**07KATHMANDU896**

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VZCZCXRO5590 OO RUEHCI RUEHCN DE RUEHKT #0896/01 1241212 ZNY CCCCC ZZH O 041212Z MAY 07 FM AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5817 INFO RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING PRIORITY 5690 RUEHLM/AMEMBASSY COLOMBO PRIORITY 5995 RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA PRIORITY 1217 RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD PRIORITY 4018 RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 5310 RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY 1393 RUEHCN/AMCONSUL CHENGDU PRIORITY 0372 RUEHCI/AMCONSUL KOLKATA PRIORITY 3436 RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA PRIORITY 1628 RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 2651 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 02 KATHMANDU 000896 SIPDIS SIPDIS E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/04/2017 TAGS: PREF PREL PGOV BT NP SUBJECT: UNHCR PREPARES TO RESETTLE BHUTANESE REFUGEES Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Robert Hugins. Reasons 1.4 (b/d). Summary ------- [Â¶](http://www.bhutan-research.org/us-diplomatic-cables-on-bhutan/07kathmandu896#par1) 1. (C) On May 3, UNHCR International Protection Division Deputy Director and Head of the Resettlement Service Vincent Cochetel and UNHCR's Country Representative Abraham Abraham informed Charge d'Affaires that the United States needed to clarify its preferred methodology to identify and process the Bhutanese refugees who would seek U.S. resettlement. UNHCR's ability to deliver the number of requested cases in a timely manner would depend on U.S. data requirements. UNHCR also required this information before it could prepare budget estimates. Cochetel reported that UNHCR had completed its census in the camps and was in the process of compiling the data. Cochetel reported that he had observed an atmosphere of fear in some of the Bhutanese refugee camps due to political party activity which openly discouraged resettlement. UNHCR planned to address misinformation and negative perceptions by providing as much accurate information as possible. Cochetel stressed that the refugees needed more detailed information on the consequence of resettlement and that the Government of Nepal's (GON) support of the process would be critical to its success. Meeting of Core Group on Bhutanese Refugees ------------------------------------------- [Â¶](http://www.bhutan-research.org/us-diplomatic-cables-on-bhutan/07kathmandu896#par2) 2. (C) In a May 3, meeting UNHCR Deputy Director Division of International Protection and Head of Resettlement Service Vincent Cochetel, UNHCR's Representative in Nepal Abraham Abraham, and UNHCR Durable Solutions Officer Kimberly Robertson informed the Charge d'Affaires that the U.S. needed to clarify its preferred methodology to identify and process the Bhutanese refugees who wish to seek resettlement to the U.S. UNHCR's ability to deliver the number of requested cases in a timely manner will depend on the data requirements and the level of detail demanded by the U.S. The UNHCR representatives added that they will need the U.S. requirements for the resettlement process to generate budget estimates for the donor community. The Corp Group also stressed the need for the U.S. to continue its efforts to encourage the Government of Nepal to simplify resettlement procedures and support the process. Abraham stated that Nepal's current procedures used to process "vulnerable" refugees would be far too cumbersome for the planned large-scale resettlement program. These same points were reiterated in a separate May 3 meeting with the Ambassadors representing the Core Group on Bhutanese refugees, hosted by Australian Ambassador Graeme Lade. UNHCR Evaluates Findings from Census ------------------------------------ [Â¶](http://www.bhutan-research.org/us-diplomatic-cables-on-bhutan/07kathmandu896#par3) 3. (C) UNHCR's Deputy Director Cochetel, who was visiting from Geneva, reported that the objective of his trip was to review and assess the data collected during UNHCR's recent census of the Bhutanese refugee camps population. Cochetel reported that the census had been peaceful and that the refugees understood its significance and had fully cooperated. The data collected was being used to help formulate resettlement programming. As another dividend of the census, UNHCR would urge the Government of Nepal to discharge its obligations to the refugees to issues administrative documents such as birth certificates, marriage certificates, etc. UNHCR to Seek Agreement on Refugee Children ------------------------------------------- [Â¶](http://www.bhutan-research.org/us-diplomatic-cables-on-bhutan/07kathmandu896#par4) 4. (C) Cochetel noted that the information collected on children living in the refugees camps, separate from their parents who remained in Bhutan, would be used to build compelling humanitarian cases for the children's return to Bhutan. UNHCR believed there could be as many as 400 of these children. Cotchetel explained that, since the legal KATHMANDU 00000896 002 OF 002 status in Bhutan of the children's parents was unknown, UNHCR would seek assurances from the Bhutanese government that there would be no retaliation against the parents should UNHCR attempt to locate them. Resettlement Portrayed as Selling Out ------------------------------------- [Â¶](http://www.bhutan-research.org/us-diplomatic-cables-on-bhutan/07kathmandu896#par5) 5. (C) Cochetel reported an atmosphere of fear in some of the Bhutanese refugee camps he had visited. He had observed political party activity apparently by supporters of the Bhutanese Communist Party (BCP) which openly discouraged resettlement through intimidation and threatened violence. The BCP was spreading the word, especially among youth in camps, that resettlement would defeat their efforts to return to Bhutan, destroying any chance for justice. The UNHCR representatives acknowledged that this negative perception needed to be dealt with directly. Cochetel stated that UNHCR would make every effort to portray resettlement as a positive move that would not weaken the refugees' case for repatriation. Refugee Apprehensive about Resettlement --------------------------------------- [Â¶](http://www.bhutan-research.org/us-diplomatic-cables-on-bhutan/07kathmandu896#par6) 6. (C) The UNHCR representatives stressed the refugees' need for accurate and adequate information on the details of resettlement and life in the United States. The refugees had many questions related to cultural values and at present there was no Bhutanese community in the United States which could respond to their concerns. Cochetel stressed that a special effort should be made to ensure that the process was smooth for the first wave of refugees. These refugees would become the ambassadors for the rest of the refugees seeking resettlement. The Charge d'Affaires said that the Embassy's Public Affairs Section had proposed a TV co-op with government-owned Nepal TV to produce a program or series on refugee resettlement in the U.S. (Note: Post awaits word on this proposal from PA/OBS/BSP.) UNHCR representative Abraham responded that he believed there was a private donor who was interested in establishing an information center in one of the camps as a pilot project. All agreed that it would be important to effectively counter misinformation with the appropriate assurances and clear detailed information that addressed the refugees' concerns and questions. Government Support of Process Critical -------------------------------------- [Â¶](http://www.bhutan-research.org/us-diplomatic-cables-on-bhutan/07kathmandu896#par7) 7. (C) Cochetel stressed that the support of the Government of Nepal was critical to the success of the program. He urged the U.S. to continue its dialogue with the Government of Nepal (GON) to support the process and establish detailed procedures concerning the GON's processing requirements for approval of resettlement and issuance of travel documents and exit permits. HUGINS