

India

Response to Information Request Number:	IND00001.ZNY
Date:	5 January 2000
Subject:	India: Possible Mistreatment of Tibetan Refugees in Darjeeling by Ethnic Nepali Nationalist Groups such as Ghorka National Liberation Front and Ghorka Student Union
From:	INS Resource Information Center
Keywords:	India / Exile / Ethnic conflicts / Host country / Nepalis / Refugees / Tibetans

Query:

Are ethnic Nepali nationalist groups such as the Ghorka National Liberation Front and Ghorka Student Union targeting Tibetan refugees in Darjeeling for mistreatment?

Response:

A representative of the Department of Home, Central Tibetan Administration in Dharamsala, India, stated "as far as I am aware, there has been no communal problem between the Tibetans and the local people in [the] Darjeeling area." (29 Dec. 1999) The Department of Home is responsible for rehabilitation and social welfare programs for Tibetan refugees in India. (Central Tibetan Administration)

Representatives of the U.S. Department of State (USDOS) India Desk and of the USDOS Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor did not know of tensions between Tibetan refugees in Darjeeling and the local population. (USDOS/DRL 28 Dec. 1999; USDOS 29 Dec. 1999) The American Embassy in New Delhi also reported that, according to correspondence between the embassy and the Dalai Lama's office in New Delhi, there have been no reports of mistreatment of Tibetan refugees in Darjeeling for the past several years. (USDOS Cable 30 Dec. 1999)

The Director of the Tibet Information Network (TIN) stated that TIN has no information on the treatment of Tibetan refugees in Darjeeling, though he stated this does not mean that there have not been incidents of mistreatment of Tibetans. (29 Dec. 1999)

The President of the International Campaign for Tibet (ICT) stated that ICT has heard of a clash in Darjeeling between the Ghorka National Liberation Front, and Tibetan refugees. His sources indicated that the clash involved harassment of individuals and violence against property. He stated that the Ghorka National Liberation Front is active in Darjeeling, and that some Nepalis in Darjeeling had felt that they were in economic competition with the Tibetans. (4 Jan. 2000) He is of the impression that the clashes are not ongoing. (5 Jan. 2000)

In 1995 in Arunachal Pradesh, which is northeast of Darjeeling, an anti-outsider campaign and a motion by the state government to expel around 12,000 Tibetans received a great deal of local support, but the Indian government was "angered" by the state government's initiatives. (TIN 29 Dec. 1999; IRB 23 Dec. 1999) Besides this and other "random and isolated incidents," most sources emphasize that India has been accepting and accommodating of the Tibetan refugees overall. (TIN 29 Dec. 1999; USDOS Aug. 1998;

USCR 1999; IRB 23 Dec. 1999; ICT 4 Jan. 2000) There is a concern, however, that the continuing in-migration of Tibetans to India will lead to strained relations in the future between the refugee population and their Indian hosts. (USCR 1999, p. 128)

This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the RIC within time constraints. This response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum.

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Electronic sources: INSRIC databases, CISNET, FBIS on-line, Internet, Keesing's Record of World Events, REFWORLD

Unsuccessful attempts to contact one oral source.

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