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Special Editorial Green Signal

The 16th attempt to find amicable solution to the prolonged refugee stalemate through Nepal-Bhutan talks will be probably on third week of November. The 15 rounds of futile bilateral talks between these two Himalayan kingdoms have already wrapped up yielding no solutions.

This time the refugees including well-wishers are enthusiastic to hear an amicable solution regarding the long standing crisis. More remarkably, the talk is going to be held after a long interval amidst baffling status. In fact Bhutan at hand is having more risks if it still conceals the facts that these refugees are to be repatriated without delay. The more it divides opinion among refugees, the further problem it generates to Bhutan.

Bhutan should clearly understand that if these refugees opt for third country resettlement and still posse a feeling of nationality, it would be at menace because those refugees would be well equipped both physically and mentally to step towards collapsing absolute regime of Bhutan. The mushrooming growth of Bhutanese youths' brainwave towards communism would be a supplementary peril to both Bhutan and India if it further uses delaying diplomacy as in past bilateral talks. Nepal's increasing Maoists activities before *Janaandolan-II*, which was a burden even to India is a suitable instance. This is the high chance for India to prove that she is one of the world's largest democratic countries that has been an active bystander of gross violation of even fundamental rights in Bhutan.

It would be wiser on Nepal's part to include refugee representatives in the talks as this impasse is a problem created between the Bhutanese government and refugees. Bhutan shouldn't abscond from giving concrete, practical and justifiable decision to refugee problem in the upcoming 16th round of bilateral talks.

Meanwhile, the Nepali community from every corner of the world will test Nepal's eligibility towards how it furnishes entire justice to the minority Lothsampa ethnic group from Bhutan. This integrity would be none other than making refugees return homeland with honor, dignity and compensation. Again Nepal should not go agreeing with the unnecessary conditions of Bhutanese ally.

If the talk is held in Kathmandu, exiled Bhutanese leaders have greater, final and binding role in launching strong programs pressurizing the talk's team for concrete results before greeting further regrets. It is almost late to begin campaigning potential Nepali civil society members and other well-wishers to help build pressurizing environment during the bilateral talks. Leaders! catch the green light before it signs-off.

HIGHLIGHTS

People Criticize BRRRC

In response to the suspension of camp secretaries from Central Committee of BRRRC, 528 individuals from Beldangi-II have sharply criticized Rizal's move without a valid reason.

In a press release, the signatories have appealed the media to cover views of all section of the exiled Bhutanese but not only the emotional sentiments of leaders.

They have accused BRRRC of going against peoples' will. "We ourselves are able to get relief from this sinful life" the release reads. The signatories in the release have strongly demanded to dissolution of the BRRRC.

Women org hassles TBR Journo

TBR Correspondent Beldangi, Nov

Beldangi-II branch secretary including other responsible members of the Bhutanese Refugee Women Forum (BRWF) have harassed TBR correspondent while trying to collect information on October 15.

Secretary Devi Maya Adhikari denied reacting to the TBR query on the recent US announcement to allow about 60,000 exiled Bhutanese to its land. She even used rude words also denying giving information. "Why should I answer you? No one will speak to

US proposal greets hot debates

■ Rizal objects ■ Camp Secys hail ■ BRRRC suspends Secys

TBR Correspondent Damak, Nov

The US assistant secretary of state for refugee affairs Ellen Sauerbrey's Geneva announcement of allowing up to 60,000 exiled Bhutanese in American soil has greeted hot debates in camps.

Against the stand of leaders, secretaries from the six camps of Jhapa welcomed the US offer amidst an interaction organized in Birtamod on October 9.

Manoj Rai, camp secretary of Khudunabari camp, Hari Bangale Adhikari of Beldangi -II, D. P. Pradhan of Beldangi -I, Manorath Khanal of Beldangi II extension, Parshuram Nepal of Timai and Ram Chandra Baskota of Goldhap camp heartily welcomed the proposal.

Saying that no good would come of the speeches of the political parties and organizations in exile, they pointed out that pressure



upon Bhutan could be brought to bear for repatriation even after going to the US.

Meanwhile, accusing those camp secretaries of involving in bringing division in the

Bhutanese community in exile and working against the interest of the Bhutanese people, a meeting of the BRRRC held in Damak on October 10 in presence of its chairman Tek Nath Rizal decided to suspend the six camp secretaries.

Rizal has said the six persons have been suspended, as they were involved in bringing division in camps.

US consulted us on resettlement: Oli

Nepalese Deputy Prime Minister K. P. Oli disclosed that the US government held consultation with him before the announcement was made to resettle 60,000 of the 107,000 exiled Bhutanese in the US.

Oli said announce by the US government for resettlement was made only after he met US Assistant Secretary of State for Population Refugees and Migration Ellen Sauerbrey regarding resettlement during his re-

cent visit to the US.

Oli said the US government has agreed in principle not to adopt the selective procedures to pick these 60,000 people for settlement in the US, rather randomly.

The Kathmandu Post quoted him saying that the exiled Bhutanese will be picked on camp-by-camp basis, not on individual basis. However, he said, no agreement has been signed between the two countries in this regard.

16th round of Nepal-Bhutan Talk in November

Special Correspondent Kathmandu, Nov

The 16th round of Nepal-Bhutan bilateral talk will be held in the second week of November this year in Kathmandu as proposed by the government of Nepal to its Bhutanese counterpart.

In a formal letter dispatched by the Nepalese foreign ministry, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister K. P. Sharma Oli has asked the Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Lyonpo Khandu Wangchuk, to sit for talks to finalize the crisis. Nepal has proposed the date for talks to be on November 12 and 13.

The letter was sent as per the agreement reached between Oli and Wangchuk to sit for final round of bilateral talks on the issue in New York while attending 61st session of the UN General Assembly.

Oli in a recent meet with leaders in exile in Birtamode has said the meeting to be held between Bhutan and Nepal next month would take a final decision over the repatriation of the exiled Bhutanese. "The forthcoming talks will be decisive. In case of it being otherwise we will look for alternatives. The government,



K. Wangchuk

We want solution: women in camps

KP Oli

however, doesn't want to prolong the process," he said.

Meanwhile, Tek Nath Rizal has asked all to remain patient till the government of Nepal takes any decision over the matter. In a statement issued after the meeting of Bhutanese Movement Steering Committee (BMSC) in Damak, Rizal has said since the Nepal and Bhutan governments are holding talks next month, we must remain calm till that time.

TWMN allows for affiliation to Bhutanese media

Bhutan News Service Kathmandu, Nov

The Third World Media Network (TWMN) an independent, international, non-profit organization of the working journalists from the least developed countries (LDCs) having its headquarter in Dhaka Bangladesh has recently given affiliation to TWMN-Bhutan Chapter.

According to Teju Chouhan, the Secretary General of TWMN-Bhutan Chapter, they received a response letter from the headquarter stating the acceptance of Bhutan Chapter in TWMN.

The Bhutan committee comprises seven members under the President ship of the Editor of TBR.

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Editorial. . . .

Common Consensus

Long stay in the deteriorating camp situation brought confusions within refugees. Individual refugee's opinion is divided and there seem no able leaders to point out the right way towards safe landing of this protracted issue.

Suspension of camp secretaries from BRRRC has further decreased the probabilities of building common consensus on the issue. The frontline leaders and most of the organizations in exile have strongly criticized other options beside repatriation, stating that it would weaken the Bhutanese political movement. Even those countries which have wished to share burden of these refugees on the humanitarian ground haven't yet made public about its procedures.

The existing political and non-political organizations in exile are gradually losing faith from public. Time has drawn closer for these leaders and organizations to make their programs and position public. It would be better if this issue could be dealt on the ground of general cause. Neither political nor non-political organizations have generalized their programs and strategies. And this has resulted frustrations in public.

Thus, a common consensus has to be immediately built involving the sentiments of all aspects for finding suitable outlet to the problem.

Column & Opinion

US motivation is humanitarian

Some concerns have arisen since I announced in early October that the United States is willing to resettle up to 60,000 of the Bhutanese refugees in Nepal over the next three to four years. Let us address these worries.

First things first: The US motivation is humanitarian. It is tragic that a generation of Bhutanese children has been born and raised to adulthood never knowing anything but life in a refugee camp.

I know the people and the government of Nepal share this concern.

Nepal is to be commended for generously hosting the Bhutanese for nearly two decades. The United States has contributed a significant share of the assistance funding that has kept this refugee population alive over the years.

But we need to go beyond sustaining and just keeping people alive and find a humane and durable solution. The US offer should be understood in the context of our shared concern and effort to resolve this unfortunate situation.

The United States fully supports efforts by the Governments of Nepal and Bhutan to resolve the protracted situation of Bhutanese refugees. We have steadfastly encouraged both governments to work together, particularly to allow refugees who so wish to return to Bhutan.

The United States government, working closely with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and other interested

governments, is part of an international effort to resolve this situation. We commend the efforts of Nepal in working with UNHCR to do a census of refugees, which is essential to identifying appropriate solutions.

Third country resettlement is one of the solutions that concerned countries, such as the United States, can offer. We do not imagine that it would be the solution for every refugee, and only those Bhutanese refugees who freely choose to resettle in the United States would be considered for our program.

View Point

By: Ellen Sauerbrey

Again, it is our intention that it be part of a comprehensive solution to the problem, which may also include resettlement to other countries and voluntary repatriation to Bhutan. The United States continues to urge the Government of Bhutan to permit the repatriation of all refugees who have legitimate claim to Bhutanese citizenship and who wish to return to Bhutan.

It is important for all to keep in mind that the timeline proposed for this resettlement effort is three to four years. This means from 2007 to 2010 or, more likely, 2111. This would not happen overnight.

The United States has a long tradition of offering permanent resettlement to refugees from around the world. It continues to lead the world in refugee resettlement,

accepting more than 60 percent of the individuals referred by UNHCR in 2005 and admitting more refugees each year than all other resettlement countries combined.

Since 1975, the US has offered a permanent home to more than 2.6 million refugees. Over 40,000 refugees from 68 countries started new lives in the United States in the last year alone.

We have a long track record of successfully integrating refugees from all backgrounds. It is important to note that we select applicants for our program on the basis of applicants' need — we do not make selections based upon level of education, job-related skills or other such criteria.

On arrival in the US, refugees are helped with education, language training, and job skills to give them every opportunity for a successful new beginning. Most refugees who come to the United States are able to find jobs and support their families. After five years, resettled refugees become eligible to apply for American citizenship and the vast majority embraces this opportunity.

I believe we are all in agreement that the Bhutanese refugees have been in the camps for too long and need a fresh start in life. This is an unhappy situation for them and it certainly is not desirable for Nepal, either.

The United States hopes that, working together with Nepal and the international community, we will soon make real progress on this situation, and offer new hope to the Bhutanese refugees in Nepal.

(The writer is the US Assistant Secretary of State for Population, Refugees, and Migration)

Readers' Column

Thank you TBR!

Indeed, Beldangi-I residents are indebted upon the help as relief that was extended by The Bhutan Reporter (TBR) during the time when the fire broke resulting great loss. TBR's contribution prior to UNHCR's help is praiseworthy. Nevertheless, personally I can say TBR was the first and the only means which extended basic needs to fire victims including pieces of clothes collected by Bhutan Students Circle.

It is in fact great contribution amidst such a huge loss. All fire victims are thankful to TBR for its support.

The writer, one of the fire victims, prefers to remain anonymous.

.....
Through Kantipur F.M I came to know that TBR team extended its possible support to the Beldangi-I fire victims at the first and fresh hours. This is nothing then a lesson to other existing newspapers or any other individuals. Breaking Fire in the exiled camps is a regular matter and it has been learned that the support, meant for victims, is always misused. Now on, a clear lesson has been spread out that if the support be directly extended to the victims like that of TBR it would be well-handled.

There is a lesson from TBR to other papers in camps to help any kinds of victims in cases of emergencies. Learn it!
Bal B. Gurung, Biratnagar.

Publicize programs

The exiled Bhutanese dilemma is getting more and more intricate. Ground level people in camps have started opposing the so called leaders who are dwelling in advanced towns of Nepal and India as well.

Without creating orchestrated statement now the leaders must make their programs public so that people would decide on the right path.

Without hesitation we can say that exiled leaders have done nothing rather than issuing press statements quite routinely. People are wishing to see their programs ahead for repatriation.

Bhim, Chandra and Kul Bahadur, Beldangi camp.

Good Editorial

My attention was drawn when I read the editorial 'Divisive Package' of last issue. Indeed, it was really good. The US move to take Bhutanese refugees in its land right at this moment is somehow nice when we are to consider the miserable life in exiled camps but I don't think it can give entire justice to Bhutanese political problem. Thus, we must be patience to wait until a portion of refugees gets repatriated.

I personally have a high spirit towards fleeing to western country to build up my career but that moment hasn't arrived yet.

Ram Chhetri, Kathmandu.

TBR Feature

Does anyone like to ideally sit viewing people in streets with full red *teeka* in forehead during the festival like Dashain? This was not an eccentric issue for six exiled Bhutanese who were there in front of the UN house in Lalitpur inside a tent staged for sit-in.

Ram Lal Subedi, 60, from Beldangi-II is one of them. Subedi says he clued-up his family members who were waiting their guardian, stating he would not return home until UN speaks on the refugee stalemate. "The past 16 years were also gloomy in terms of celebrating dashain being stateless and this time's too wasn't of much significance" he says.

Krishna Bahadur Khadka, 53, says there wasn't peculiarity when he couldn't put *teeka* as in the preceding years. He opines that the exiled Bhutanese are not in Nepal to celebrate such festivals with much happiness. "We have our nation where we can enjoy, but only after getting repatriated" Khadka says.

Another participant Dilliram Poudel, 58, a guardian of 12 members in a family from Khudunabari camp was also an active eye-witness of people with red *teeka* moving alongside the busy roads in Kathmandu during dashain. Dilliram says every festival after forcible eviction from our hometown had gone by desperately. Poudel, who was

What is left for them to further sacrifice?

placed in category 2, says "It would be wiser on my behalf if I leave this sit-in only when the UN speaks on our demands.

Chandra Maya Monger from Beldangi-II extension who celebrated dashain with her family in the camps has now already come to join her previous duty of enrolling the whole day in the sit-in. She is going to sacrifice this *tihar* for the cause of repatriation.

Yam Bahadur Bhattarai, a youth who has just passed his higher secondary examination was



another who told lie to his parents in a telephone informing that he would arrive home before dashain. The most remarkable thing is; how did Bhattarai passed on his time for he is the only youth among other aged participants of above 50 years. He further shows uncertainties to pursue his higher education due to adequate financial assistance.

Ananta Lal Acharya of Beldangi-II showing a photo says, "Here is how we celebrated dashain." If you were to look onto it, then they can be seen in group in a small red *teeka* on the forehead amidst their leaders

Tek Nath Rizal and Thinley Penjore.

Damber Biswa of Khudunabari is a deregistered Bhutanese in camps. He also shows enthusiasm towards repatriation rather than celebrating festivals with great importance being out from the native place. Except Yam Bahadur, all these participants are guardian in their respective family. What had their children, who saw their neighbors happily celebrating dashain thought upon these parents in absence? They have a plan of exerting pressure to the 16th round of Nepal-Bhutan talks, which will be probably in Kathmandu in the third week of November. They claim the joint attempt from only seven people to mount pressure will also gain momentum even if leaders will show unwillingness.

The chili cold has almost begun in Kathmandu. Sooner or later it will make them to leave for home if their leaders do not work towards providing them some woolen clothes if they really want to sit until UN addresses. What would the dream of Ram Lal and other like Bhutanese who still have faith towards repatriation be? This is a question which needs more homework to be justified.

They have been in this tent from June 2 though Tek Nath Rizal was formally adjourned the sit-in from August 27. What still is left for these innocent participants to sacrifice for repatriation?

Exile Voice

APFA Gives Journalism Training

Pabi Maya Rai
Beldangi, Nov

The Association of Press Freedom Activists (APFA)-Bhutan has given four days training on 'Basics of News Writing' last month in Beldangi-II to TBR correspondents stationed in Jhapa and Morang.

TP Mishra, Teju Chouhan and Shanti Ram Poudel have facilitated the training. According to APFA-Bhutan, 30 candidates had shown participation. APFA-Bhutan has also given a merit certificate stating



Trainees in group activities Photo APFA

candidate's active participation.

Meanwhile, Third World Media Network (TWMN)-Bhutan Chapter has declared an award, 'The Reporter of the Year' which will be given each year to the best reporter from TBR coinciding its establishment day.

Suicide cases rise in camps

Bhutan News Service
Beldangi-II, Nov

Longer stay in unimproved camps and the escalating frustration and depression among the exiled Bhutanese have increased the cases of suicide.

Ichcha Ram Koirala of Beldangi-II, sector E-3 committed suicide in his own hut on October 8. Witnesses say Koirala was mentally depressed. Koirala was employed in Royal Bhutan

Army. Before forcible eviction he was arrested and tortured severely for three years.

61 years old Koirala was survived by five daughters, one son and a wife.

Similar kinds of suicidal cases are regularly reported in camps. However, the exact figure is not yet known. Talkative on unnecessary subjects, wandering for the whole day without any reason are common symptoms seen in those cases.

TBR extends support to fire victims

Ganga Ram Kalikotey
Beldangi-I, Nov



Helping Needy: TBR team and its well-wishers distributing food stuff to victims of fire in Beldangi-I. Photo: Teju/TBR

TBR extended its basic relief support to fire victims in Beldangi-I last month at the initial phase before other refugee aiding agencies helped them.

TBR provided basic food items to all fire victims in Sector B/1. It also distributed about

the camp secretary, head teachers and other influential persons. Bhutan Students Circle (BSC), Kathmandu is reported to have provided those clothes to TBR.

The fire that broke-out in this sector killed one leaving huge damages.

Elephant kills one in Timai

TBR Correspondent
Timai, Nov

Elephant kills one and injured one more in Timai camp on October 17.

Bishnu Maya Rai, 28, the resident of Sector C was killed when the elephant attacked her leaving her 8 years old

daughter Vidhya Rai severely injured. She is reported to have undergoing medical treatment in a local hospital. Three other local villagers were also injured in the elephant attack.

The elephant attacked them while they were collecting firewood in the nearby forest.

From Regime

Crown Prince expels lama

Binod Sanvashi
Thimphu, Nov

Religious suppression on Nyingmapa Buddhism still continues in Bhutan even after king announced for establishment of democracy by 2008 guaranteeing religious freedom.

Shri Lhomon Ngayur Ningma (Buddhist Welfare Association) has said the Crown Prince Jigme Khesar Namgyal Wangchuk has expelled Drukpoen Lungten Dorji, deputy chief of Youngla Goenpa in Pema Gatsel, on the verbal order. The association further said proceeding to expel Lama Neten, the shrine chief, is already in action.

Action has been taken against both the Buddhist monks after the Crown Prince happened to see the portrait of

HH Dodup Rinpoche, highly revered spiritual leader in Nyingmapa sect, on the wall of Lama Neten's private bedroom.

In the midst of 1990s, Rinpoche was barred to enter Bhutan after persistence misinformation campaign and submitting false report to King by few vested interested persons who successfully engineered misunderstanding between Rinpoche and King. Thence, Government started to prosecute Nyingmapa sect practitioner and particularly Rinpoche's followers. Government forcefully converted the Nyingmapa learning centers into Kagyurpa centers.

The association has also urged for reinstatement of the Drukpoen Lungten Dorji and expulsion of Neten.

Private FM radio begins

Bhutan News Service

First private FM radio station has begun in Bhutan on September 28 at 6:30 am. The FM Kuzoo 90 MHz is run by Kuzoo society.

"For the youth, by the youth and of the youth" is the signing slogan of the FM station.

The FM owners have said the radio would run music and informative programs. Owners said Kuzoo will provide alternative source of quality entertainment and information and the station will also foster creativity, innovation and social advocacy through the youth.

The radio broadcasts from 6:30 in the morning to 6:30 in the evening. The daylong broadcast also features public service announcements and news. It has said it will not charge fees for any

government or private entities wishing to advertise products or services, as long as the advertisements do not violate the station's editorial policy. However, business companies capitalized at over Nu 10 million will be charged advertising fees.

The owners aim to extend the radio's transmission throughout the country.

APFA-Bhutan has welcomed the initiation of the government to allow the private companies to run FM radios that has proved instrumental in raising awareness among the people and fostering democracy, human rights and press freedom. APFA said it hopes that government will allow the private media houses run independently from the state influences thereby respecting the citizens' right to information.

TBR steps third year

TBR Correspondent
Kathmandu, Nov

The Bhutan Reporter, the only English news bulletin in Bhutanese community, that has begun its publication in October, 2004 has now reached third year of its publication despite financial constraints and other several obstacles.

On its third year eve, its publisher issuing a press release has thanked all individuals who helped TBR for its successful continuation for the past two years. "The similar help is even expected in the days ahead" the release reads.

Meanwhile, the publisher has said TBR has been facing crunch financial assistance to still bring it into existence. The publisher has urged individual readers and its well-wisher to extend possible support including financial aid. "However, we totally ignore the support given in the condition to put censorship in our free news" it reads.

Women org...

Meanwhile, Bhutan Media Society (BMS), the publication house of TBR has shown deep concern over such incident. Issuing a press release it has said "The right of journalists to get information in current happenings should not be violated from any organizations or individuals." BMS has further sought attention of BRWF urging their members not to react in the similar ways to any of the exile journalists in the future.

This is the first time that TBR correspondent in camps has encountered such problems while gathering information.

TWMN affiliation ...

Talking to BNS Chouhan said, TWMN-Bhutan Chapter will work independently for at least a year and we may then affiliate it under Association of Press Freedom Activists (APFA)-Bhutan.

APFA-Bhutan is the umbrella organization struggling for establishing complete press freedom, freedom of speech and expression inside Bhutan.

"But provided in a condition that TWMN headquarter will have no objection" he added. Chouhan also informed BNS that Bhutan Chapter will soon begin publishing a free circular, monthly Bulletin (only electronic copy in PDF format) from inside Bhutan through efforts from some of its members who are now in Capital city Thimphu.

According to the information uploaded in TWMN official website, the President of TWMN-Bhutan Chapter is a self nominated Central Committee member of TWMN-Headquarter. Further, it states that TWMN is dedicated towards increasing the efficiency of reporters, feature writers, editorial staff and other media professionals in the member countries. It also acts as a watchdog of press freedom across the world, particularly in the developing and least developed countries.

This is the first time that such large media network has given affiliation to Bhutan chapter where free press, freedom of speech and expression doesn't exist at all.

SHORT CLIP



Future journo: Trainees posing in the closing day of APFA journalism training, October 28. Photo: APFA

'Resettlement doesn't furnish justice'

Dr. Tara Niraula is the President of New York based America-Nepal Friendship Society established in 1983. Dr Niraula, also the general secretary of Nepalese Americas Council, an umbrella organization for Nepalese societies in the North America, is one of the strong advocates of the issue of the exiled Bhutanese since early 1990s. During his recent visit to Nepal, he talked to **Thakur P Mishra** of Bhutan News Service on contemporary situation of the crisis and possibility of getting it solved. Excerpts:

BNS: When did you start advocating for exiled Bhutanese?

Dr. Niraula: I have been in the touch with them since early 1990s. Especially, during the 1990s we launched a number of programs in the US and have even handed over several appeals and memorandums to the government as part of lobbying. We demanded for dignified repatriation of the exiled Bhutanese to their home.

BNS: The crisis is getting protracted. Who do you think is responsible for this?

Dr. Niraula: No doubt, Bhutan is responsible for this prolongation. The exiled Bhutanese are the genuine citizens of Bhutan. So, it is Bhutan's greatest failure not to take them back before it was too late. And I think the problem would have already solved if India had shown interests.

BNS: Is not Nepal responsible for failure of 15 rounds of Nepal-Bhutan talks?

Dr. Niraula: Nepal has its weaknesses. Nepal at all didn't sit for bilateral talks with enough homework. It would have exerted pressure over Bhutanese counterpart if adequate preparations were made before each round of talks. Nepal didn't take the issue responsibly as it is

engulfed in its own interim political turmoil. In reality, Bhutan is ahead in spreading propagandas than Nepal. The other reason of talks failure is the inability to include India in the talks, who controls Bhutan's foreign policy.

BNS: Could India be a catalyst towards resolving of this crisis?

Dr. Niraula: In my personal view, India's role is most significant since all exiled Bhutanese came to Nepal via Indian soil. And many Bhutanese are still languishing in different states of India as undeclared 'refugees'. Thus, India should show its serious concern in finding a lasting solution of the crisis.

INTERVIEW OF Month

BNS: Is the US offer of resettlement an amicable solution?

Dr. Niraula: It isn't an extra thing for the US to allow 60,000 people live on its soil on humanitarian ground but I think this doesn't furnish entire justice to Bhutanese struggle towards establishing democracy and human rights inside Bhutan. The problem is not only of these 60,000 people. There are other thousands of Bhutanese in different parts of India and Nepal waiting for repatriation. I think it would be wiser if those who are willing to opt for third country resettlement extend their help at this movement towards dignified repatriation. This option is just a solution only for individual.

I think it would be impossible to think of lobbying on the issue from the US and other countries. There, you would be busy at building your personal career as like that of other exiled Bhutanese friends who



are now in the US. Even those who were in touch with us like Bishwonath Chhetri, Bishnu Pradhan and others are currently out of contact. On the other side, I suppose that those who are willing to opt for resettlement do not represent majority's voice.

BNS: What role can friends of exiled Bhutanese in the US play for comprehensive solution?

Dr. Niraula: We can make the Americans aware of this issue. Lobbying American Senator to build pressure on Bhutan and Indian government for repatriation of the exiled Bhutanese can be possible from our side. We did this earlier as well. However, Bhutanese friends in America must show active participation and serious concern.

BNS: What you expect from 16th round of Nepal-Bhutan talks?

Dr. Niraula: It is a good indication that Nepal and Bhutan are sitting for bilateral talks next month. However, it shouldn't be like those in the past. As Nepal is surmounted by its own problems, there are no possibilities on its side to grasp any reasonable outcomes. If Nepal is truly serious, then it should give emphasis on repatriating the exiled Bhutanese to their homeland. It would be better if Nepal could work towards including representatives from the Bhutanese community in exile in the talks. I think, if this talk fails, it would certainly multiply frustrations in exiled Bhutanese. Nepal must expedite the process of repatriation without any further postponement.

Congratulations

**Congratulation to The
BhutanReporter
for stepping into third year of its
publication.**

**It is hoped that it always carries
first-hand news as before.**

APFA-Bhutan

Refugees Around US

Congolese refugees

25000 Congolese refugees back home

compiled by:
Vidhyapati Mishra

A landmark United Nations convoy has brought the first group of nearly 25,000 Congolese refugees back home from Burundi in another sign of the gradual return to normalcy in the war-torn country.

According to UN News Center, the group of 282 refugees, who had been living in the Gasorwe refugee camp in northern Burundi, were first brought to a United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) transit centre in the border town of Uvira in Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) Monday before being returned to surrounding communities on Wednesday.

The returnees received basic assistance packages including household items, plastic sheeting, blankets and a three-month food ration to cover immediate needs while they begin to rebuild.

The repatriation from Burundi is the fifth "return corridor" the UNHCR has opened to the DRC since the agency began assisting the return of Congolese in October 2004, first from the Central African Republic, then successively from the Republic of Congo, Tanzania and Sudan.

Since July, more than 1,000 Congolese refugees in Burundi have registered for voluntary repatriation. A

second convoy from Burundi is scheduled on October 17.

Due to security concerns, related to the second round of the DRC presidential election, cross-border repatriation movements are to be suspended from October 21 until November 6 but are expected to resume soon afterwards.

Of the estimated 24,500 Congolese refugees in Burundi, some 11,000 are living in Gasorwe and Gihinga refugee camps, while the rest are scattered in urban areas. In all, there are still more than 420,000 Congolese refugees in various countries of asylum.

Among the returnees was Sumaili Mahonesho, 36, who said on the eve of her departure from Gasorwe that she had been dreaming of going back home for the past four years. "I have stayed in this camp for long enough. The only thing I did here was to wait for the monthly food ration. Since the situation has improved, it is time to return to Uvira," she said.

Sumaili, who is from Uvira, left with two of her six children, but has heard that the others are safe and with an aunt. Her 12-year-old son Espoir said he was looking forward to seeing his old friends and started reciting their names.

Notice of Gratitude

We thank the **Kathmandu International Studies Centre (KISC)** and **The British School (TBS)** for providing us with books, clothes and other materials for vulnerable refugee students.

We would like to inform these school authorities that out of about 400 plus pieces of clothes, we distributed about 250 pieces to fire victims on October 2 in Beldangi-I, one of the refugee camps.

Bhutan Students Circle (BSC) expects similar support in the future.