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## **Over 50,000 Bhutanese refugees resettled**

Nepali Times (17.08.2011) - The number of Bhutanese refugees resettled to the third countries from the camps in Jhapa and Morang districts in eastern Nepal has crossed 50,000.

The resettlement programme was launched by the UNHCR four years ago.

Under the programme, launched in November 2007, the Bhutanese refugees who were long taking shelter in the camps in Jhapa and Morang have been resettled in eight countries. About 42,000 now in the United States, other resettlement countries are Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Norway, Denmark, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom.

"This is a fantastic outcome, the kind of an outcome made possible by the incredible generosity of the resettlement countries, the resilience of the refugees and the great support from the Nepali government and people," said UNHCR Representative Mr. Stephane Jaquemet.

Jai Prasad Sunuwar was the 50,000th refugee to be resettled from Nepal to the USA.

US Ambassador to Nepal, Scott H. DeLisi said the departure of the 50,000th Bhutanese refugee from Nepal for resettlement abroad is a noteworthy milestone, one that marks the realisation of the efforts of a multi-national partnership among nine nations and the United Nations. DeLisi said: "I'm delighted that the United States has been one of the leaders in this effort to offer this refugee population a chance to build a new future for themselves and their families."

The UN refugee agency is responsible for interviewing refugees and referring their names to resettlement countries, while the IOM conducts health assessments, organizes cultural orientation courses and transports the refugees from the four camps in eastern Nepal to their countries of resettlement.

"The success of this project is directly attributable to the excellent cooperation among all partners, including the Government of Nepal and the countries of resettlement," said IOM Chief of Mission Mr. Sarat Dash. "IOM is committed to concluding the resettlement project for refugees from Bhutan in the same efficient manner that has been demonstrated over the past four years."

At the start of the resettlement programme, there were 108,000 refugees from Bhutan residing in the camps in eastern Nepal's Jhapa and Morang districts, most of who had been there for almost two decades.

Of the 63,000 remaining in the camps, more than 47,000 have expressed an interest in resettlement and are expected to depart within the next four years. "We continue to receive a steady stream of expressions of interest for resettlement," Jaquemet said.

While resettlement is currently the only available option for refugees in the camps in eastern Nepal, UNHCR, together with the international community, continues efforts to

achieve comprehensive and lasting solutions to the plight of refugees from Bhutan, including voluntary repatriation as and when return conditions permit.

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