador James F. Moriarty for reasons 1.4(b/d). Summary ------- [Â¶](http://www.bhutan-research.org/us-diplomatic-cables-on-bhutan/07kathmandu338#par1) 1. (C) In a February 9 meeting with Ambassadors representing the Core Group on Bhutanese refugees, Ambassador Moriarty informed his colleagues that Prime Minister had approved large-scale resettlement (ref A). The Ambassador's briefing was well-received and helped the Core Group to define its next steps, including a joint demarche to the Foreign and Home Ministries. In other business, UNHCR Country Director Abraham noted delays in the Government of Nepal's processing of vulnerable cases for resettlement. All the Ambassadors expressed concern over the impact that the apparent increase in Maoist and Communist Party of Bhutan activity in the camps might have on a resettlement program. Australian Ambassador Lade, who chairs the Kathmandu Core Group, raised the problem of the refugees' food supply, which Abraham said had been secured through mid-May thanks to U.S., Canadian and European contributions. Australia Will Chair Kathmandu-Based Core Group --------------------------------------------- -- [Â¶](http://www.bhutan-research.org/us-diplomatic-cables-on-bhutan/07kathmandu338#par2) 2. (SBU) On February 9, Ambassadors representing the Core Group on Bhutanese refugees met to discuss recent developments and possible next steps. Hosted by Australian Ambassador Graeme Lade, Ambassador Moriarty, Danish Ambassador Finn Thilsted, Canadian Cooperation Officer Ed Doe, and UNHCR Country Director Abraham attended the meeting. Lade provided a brief overview of the January 17 Core Group (CG) meeting in Geneva. While Canada had assumed chairmanship of the Core Group in Geneva, he noted that, at Canada's request, Australia had consented to chair the CG in Kathmandu. GON Processing of Vulnerable Cases Too Cumbersome --------------------------------------------- ---- [Â¶](http://www.bhutan-research.org/us-diplomatic-cables-on-bhutan/07kathmandu338#par3) 3. (C) UNHCR Abraham provided an update on the Government of Nepal's (GON) processing of vulnerable cases for third-country resettlement. Of the first batch of 16 vulnerable refugees, to date, 12 had departed Nepal, 3 had withdrawn their applications and 1 was under process with the Home Ministry. Abraham stated that, on January 4, UNHCR had submitted to the Home Ministry a second batch of 36 cases that third countries had approved for resettlement. Using a flow chart, Abraham detailed the GON's processing requirements, including a vulnerability assessment, approval for resettlement and issuance of travel documents and exit permits. He opined that these current procedures would be far too cumbersome for a large-scale resettlement program. Abraham wanted to meet with the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Home together to discuss ways this process might be streamlined. Concern Over Maoist and Other Communist Activity in the Camps --------------------------------------------- ---------------- [Â¶](http://www.bhutan-research.org/us-diplomatic-cables-on-bhutan/07kathmandu338#par4) 4. (C) Lade expressed concern that the Communist Party of Bhutan and Nepal's Maoists were attracting refugee youth to their movement. He noted in particular the recent report that Maoist posters instructing teachers to close a schoolwere found covering the walls of the Beldangi 2 camp. Maoists had clearly stated their intention to prevent the resettlement of refugees to third countries, Lade added. Ambassador Moriarty agreed that there seemed to be increased Communist activity in the camps, which posed additional risks for refugees who supported third-country resettlement. More Contributions Needed for Refugee Food Program --------------------------------------------- ----- KATHMANDU 00000338 002 OF 002 [Â¶](http://www.bhutan-research.org/us-diplomatic-cables-on-bhutan/07kathmandu338#par5) 5. (C) Lade worried that a break in the World Food Program pipeline for the refugees would play into Maoist hands and encourage further dissatisfaction in the camps. Abraham noted that ongoing unrest and the continuous series of bandhs, or closures, in the Terai had compounded the food supply problem. Abraham detailed recent donor contributions to the Bhutanese refugee food program, including the U.S. contribution of USD 1.8 million, the Canadian grant of nearly USD 500,000 and the USD 400,000 from the Swiss. He believed that the European Commission contribution of Euros 1.5 million (roughly USD 2 million) had been used to pay back WFP's internal loan from January that had prevented an earlier break in the food pipeline (ref B). With these contributions, Abraham averred, the food supply was secured through mid-May 2007. Ambassador Moriarty agreed that a break in the pipeline would be counterproductive to Core Group interests and encouraged donors to make additional contributions. Encouraged by PM Koirala's Agreement on Resettlement --------------------------------------------- ------- [Â¶](http://www.bhutan-research.org/us-diplomatic-cables-on-bhutan/07kathmandu338#par6) 6. (C) Ambassador Moriarty then briefed the group on his February 7 meeting with Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala (ref A). Noting that he had previously raised this issue with all three relevant Ministers (Prime, Foreign and Home), the Ambassador indicated his belief that the Prime Minister's agreement was the result of internal GON consultations. Encouraged by the PM's agreement, the Core Group agreed that it needed to move quickly to take advantage of this opportunity. The Ambassador detailed the U.S. plan to issue a Request for Proposals soon. Next Steps: Core Group Demarche to GON --------------------------------------- [Â¶](http://www.bhutan-research.org/us-diplomatic-cables-on-bhutan/07kathmandu338#par7) 7. (C) The Ambassador stated his intention to meet the week of February 12 with both the Foreign Minister, who was expected to return February 12 from medical treatment in Thailand, and Home Minister to obtain their buy-in for the resettlement program. Both the Australian and Danish Ambassadors were interested in a joint Core Group meeting with both the Foreign and Home Ministers. The Ambassador agreed to request such a meeting during his bilateral meetings next week, adding that concrete resettlement offers by other Core Group members would strengthen a joint demarche. The group agreed that implementation of a resettlement program, including streamlining GON processing requirements and broad dissemination of information on resettlement, would be key to success. Comment: The Way Forward ------------------------ [Â¶](http://www.bhutan-research.org/us-diplomatic-cables-on-bhutan/07kathmandu338#par8) 8. (C) Both the Danish and Australian Ambassadors seemed pleased with U.S. advocacy for, and the Prime Minister's agreement to, a resettlement program for the Bhutanese refugees. We agree that a joint Core Group demarche to the Government of Nepal, particularly if it includes other concrete resettlement offers, would help to keep momentum going in Kathmandu. We also recommend that the Department consider the idea of a demarche by Embassy New Delhi to the Government of India (GOI) and Royal Government of Bhutan (RGOB) detailing the U.S. interest in accelerating a comprehensive solution and seeking their assistance. We believe that a clear statement that the international community would not tolerate further expulsions from Bhutan should be a central element of this demarche. MORIARTY