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**Human Rights
Without Frontiers
Bhutan**

Advisor

Tek Nath Rizal

Bhutane in the Netherland Met European Parliament Members

A six member delegation representing National Front for Democracy in Bhutan (NFD) met with the European Parliament members for different nations at their respective offices in Brussels to apprise the EU dignitaries about the recent development in the Bhutanese Refugee Camps and the recently concluded Long march under the banner of NFD. The delegation informed the EU members about the division among the refugees because of third country resettlement

program. They also informed about the India's statement regarding the refugee issue and further chances of eviction from Bhutan in the days to come. They expressed hope for the continuous support to the Bhutanese Refugees in solving the refugee problem. After the meeting with the EU members, the delegation released the press statement.

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BMSC expressed serious concern on the martyr and wounded activists



June 12 2007- An emergency meeting of the BMSC was convened in Kathmandu on June 12, 2007 under the chairmanship of Mr. Tek Nath Rizal to evaluate and postmortem the NFD-Bhutan spearheaded Peace program at Mechi Bridge. Despite several unfortunate incidents owing to aggressive baton charges from the Indian security forces at the other side of the bridge who used not only lathis but also tear gas shelling and live bullet firing, the program ended with tremendous coverage by world media whereby attention of the largest democracy and the oldest democracy were invited. The BMSC members also accepted the program as historic and successful after seventeen years of refugee stalemate.

The BMSC members expressed serious concern on the martyr and wounded activists as a result of lathi charge and bullet firing from the Indian Security forces in the international border at the Mechi bridge. The BMSC also showed concerned about the

woundeds as there was no proper medical care in the hospitals despite appeals to the Home Minister made by refugee delegation led by Mr. Baram Poudyal and D.P. Kafley during his recent visit to Jhapa. The BMSC members informed that as assured by the Hon'ble Home Minister, the letter of sanction has not yet reached the hospital that has now made it difficult for the patients to receive proper treatment and there is reportedly no proper medical care as of date in the Dharan B.P Memorial hospital. Mr. Tek Nath Rizal, chairman, BMSC along with refugee leaders,

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Nepal Gives Permission to Seek Resident Visas in Third Countries

July 4 2007- Nepal government has given the permission to seek resident visas in third countries to the Bhutanese Refugees.

According to the decision taken by foreign and home ministry of Nepal "Bhutanese refugees would be given permission to begin process for resident visas in third countries".

The decision was made in order to internationalize the Bhutanese refugee problem, which failed to solve it after 15 rounds of bilateral talks between Nepal and Bhutan on the fate of Bhutanese refugees living in 7 camps in eastern Nepal for the past 17 years.

International Community Focused Only on Resettlement

The Bhutanese Refugees have been made a dummy in the hand of Bhutan, Indian, Nepal and the international community.

These countries are using these people in their own personal interests. Bhutan used these people in the developmental works, like construction of roads, bridges, schools, hospitals etc without pay. When the requirement was fulfilled they were evicted from the country. When the Bhutanese were evicted and were in need of help from the neighboring country, India, it dumped them in the Nepal boarder considering as Nepalese. Nepal provided shelter to these Bhutanese citizens but made blunders several times on the fate of the refugee community. Even the international community, instead of using their power in pressurizing Bhutan government in accepting these people with dignity and honor, provided relief to Bhutan government by offering the option of third country resettlement.

The refugees are divided into different groups due to the offer made by US and other western countries. Violation has increased in the camps. But these countries are not bothered about the wants and desire of the refugee community. They are speaking about giving preference to repatriation but giving imphasis to the resettlement.

India has been considering refugee issue as the problem between Nepal and Bhutan. Suddenly when the third country resettlement program is scheduled to begin, India changed its plan by stating it an international issue.

Nepalese ministers have been giving statements supporting the repatriation. Even the PM Girija Prashad Koirala once told the refugee leaders, that he had told the international community to take the refugee first to Bhutan before resettling them to third countries. Suddenly the plans of the government has changed and also has given permission to establish International Organization for Migration (IOM) office in the country to resettle the refugees to US and also arranged for their securities in the camps. Nepal never gave importance in internationalizing the refugee issue but all of the sudden, Nepal decided to internationalize the Bhutanese refugee problem and given permission to begin process for resident visas in third countries.

Nepal should realize that the people living in the camps are only the half of the population of Nepali origin living inside Bhtan. If Nepal gives green signal to the resettlement process, history may repeat again and again. India should also realize the intention of the western countries in resettling these people to their land. Hence for the permanent solution of the refugee impasse, repatriation and resettlement should go hand in hand.

SAFHR Criticized the Action Taken by the SSB

June 18 2007- South Asian Forum for Human Rights (SAFHR) strongly



criticized the inhuman and antisocial action taken by the Shashastra Seema Bal (SSB), an Indian security forces against the Bhutanese refugees at Indo-Nepal boarder when the latter were trying to voluntary return back to their country.

The West Bengal Chief Minister Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee in the local newspaper said that the "long march" of the refugees posed threat to law and order in his state. SAFHR in an appeal, opposing the statement, said that in no words this group has ever indicated that they wish to create any problems on Indian soil.

According to SAFHR report Bhutan and India have a special agreement that allows their people to travel back and forth between the two countries without visa requirements; therefore it is totally unacceptable that the Indian government bar these people from entering India. Bhutan is separated from Nepal by a strip of Indian Territory. Therefore, there is no other passage overland into Bhutan from Nepal, unless one passes through India.

The SAFHR further said the refugees were justifiably unhappy at the international community's

tacit approval of the exercise of sham democracy initiated in Bhutan by the ruling

Wangchuk dynasty and their cohorts and also asked the government of India to uphold the democratic values it claims to support and to stop using force to obstruct the Bhutanese refugees from exercising their democratic rights and freedoms and the international community to respect the sentiment of those refugees who want to return to their homeland.

SAFHR also welcomed the offer of third country settlement by the US, Canada, and other western countries, and urged these governments to involve in serious dialogue on this issue to make Bhutan realise that they can not brutally uproot people from their homes and throw them out into the wilderness.

SAFHR also expressed concern over the violence in Beldangi camp in eastern Nepal resulting two deaths and several injured a month ago. SAFHR expressed its commitment in providing opportunity to freely examine all the three options available under the UN Convention concerning Refugees and decide about ones future in an atmosphere of freedom to every refugee. But it opposed and criticized the attempt to force the refugees to accept a particular option.

Government to Tighten Security in the Camps

July 31 2007- The Home Ministry of Nepal announced to provide 25-30 armed policemen for all the seven refugee camps in eastern Nepal within a month to ease the process of third country resettlement.



Beldangi Refugee Camp

Due to the proposal of third country resettlement, refugees are divided into different groups and the environmnet is not found suitable to precede the process of third country resettlement. Considering the present environmnet in the camps, Nepal governmnet has decided to recruit armed policemen in these camps. According to the source UNHCR also have agreed to construct shelter for these policemen in the camps.

International Organization for Migration (IOM) has been selected as the Overseas Processing Entity (OPE) by the Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration, Office of Admissions, under the US Department of State to assist people to migrate to the US. It is also informed the office has already been established in Damak, Jhapa.

Bhutanese in the Netherland Met European...

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Press Release.

Dated 28 June 2007

A six member delegation representing National Front for Democracy in Bhutan (NFD) held very fruitful meetings with Mr. Robert Evans, Member of the European Parliament for London cum Chairman of the European Parliament's South Asia Delegation and Mr. Jean Christian REMOND, European Commission's Unit Head for India, Nepal and Bhutan at their respective offices in Brussels separately on Thursday the 28th of June 2007.

The delegates appraised the European Union dignitaries about the recent development in the Bhutanese refugee camps and their movement aftermath long march to Bhutan organized by NFD. The issues like that of third country settlements and the grave division brought by it in the refugee community, the highly controversial statement of Indian Foreign minister that "Bhutanese refugee's return to their country will bring demographical imbalance in Bhutan" and its changed stand towards the Bhutanese refugee issue, deprivation of political rights in the just concluded mock elections to around 80,000 Bhutanese citizens inside Bhutan and their likely eviction in near future, the recent chain of mass arrest in southern Bhutan just on the doubt of being

member of Bhutan Communist party and their inhuman torture in Samchi jail by denying their near and dear ones to meet, grave conspiracy inside Bhutan to exclude lhosampa communities from participation in the 2008 parliamentary election by King's brother in-law Sangye Nidup and other important issues of immediate concerns were discussed in details during the meetings.

The delegates after thanking European Union for their continued support for the Bhutanese refugees, expressed their hope for more support also politically in their quest to establish Human Rights and Democracy in Bhutan. They also requested European Union to actively take up all the issues above, with Bhutan and India governments and press them to work towards repatriation of all the genuine Bhutanese who are ever willing to go back to their country with dignity and honour. They were also requested to press Bhutan government to recognize exile based Bhutanese political parties and to allow them to participate in the democratic process.

"We have not yet accepted third country settlement as the genuine solution of the 17 years old Bhutanese refugee crisis", said Robert Evans the Chairman of the South Asia delegation at the European Parliament. He was very supportive towards the unconditional repatriation of Bhutanese refugees in Bhutan and their active participation in the forthcoming general election as an equal citizen. "EU will try to send its election monitoring team (if possible) in Bhutan's first general election in 2008, this will enable us to know the genuineness and fairness of the Bhutanese election", was

his response towards Bhutan's democratisation process.

"European Union has no official position on the issue of third country settlement of the Bhutanese refugee" said Jean-Christian REMOND, Head of Unit India, Nepal and Bhutan at the European Commission. He further said that European Commission is supporting Bhutanese refugee purely on humanitarian basis and its prolongation has started developing fatigue in it. Thus the durable solution of the Bhutanese refugee crisis is an urgent need. He also said that it is doing all possible means to involve India in the just resolution of Bhutanese refugee crisis. "Bhutan has already given its word to the UNHCR chief during his visit there that it won't evict any more people in future", was his response when the delegates raised the issue of 80,000 Bhutanese who were excluded from the recently held mock elections. The six member NFD delegation which was headed by its executive member and general secretary of Bhutan Peoples Party Mr. Durga Giri submitted memorandums to the concerned people both at EU and EP. The delegation included Mr. Ram Bahadur Karki Chhetri, central member of Bhutan Peoples Party, Mr. Nandi Kishore Neopaney, President of Federation of Bhutanese Trade Union, Mr. Tej Man Monger, central member of Youth Organization of Bhutan, Mr. Bhakta Man Subba, Member of Youth organization of Bhutan and Mrs. Jamuna Karki Chhetri, member of Women Organization of Bhutan.

*Sincerely yours,
Ram Bahadur Karki Chhetri
NFD Delegation member
The Netherlands*

BMSC expressed serious concern on the...

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Thinley Penjore and Balam Poudyal met all the government authorities on the issue and appraised the Health Minister of Nepal on the situation of bullet injuries and other wounded refugees. The Health Minister was pleased to give his assurance to follow up on the matter and ensure treatment is given without any problem.

The members showed serious concern about the casualties who failed to get proper treatment during the need of the hour as such negligence could result in the deterioration of the injured. The meeting also decided to request Dr. Bhampa Rai who delivered a long dedicated service of to the Bhutanese refugees, to take the initiatives of meeting Health Ministerial authorities to call for their immediate attention and help expedite treatment of the patients.

The meeting was apprised on the agreement reached between Nepali Authority comprised of the Jhapa CDO, SSP, SP, 8 political parties alliance of Nepal with the Indian authority

composed of the DM Darjeeling, IG of North Bengal, SP Darjeeling and BDO Khoribari to release all those arrested during the peaceful program at the Mechhi bridge. But two refugees Mr. Chetan Khanal of Goldhap camp and Mr. Dinesh Rai of Khudunabari are reportedly under custody in India along with other two innocent Nepali people Mr. Bir Bahadur Shrestha and Mr. Daya Ram Dahal (Journalist). So all the members felt it necessary to pressurize concerned stake holders to release them immediately and unconditionally in keeping with the agreement.

The BMSC members welcomed recent statement of India on the issue concerning Bhutanese refugees and deliberated on the need for India's role on the Bhutanese democratic movement. India should have clear stand on the refugee issue and shouldn't stop the refugees from returning to Bhutan using Indian soil as was used in 1990 and onwards. However, issue concerning population imbalance need to be seriously examined as the 106,000 refugees belong to the Bhutanese population who are responsible for giving security to Bhutan at such times when the region was densely under forest and the northerners feared to occupy due to

malaria and wild animals besides neighboring intimidation.

The BMSC appreciated the NFD-Bhutan for submitting timely memorandum to the Indian government for compensation to the martyr and treatment for the wounded refugees.

The BMSC acknowledged the support demonstrated by Indian political leaders from their own soil and moral supports expressed by respective Indian civilians at North Bengal, Sikkim and Assam regions. The meeting expressed full acknowledgement and gratitude towards the selfless support of the eight political alliance supporters along with civil society of Jhapa, Nepal Red Cross Society, Jhapa, Bhutanese Refugee Concern Group, Jhapa, media personnel, social workers and all those involved in supporting NFD-Bhutan spear headed program.

The meeting concluded with their expression of deep concern for the early recovery of the wounded and condoled the brave sacrifice of Saha Bahadur Sheewa and prayed for his sole to rest in peace. The BMSC also endorsed the NFD-Bhutan's declaration of the postponement of the program by another one month to observe developments taking place in the regional aspects of the political scenario.

Update of NFD Bhutan on Long March

June 4, 2007:

Demanding equal rights in the process of democratization in Bhutan, the National Front for Democracy in Bhutan, a coalition of Bhutan Peoples' Party, Druk National Congress and Bhutan Gorkha National Front, under the leadership of its Chairman, Dasho Thinley Penjore and the three Vice Chairpersons, Mr. Balam Paudyal, Mr. D. B. Rana Sampang and Mr. Gup Khila launched peaceful mass movement supported by Bhutanese Movement Steering Committee, participated by thousands of refugees from all the seven camps in Nepal on May 28, 2007. The Refugee Concern Committee headed by Mr. Gopal Basnet, representatives of the eight political parties in Nepal, members of the civil society and media people extended their moral support and solidarity.

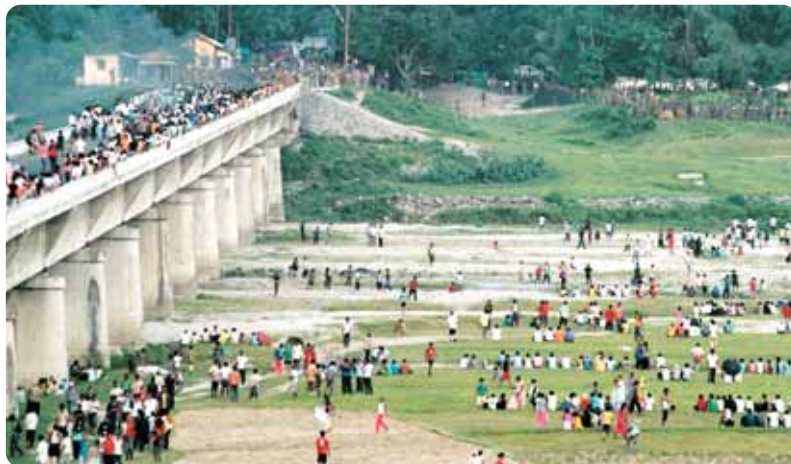
The program had to be suspended until June 15, 2007 on the third day 30 May 2007 following an agreement reached between the Darjeeling District Magistrate, SP Darjeeling, IG (Police, North Bengal) and the Chief District Officer of Jhapa District, members of the eight political parties, where the leaders of the NFD-Bhutan were also invited. It was first time in the history of the Bhutanese struggle that refugee leadership were invited in the negotiation concerning the refugee crisis.

The outcome of the dialogue was, the District Magistrate, Darjeeling, to convince state government to pressurize Delhi to take the initiatives to evolve a situation for a dialogue between Bhutan, Nepal, India and the NFD-Bhutan along with refugee leaders within June 15, 2007. Meanwhile the NFD-Bhutan has begun working out strategies of roadmaps to approach towards reaching to an amicable solution of seventeen year protracted refugee crisis. In case of failure to bring India for its involvement in the trilateral effort, the NFD-Bhutan will make efforts to make long term strategy looking into wider aspects of the crisis to garner sympathy and commitment of India in the long term peace and stability of the region. Secondly, the meeting agreed to give proper medication to the injured and release of 15 people detained under Indian police custody unconditionally. Following is the day-wise developments:

May 28, 2007:

At the gong of 1300 hours Nepal time, tens of thousands of refugees gathered at Kakarvitta and marched towards Mechi Bridge, Indo-Nepal border. The huge numbers of the refugees led by the leaders of the NFD-Bhutan reached ZERO POINT accompanied by the local leaders of different political parties of Nepal, members of the civil society, human rights workers and media people. Everything was going on peacefully. But as the leaders offered their arrest and the two sides reached at the deciding point, despite of several barricades, the mass tried to cross the barricade forcefully.

Unfortunately, some youths, apparently instigated by the anti-movement elements pelted stones at the Indian security forces that provoked SSB (Seema Security Bal) to "baton



Bhutanese Refugees stopped at Mechi Bridge by the Indian police force during their LONG MARCH

charge" peace marchers including its leaders. The senior leaders including Dasho Thinley Penjore, Balam Paudyal, and D. B. Rana Sampang were seriously injured. The human rights leader D. P. Kafley and President of Bhutan Press Union C. N. Timsina were also not spared. All the injured were immediately rushed to different hospitals in Jhapa and Dharan while one Saha Bahadur Shewa (Darjee) from Sanischare camp succumbed to bullet injury from the Indian security forces. Opening gun fire and tear gas to the peace marchers, the situation turned out uncontrollable.

The role of Nepal Red Cross Society, members of civil society, leaders of the eight Nepal political parties, media people and Nepal security personnel played highly commendable role providing first aid medical support and rushing injured to the hospitals, without whom the casualties would have been much higher.

Despite all the odds, peace march participants continued struggling and pressurizing the Indian side to give safe passage for the refugees. Later as the mass became wilder breaking the barricades and crossing Indian side that extended to the other end of the bridge, many were arrested and taken into police custody. Situation continued to grow tense and violent. In absence of the senior leaders who were evacuated to different hospitals for emergency treatment following batten charges, the situation became difficult and turned out beyond manageable.

The Central Committee members of the NFD-Bhutan, in particular, Mr. Rinzin Dorji, Ms. Jasoda Budathoki, Mr. Gopal Gurung, Mr. Lalit Pradhan, Mr. Thak Bahadur Thapa and Ms. Karma Wangmo made their presence with the overwhelmingly crowded mass. The youth leaders like Mr. T. R. Rai, Mr. K. B. Gurung (Timai), Mr. K. B. Gurung (Goldhap) and Ms. Deo Maya Giri played equally vital role in handling the mass at the difficult hours of the situation. The role of Mr. Rajman Gurung from the BRRRC was highly commendable

as he contributed his time at the most crucial time of need in bringing the situation under control.

Indian side: The President of Bhutan Solidarity Group Dr. Sunilam along with Member of the Rajya Sabha Mr. Brij Bhusan Tiwari, Youth leaders Mr. Deepak Mishra and Arvind Giri and the Vice Chairperson of Indian Solidarity Freedom Committee Ms Savita Shinde arrived from Delhi to extend their moral support and solidarity to the cause of the Bhutanese people. However, they were denied entry into Mechi Bridge citing reasons of security problem. The NFD-Bhutan had assigned Mr. Narad Adhikari, in-charge foreign affairs of the coalition and spokesperson of the coalition along with one Central Committee member Mr. Kin Dorji to receive the visiting dignitaries.

When they were denied the entry, the visiting dignitaries staged sit-in protest at the railway crossing in Panitanki side and addressed the local gatherings. They urged everyone present to extend their support for the establishment of democracy and human rights in Bhutan so that the people of Bhutan too could live like any other human beings of the democratic world. The team returned to Siliguri after they addressed the gatherings.

May 29, 2007:

More participants joined from the camps to continue their demand for safe passage back to Bhutan. Rajman Gurung, Rinzin Dorji and others continued their vital role in absence of the main leaders, who were recovering in different hospitals. The Indian Security forces invited Rajman Gurung to work out a strategy to bring the uncontrolled mass into a peaceful demonstration. But all efforts made by him could not change the minds of the participants and continued protesting more assertively and violently. Equally violent were the Indian security forces, who wanted the protest program to be called off immediately.

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Update of NFD Bhutan on ...

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In Siliguri: Dr. Sunilam and Mr. Brij Bhushan Tiwari held a press conference and urged the government of India to consider the demands made by the Bhutanese people. They were of the view that when India could allow the Bhutanese refugees to come to Nepal from Indian soil, why was it not possible for India to provide safe passage for return to their homestead. The leaders strongly condemned the act of Indian forces and demanded for an independent judicial probe by a High Court Sitting Judge so that the defaulters could be punished, injured be treated properly and appropriate compensation be provided to the relatives of the deceased.

Moreover, the Indian leaders demanded for India's involvement in finding a lasting solution of the problem. They were of the view that tripartite talks between India, Bhutan and Nepal should be initiated immediately where the representatives of the refugees should also be included. "Any delay in finding an appropriate solution on this complex problem could invite serious problem in the region which will not be in the interest of the regional peace and development", said Dr. Sunilam.

The leaders left for Delhi as scheduled after addressing the press conference (by Rajdhani Express at 11.30 AM. At 11.45 AM). Mr. Narad Adhikari, who was with the leaders to see them off got arrested by the Indian intelligence agency and taken into police custody. He was taken to the Khoribari Police Station for detention. Twelve others were also arrested and taken into police custody.

May 30, 2007:

The situation continued to worsen as more and more participants joined the venue of the demonstration demanding safe passage for their rights to return to their homestead. Meanwhile, Darjeeling District Magistrate initiated a parley with the Chief District Officer of Jhapa to resolve the current crisis in the international border. It was on his initiative a negotiation took place at Raniganja Immigration Office near Panitanki, India, which was participated by the CDO Jhapa, representatives of the eight political parties, and the leaders of the NFD-Bhutan from Nepal side with the DM Darjeeling, IGP (North Bengal) and SP Darjeeling from the Indian side.

After the long deliberation, District Magistrate agreed to forward the memorandum of the NFD-Bhutan to the central government so that the government responds either to accept the proposal of the NFD-Bhutan for a tripartite talks or provide safe passage to the refugees by June 15, 2007. As per the conclusion of the agreement of the dialogue, 15 detainees including Mr. Narad Adhikari were released unconditionally.

It was unfortunate that upon return of the CDO, Eight Party and the NFD-Bhutan leaders to address on its outcome, the mass failed to

pacify and strongly demanded for the protest to continue until demands were addressed satisfactorily.

In view of the serious impact seen on the International zone with deteriorating economic situation of the local habitants at both sides of India and Nepal besides other issues of sensitivities, there was no other option but to suspend the program at least until June 15, 2007. All the leaders requested the participants to disperse from the venue despite a few uncontrolled elements started pelting stones to both Nepal Security forces and to their own leaders. Given the situation, on the request of the Nepalese security forces, the leaders were compelled to take shelter for few hours at the Indian side for their security until situation returned to normalcy.

The dead body of late Shewa was brought to Mai River for funeral rites. Dr. Bhampa Rai represented the leaders to pay respect to the departed soul while hundreds of people both from the local community and the refugee camps were present at the funeral.



In Kathmandu: A protest really was organized in front of the Indian Embassy demanding safe passage as well as for providing medical treatment to the injured and compensation to the bereaved family members.

In Delhi: Bhutan Solidarity Group organized a press conference and submitted a memorandum to the Prime Minister of India demanding to uphold the agreement reached between the DM, CDO and Leaders at Panitanki in Indo-Nepal border and to accede to the contents of the memorandum submitted by the NFD-Bhutan in order to help find early and amicable solution to the deteriorating crisis.

May 31, 2007:

The NFD-Bhutan leaders staggered to normalcy and called for an emergency meeting at Hotel Kanchanjanga to evaluate and postmortem the situation. The meeting decided to give highest priority to look after the health conditions of those injured and admitted in different hospitals. It also decided to make necessary documentation of the injured in the camps who need urgent medical treatment. The meeting decided to keep the movement alive at any cost. It decided to give serious consideration of the time period given to the government of India and to develop more effective programs on the basis of the outcome

of the suspended period which expires by June 15, 2007. The NFD-Bhutan made all the necessary arrangements to ensure that the participants who were stranded following traumatic scenario created during the time of disperse at Mechi bridge to reach their respective camps safely.

June 1, 2007:

The NFD-Bhutan continued arranging to lift the injured to different hospitals from respective camps for immediate treatment. Meanwhile a delegation under the leadership of Balaram Paudyal, the vice Chairman of the NFD-Bhutan, met the Nepalese Home Minister at Birtamod and appealed for providing immediate medical assistance to the injured who are in the hospitals. The Home Minister was pleased to assure to extend all medical assistance and treatment of the injured. Those who were missing were listed. Others who were in the Indian jails were also traced out and arrangements being made by the NFD-Bhutan providing advocates to release them from Indian judicial system.

June 2, 2007:

The NFD-Bhutan continued providing medical assistance to the injured in different hospitals. Mr. Balaram Paudyal, Vice Chairman visited Bhadrapur Hospital to meet the patients who were provided medical treatment with the help of Nepal Red Cross Society and understand the situation. Some funds were arranged for patients in Dharan hospital for their temporary relief. Gopal Gurung, Central Committee Member represented the NFD-Bhutan on the other day to ensure proper care and medical treatment to the injured.

June 3, 2007:

The leaders of the NFD-Bhutan and its central committee members met to assess the current situation in the camps concerning health and welfare. In the afternoon, the NFD-Bhutan met the members of the Refugee Concerned Committee and jointly evaluated all aspects of the program and decided to develop more effective and strategic programs to give continuity to the movement after June 15 depending on the response from India.

June 4, 2007:

Dasho Thinley Penjore along with Mr. Balaram Paudyal and Dr. Bhampa Rai accompanied by its CC members visited Dharan hospital to study the actual situation of the bullet injured patients and those in critical position. The leaders met Gopa Medical Supervisor and requested to pay extra attention on these patients with whose selfless contribution the program rocked its height catching attention of as many as millions of websites over night.

Meanwhile, Narad Adhikari and D. P. Kafley visited North Bengal Medical College and met Shaha Bahadur Gajmere, Dinesh Rai and Dayaram Dahal (Nepali) and inquired about their health conditions. They also visited Siliguri Jail where they met Chetan Khanal and Bir Bahadur Shresta (Nepali) and arranged a lawyer to appear for their bail hearings which is scheduled on June 6, 2007.

Long March Should Not Risk the Safety and Security of Women and Children

June 28 2007- United Nations High Commissioner for Refugee (UNHCR) Representative in Nepal Abraham Abraham said the recent 'Long March', a voluntary repatriation campaign launched by Bhutanese refugees under the banner of National Front for Democracy (NFD) at Indo-Nepal boarder in eastern Nepal, was their natural right.

Speaking to the media at a press meet at the Parliamentary Secretariat, Abraham said that it is the right of the Bhutanese refugee to carry out Long March but it should not jeopardize the safety and security of women and children. He added that though the repatriation of the refugees was the happiest solution but Bhutan should be ready for safe return of the refugees to their home.

Abraham also said the refugee agencies are concerned about resolving the problem of Bhutanese refugees living in India, who have not been given refugee status. Speaking to journalists he said, "It is up to the government

of India to find solution for these stateless people, but we stress nobody should live stateless."



On questioned by the media regarding the security in the camps, Abraham said, the Home Ministry and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs have been requested to make proper security arrangement in the refugee camps and expressed hope for the same.

On query of the reporters regarding the encouraging refugees for third country resettlement, Abraham said that they don't encourage anybody what decision they should take as it is their individual decision.

Mentioning about the recently completed census in Bhutanese refugee camps, Abraham said the census report will be made public soon.

RCU Accused of Bribery

July 25 2007- Refugees in Beldangi-II camp have accused assistant Refugee Coordination Unit (RCU) for taking bribe during their re-registration process.

According to the Bhutan News Service (BNS), Tara Giri under Sector I/4, Hut no 81/82 and Tara Basnet under Sector I/4 Hut no 65/66 of Beldangi- II have claimed they offered Nepalese currency one thousand each for their re-registration since the RCU denied necessary initiatives without money. Giri and Basnet have also claimed that Rai denies doing any work related to re-registration without bribe.

According to BNS, Parvati Biswa, camp secretary of the same camp said the RCU also informed her that he would not do any work related to 're-registration' without money. However, in response to a query of the BNS,

Rai said that the mind of a woman do not have power to tolerate like that of a man.

Meanwhile, talking to the BNS, assistant RCU strongly refuted the allegations put upon him. "I have not taken any money from those people", said Rai, adding that the allegation was baseless.

According to Giri and Basnet they also filed an application through camp management committee, signed and forwarded by the camp secretary, to the Chief District Officer (CDO) of Jhapa district on July 18 demanding probe into such bribery cases in camp. There are yet no any reports of measures taken by the CDO.

Purna Bahadur Monger, administration of the camp informed the BNS that among 56 suspended from Beldangi-II, 43 have been re-registered while the remaining 13 still make frequent visits at the RCU office for their re-registration.

Nepali Speaking Bhutanese Charged of Treason

June 14 2007 - Bhutan police have charged thirteen Nepali speaking Bhutanese citizens of treason.

These people were arrested by Bhutan police few weeks ago from Samtse district of Southern Bhutan on the charge of planning an armed rebellion against the government. The news reporter was informed that the arrested would be charged of treason under the Bhutan Penal Code and the National Security Act at a Samtse court.

Bhutan police have claimed that the group was arrested with the materials used for making improvised explosive devices and on the charged of holding meetings in the village to distribute forms of the Communist Party of Bhutan to recruit more members and collect donations to finance their activities

HAF Prefers Refugees to be Repatriated with Dignity and Honor



July 13 2007 - The Hindu American Foundation (HAF) have asked the Bhutanese government to allow its evicted citizens return back to the country with dignity and honor.

HAF in a report said, "Without taking back the exiled Bhutanese, it will be impossible to achieve integration of the Bhutanese society and the exiled Bhutanese must be repatriated with dignity and honor.

The report also asked the international community to pressurize the Bhutan Government until the problem is solved and Human Rights guaranteed by Bhutan. It also asked Bhutan conduct a bilateral talk with Nepal and proceed with voluntary repatriation. HAF recommended that Bhutan, Nepal and UNHCR should adopt a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for voluntary repatriation that includes a clear statement of rights and entitlements upon the exiled citizens' return to Bhutan - including full citizenship rights and human rights protections.

Mentioning about the verification of Bhutanese Refugee Camp, HAF further recommended, that an accelerated and simplified verification exercise of other six out of seven camps which have not yet been screened, needs to be carried out on the basis of only two categories: Bhutanese and non-Bhutanese. Out of seven Refugee camps, Khudunabari Camp had already been screened by the representatives from the Government of Bhutan and Nepal Government. It also appealed to the donors, UN agencies and Bhutan's other partners to insist on measures to eliminate discrimination against Lhotshampas who have remained in Bhutan since the mass departure of refugees, and to ensure the protection of their fundamental human rights and their right to participate as full citizens of Bhutan.

Government Assured for the Treatment of Injured Refugees

June 3, 2007- The government has assured to bear the medical expenses of three Bhutanese refugees injured in a clash with the Indian Police force during their Long March Process.

Over a dozen other refugees were injured in the process of Long March when the Indian security personnel fired bullets and tear gas shells to stop the refugees voluntarily trying to march towards Bhutan via India. The three refugees, Rana Bahadur Bhandari, 17, of Khudunabari camp, Laxmi Narayan Dhungana, 18, and 20-year-old Jagannath Neupane of Goldhap were receiving treatment at BP Koirala Institute of Health Sciences in Dharan, as the bullets were stuck inside their body. The treatment was not given on time due to unavailability of fund for the medical expenses. Bhandari received three bullets, one each in the waist, thigh and hand, a bullet was stuck in Neupane's rib and Dhungana's condition was more serious as a bullet pierced his back and liver was still stuck inside.

"Even the organizers of the "long march" to Bhutan, shown interest in assisting for our

treatment," said Mohan an injured in Mechi Bridge.

According to Bhandari, the Association of Medical Doctors of Asia (AMDA), an organization that had been treating sick and injured Bhutanese refugees also denied treatment to them.

Refugee leaders have informed about their request to the home minister and the ministry of health regarding their treatment. "I personally visited Health Minister and informed about the condition of the injured. He has given me words to make necessary arrangement for the injured" said Tek Nath Rizal, a Bhutanese Human Rights leader.

The Bhutanese leaders also urged Sitaula to provide compensation to the families of Bhutanese refugees killed by Nepali and Indian policemen. At least four refugees were killed -- two by the Indian forces in Mechi bridge in their "Long March" to Bhutan and another two by Nepali police in a dispute with the refugees.

No Possibility of Nepal-Bhutan Talks

July 27 2007- Minister for Foreign Affairs Sahana Pradhan said that the bilateral process for a solution to the Bhutanese refugee impasse had almost come



to an end due to the Bhutan government's unwillingness to sit for talks.

Speaking to journalists after launching a report of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in Kathmandu, Pradhan said that there is no option before Nepal government than to try other alternatives for finding solution to the protracted refugee crisis as seven Bhutanese ministers including Prime Minister Khandu Wangchuk resigned aiming to join party politics for the first democratic election in the history of the Kingdom of Bhutan scheduled for March next year. She said "The possibility of bilateral dialogue with Bhutan has almost ended."

Because of Bhutan government's intention to boycott the bilateral talks, Pradhan said that Nepal government could decide to start the procedure for resettlement of the refugees in third countries including the United States, Canada, Australia and other western countries.

Speaking at a meeting of the International Relations Committee of the legislature parliament earlier, Pradhan said India had not yet made clear its official position on the protracted refugee crisis, and its official reaction would help determine the Nepal government's "next move" for finding a solution to the refugee crisis.

Viral Fever Wrapped up Bhutanese Refugee Camps

July 13 2007 - Viral fever has wrapped up all seven Bhutanese refugee camps in Jhapa and Morang district in eastern Nepal.

Due to the change in the season and spread of viral fever hundreds of refugees have become sick which includes most of the childrens and aged people. According to Bhedav Sharma of Goldap Refugee Camp, the number of patients visiting camp's healthpost has surpassed hundred per day. The health workers are facing problem in providing treatment to these patients due to increasing rush and unavailability of sufficient beds and medicine.

According to a health worker, Sabitra Sapkota, if the rush in the health center exceeds in the same ratio the condition of the camp's health environment will get worsen.

Bhutanese refugees an international issue: Pranab Mukherjee

June 11 - Indian External Affairs minister Pranab Mukherjee has said the Bhutanese Refugee issue is an international problem.

India for the first time said the Bhutanese refugees issue is an international problem, since the eviction of the refugees, India termed the Bhutanese refugee crisis as an issue between Nepal and Bhutan.

According to Indian Media Foreign Minister Pranab Mukherjee said, "It is an international problem and the government of India is trying to work out a solution."

The statement was given by the Indian foreign minister after a 45 minutes meeting with West Bengal Chief Minister Buddhadev Bhattacharjee at his residence in Kolkata. He

informed the media that the Chief Minister urged him to initiate a dialogue with Nepal and Bhutan as the refugee issue has created problem of law and order in his state.

He also said "Nepal claims that these are not Nepalese citizens and Bhutan is also not ready to accept them. The refugees want to enter Bhutan and they want to pass through Indian Territory."

Mukherjee further added, "We are on friendly terms with both countries. The issue of Bhutan refugees cropped up 11 years ago (sic) and as far as I know there are about 100,000 refugees in the camps. The population of Bhutan is about 600,000. If these 100,000 people enter Bhutan it would create demographic imbalance."

Complete Ceiling in the Cross-border Movement

June 16 2007- India potted its border with Nepal at three locations referring the likelihood of Bhutanese refugees crossing its territory to Bhutan.

Though the 'Long March' of the Bhutanese refugees has been postponed for certain period, the Indian side has potted its border with Nepal referring the possibility of them going to Bhutan by crossing its territory.

Hundreds of passengers passing through the boarders are affected due to the complete ceiling in the cross-border movement by India.

India has sealed Pashupatinagar, Manebhanjyang and Chabbise checkpoint where notice is posted stating the border has been sealed and passengers are prohibited of free cross-border movement without a notice from the local government officials.

Refugee leaders met US Ambassador James F. Moriarty

June 16 2007 - Bhutanese refugee leaders met US ambassador James F Moriarty on his invitation at US Embassy.

Bhutanese leaders were invited by the US ambassador to discuss regarding the refugee impasse on the day of deadline given to the Indian authorities by the refugees for addressing their demands. The invitation was considered a positive development by the refugee leaders as it would be the first and an important occasion for the refugees to present their views through official channels.

A meeting of the Bhutanese Movement Steering Committee (BMSC) consisting of Chairman of BMSC, Teknath Rizal, President of Druck National Congress (DNC) Thinley Penjore, President of Bhutan Peoples' Party (BPP) Balam Poudyal, President of Bhutan Gorkha National Liberal Forum (BGNLF) D.B. Rana Sampang and General Secretary of People Forum for Human Rights Bhutan (PFHRB) D.P. Kafley was held and the agenda was set to be presented during the meeting with the ambassador.

The meeting was concluded without any decision as the refugee leaders were asked to accept and sign the readymade proposal of US officials. The paper was drafted in two languages, Nepali and English.

June 15, 2007

His Excellency Mr. James F. Moriarty,
Ambassador,
Embassy of the United States of America,
Kathmandu.

Your Excellency,

On behalf of the Bhutanese refugee community, we would like to humbly express our gratitude to your Excellency for giving us this rare opportunity to express genuine expectations of the Bhutanese refugee community. In this connection, taking advantage of this precious occasion, we honestly make the following submissions for consideration of the US government.

The Bhutanese refugee making is deeply rooted to political interest of the government.

The book titled "Unveiling Bhutan" published this year by the Bhutanese Movement Steering Committee unfolds true picture of the Bhutanese political system that victimized large section of the population who became refugees since 1990. While absolute and feudal regimes all over the world are at the diminishing point with living example of Nepal, we wish to see that our problem is resolved politically with the establishment of vibrant, functional and inclusive democracy with repatriation as priority agenda. We believe that sincere political change with the establishment of democracy of peoples' choice will only give the people adequate opportunity to exercise their voting rights and help us to participate in the process of democratization in Bhutan.



We have submitted following demands to the Bhutanese government with no response:

1. Grant General Amnesty to all the political prisoners and allow all the political parties in exile to participate in the election respecting voting franchise of all the Bhutanese citizens;
2. Expedite early repatriation of genuine Bhutanese citizens back to their original homesteads with full justice and dignity;
3. Quash all the discriminatory policies that has affected the lives of both minorities and refugee relatives;
4. Nullify the resettlement of people in the refugee lands in the south;
5. Demilitarization of Lhotsham and affected region.

Bhutan as one of the members of the United Nations with its permanent office established in New York, we appeal the US government to levy check and balance on Bhutan in view of massive humanitarian injustice. In a nutshell, Bhutan cannot complete democratization without including refugee community into the mainstream of the election process.

Your Excellency, the utter confusion created in the refugee camps is due to lack of adequate awareness about UNHCR advocated program of the third country resettlement using camp bearers as its mouthpiece. It created differences in the refugee camps unfortunately ending up with two deaths. These incidents could have been avoided had there been clarity in the UNHCR's advocacy for inviting durable solution to the refugee problem. We appreciate US government's noble gesture and the offer of the third country resettlement scheme that has come to the people after fifteen years of protraction when hope for repatriation remained under shadow following deadlock in 2003.

In this connection, recent peace march program initiated by the NFD-Bhutan under the banner of "National Political Harmonization" has confirmed peoples' desire for repatriation. Tens of thousands of refugees irrespective of age and sex converged on the Mechi Bridge, Indo-Nepal border despite of baton charges, tear gas shelling and gunfire from India's SSB (Seema Suraksha Bal) forces that killed one and four seriously wounded

while hundreds were injured from baton charge and tear gas shelling.

Your Excellency, the US advocates global democracy, justice, development and peace.

It is also the leading donor nation to the humanitarian needs of the Bhutanese refugees. India's recent statement, "it is an international problem and the government of India is trying to work out a solution" is convincing and sees light at the end of the tunnel. India being world's largest multiparty democracy has adequate knowledge about Bhutan and its polity. We urge the US government to coordinate with India to support our struggle for the establishment of vibrant, functional and inclusive democracy and help bring about lasting solution to the seventeen year-old refugee stalemate.

The Bhutanese refugees believe repatriation to their original homesteads as the only means to give comprehensive solution to the problem. Therefore, options other than repatriation should be considered only after achievement of the first target. We appeal to the citizens of America and the US government to support us for the establishment of democracy where the rights of the Bhutanese refugees shall be guaranteed.

At the same time we also appeal America to continue humanitarian support to the refugees in the camps.

Your Excellency, political prisoners continue in jails with no independent court of justice for trial. Regulating and implementing "NOC" (No Objection Certificate) system has also affected politically conscious refugee relatives inside Bhutan. At the same time Bhutan's process of democratization is gimmick and invites attention of the world community for justice. Supporting guided process of democratization leaving humanitarian problem unresolved is but encouraging absolutism and strengthening its feudalistic system of law. Early repatriation and establishment of democracy respecting international norms and standards would only safeguard interest and welfare of the refugees in the ongoing process of democratization in Bhutan.

In consideration of the above justifications, we urge Your Excellency to help bring about comprehensive solution to the refugee crisis with establishment of vibrant, functional and inclusive democracy in Bhutan as the entire process of democratization without including large chunk of the population will not only be incomplete but also project hollow and farce democracy.

We humbly remain,

Yours sincerely,

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| 1. Teknath Rizal | Chairman, BMSC |
| 2. Thinley Penjore | President, DNC |
| 3. Balam Poudyal | President, BPP |
| 4. D.B. Rana Sampang | President, BGNLF |
| 5. D.P. Kafley | General Secretary, PFHRB |