

118TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. RES. 108

Recognizing the Kingdom of Bhutan as responsible for the oppression and forced eviction of more than 100,000 Bhutanese citizens during the late 1980s and 1990s.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MARCH 15, 2023

Mr. BROWN (for himself and Mr. CASEY) submitted the following resolution;
which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations

RESOLUTION

Recognizing the Kingdom of Bhutan as responsible for the oppression and forced eviction of more than 100,000 Bhutanese citizens during the late 1980s and 1990s.

Whereas the Kingdom of Bhutan was responsible for the oppression and forced displacement of more than 100,000 Nepali language-speaking Bhutanese citizens, Lhotshampas and Sharchops, in the 1990s due to their identity, culture, language, religion, and political opinion;

Whereas many of these individuals experienced unjust detention, torture, and other forms of human rights abuses;

Whereas many political prisoners continue to be held in Bhutanese prisons for protracted sentences;

Whereas persecuted Bhutanese were forced to cross into Nepal, where some remained for nearly two decades in refugee camps;

Whereas thousands of Bhutanese refugees remain in refugee camps in Nepal, and the Government of Bhutan continues to deny dignified repatriation to those who desire it;

Whereas more than 250,000 Nepali-speaking Lhotshampa Bhutanese still inside Bhutan suffer political, social, and economic oppression as the Government of Bhutan has continuously refused to reinstate the citizenships that were stripped during the 1990s;

Whereas such incidences of human rights violations and abuses and extreme acts of violence perpetrated by any individual actor or state should be condemned;

Whereas the majority of the Nepali-speaking Lhotshampa, who were refugees in Nepal, have now resettled in other countries, including Australia, Canada, Denmark, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, the United Kingdom, and the United States;

Whereas, although Bhutan and the United States have not established diplomatic relations, the two countries maintain warm and productive unofficial ties;

Whereas the Kingdom of Bhutan transitioned to democracy in 2008 and has held successive free and fair elections and transitions of power since that time;

Whereas the Kingdom of Bhutan has been a leader in the global fight against climate change and is the only carbon negative country;

Whereas the Kingdom of Bhutan has stood with the United States and other likeminded countries as the United Nations to condemn Russian aggression in Ukraine; and

Whereas the Kingdom of Bhutan is a close Indo-Pacific partner of the United States committed to upholding the rules-based international order: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the Senate—

2 (1) declares that the Royal Government of Bhutan is responsible for the political, cultural, and ethnic oppression of Nepali-speaking Lhotshampas and Sharchops in Bhutan during the late 1980s and 1990s;

7 (2) urges the Royal Government of Bhutan to conduct a rapid and unconditional release of all political prisoners, whose crime was demanding democracy and human rights, with due restitution and reparations;

12 (3) in a spirit of friendship, urges the Royal Government of Bhutan to resume discussions with the Government of Nepal on the status of individuals in Nepal who assert a claim to Bhutan citizenship or residency;

17 (4) requests the Royal Government of Bhutan to restore citizenship for all Nepali-speaking Lhotshampas that have had it arbitrarily revoked;

1 (5) requests the Royal Government of Bhutan
2 accept the voluntary return of its citizens from the
3 refugee camps in Nepal; and

4 (6) urges the Royal Government of Bhutan to
5 enter into a holistic peace building and reconciliation
6 process and institute an independent Truth Commis-
7 sion to publicly investigate any human rights viola-
8 tions and abuses committed during the 1990s, pub-
9 lish its findings, and follow through on its rec-
10 ommendations to ensure no future displacement or
11 oppression of Nepali-speaking Lhotshampas and
12 other minorities in Bhutan.

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