

South Focus

Southern Bhutanese face renewed threat of being evicted

Bhutan Watch

STATUS OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN BHUTAN 2021

Published by
Bhutan Watch

The Monitoring Team

Dr D N S Dhakal
Karma Dupthob
I P Adhikari
Gedun Choephel
Ram Karki

Date of Publication: February 2021
Publication number: 2021/003-HR

Contact Address:
Boudha-6, Kathmandu, Nepal
Email: bhutanwatchresearch@gmail.com
Post Box 5754, Kathmandu, Nepal

Published with the assistance of Asia Group of Stiftung Umverteilen,
Berlin, Germany

© Material from this report may be reproduced and circulated for non-commercial and educational purposes with due acknowledgement of the source.

The opinions, facts and figures presented in this report do not necessarily reflect the views of our partners in any way but are the sole views of the publishers.

In this report

Acronyms	vi
Forward	1
Executive Summary	3
Political Freedom	4
Right to Expression & Freedom of Information	8
Religious Freedom	12
Minority Issues	14
Women Issues	18
Children Issues	21
Employment and Labour Rights	28
LGBT Rights	32
Prison Situation	33
Security and Crime	34
Appendix (political prisoners)	52

ACRONYMS

BBP	Build Bhutan Project
BCSEA	Bhutan Council for School Examinations and Assessment
BICMA	Bhutan InfoCom and Media Authority
BIMSTEC	Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation
BKP	Bhutan Kuen-Nyam Party
BMF	Bhutan Media Foundation
BNCA	Bhutan Narcotics Control Authority
BNDP	Bhutan National Democratic Party
BPP	Bhutan Peoples Party
BRCS	Bhutan Red Cross Society
CCPC	Civil and Criminal Procedure Code
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CFM	Centenary Farmers Market
COVID	Corona Virus Disease
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CRO	Commission for Religious Organisations
DGPC	Druk Green Power Corporation
DNA	Deoxyribonucleic acid

DNC	Druk National Congress
DNT	Druk Nyamrup Tshogpa
DPT	Druk Phuensum Tshogpa
DSTS	Dzongkha Standard Testing System
ECB	Election Commission of Bhutan
GNH	Gross National Happiness
ICIMOD	International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development
ICRC	International Red Cross Committee
JAB	Journalist Association of Bhutan
JDWNRH	Jigme Dorji Wangchuck National Referral Hospital
LGBTIQ	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, Queer
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoF	Ministry of Finance
NA	National Assembly
NC	National Council
OAG	Office of the Attorney General
PDP	People's Democratic Party
PMO	Prime Minister's Office
RBP	Royal Bhutan Police
REC	Royal Education Council
RENEW	Respect Educate Nurture Empower Women
RGOB	Royal Government of Bhutan
RUB	Royal University of Bhutan

STCBL State Trading Corporation of Bhutan Limited
UNHCR United Nations High Commission for Refugees

Forward

This is the third year BW publishing Annual Human Rights Report on Bhutan. This is our humble effort to promote human rights, equality and justice. We have been consistently exposing the issues of human rights violations since 2019 and questioning the authority of its inability to provide justice to the citizens.

Though Bhutan claims being a democracy with a written constitution guaranteeing modest fundamental rights to all its citizen, it continues to violate human rights of its citizen. The media are controlled with punitive measures and social media is monitored and censored. Politicians appear to be ruled by bureaucracy. Citizens are still scared of speaking the truth about instances of Human Rights violations. There is no national mechanism to monitor. Justice to the victims rests on whims of the local bureaucrats.

Issue of political prisoners lingers in limbo. These brave individuals fought for human rights and democracy. When the country proclaimed democracy, the democracy fighters are treated like criminals. They have failed to receive a fair trial. Until they remain in prisons, Bhutan cannot proclaim being a democratic country.

At the international level, Bhutan has successfully painted its image as champion of happiness philosophy through its hypocritic Gross National Happiness (GNH) campaign. On top of that, being new entrée to democracy club, the international community has diverted its attention from human rights violations and refugees to helping install democratic institutions in the country. We would say, the process has been very slow and unreliable.

Even the erstwhile critics of human rights records of Bhutan like Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and other international human rights organisations stopped their monitoring Bhutan rights records, turning deaf ears to human rights violations in the country.

There is an acute need of an independent mechanism to monitor human rights situation in the country and bring those instances to the table. The timely birth of The Bhutan Watch and its continuous monitoring and reporting the instances of rights violations in Bhutan has become a blessing in disguise to those hapless Bhutanese citizens.

I assure that the Bhutan Watch will continue to monitor and report all sorts of rights violations in Bhutan and press for the timely interference from the concerned authorities both inside and outside the country. Exposing fearlessly and unbiasedly the wrong doings of elites, to some extent, could deliver justice to the victims.

In spite of great difficulties in getting the right information and its reliable sources, the monitoring team of the Bhutan Watch worked very hard to compile this report.

Tashi Delek!

Ram Karki
Coordinator
The Bhutan Watch
The Hague, Netherlands

Executive Summary

The year 2020 saw many unexpected events – the most difficult year in the recent history. The pandemic caused by the Covid-19 even affected the mystic and hermit world of Bhutan – starting with an US tourist. The country closed its international border on Mar 23¹. The Royal Government of Bhutan (RGoB) imposed several rounds of national lockdowns to contain the spread of virus. The lockdowns and other restrictions severely violated human rights. Very few were reported by media.

The virus became an instrument to constrain the liberties that have only started to grow. The meaning civic liberties and freedom were indirectly communicated as the bad form for peaceful life. That's not just in Bhutan but across the world – the democratic norms were violated to replicate what China did to contain virus. The imperative message from such action is to build sense that democracy is not the right thing when it comes to emergencies.

In Bhutan, breach of COVID-19 task force guidelines meant many citizens were arrested and put behind the bar, as if they were criminals. The debate on rights of citizens and duty of the executive cropped up. The pandemic is still raging on. The social-economic difficulties were enormous and the government has thus far mitigated the plight by implementing economic stimulus and King's Kidu-system.

The situation may improve in 2021 but very likely that methods used in Bhutan to constrain freedom and civil liberties may continue as instrument to suppress the opposition and those who criticise the government.

¹ His Majesty's Address on 22 March 2020 announcing the closing of Bhutan's borders. (2020, March 28). *The Bhutanese*. <https://thebhutanese.bt/his-majestys-address-on-22-march-2020-announcing-the-closing-of-bhutans-borders/>

POLITICAL FREEDOM

The Opposition Leader and President of Druk Phuensum Tshogpa (DPT) Dr. Pema Gyamtsho resigned from parliament and joined International Center for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) in Nepal as its Director. He was replaced by Dorji Wangdi as opposition leader in the House². Gyamtsho is the third DPT parliamentarian to abdicate politics. Former Prime Minister Jigmi Y Thinley quit in 2013 and Kinga Tshering in 2017. A by-election in Chhoekhor-Tang constituency (Bumthang), vacated by Gyamtsho, was held on November 19 in midst of pandemic restrictions. During the election campaign, the opposition party DPT claimed their candidate and supporters were not permitted to hold gatherings by the COVID-19 restriction enforcers while, ruling party, Druk Nyamrup Tshogpa (DNT) candidate was treated preferably. The ruling party candidate Dawa won the election. One of the many reasons of DPT loss was attributed to Prime Minister's black mailing – medical specialist for Bumthang would be delayed if his party loss the election³.



Dawa won the by-election with 2,889 votes while DPT candidate, Tenzin Norbu secured 1,707 votes. Postal ballots from Australia favored Tenzin

² Subba, M. (2020, September 8). Opposition party embrace new leadership. *Kuensel*. Retrieved from <https://kuenselonline.com/opposition-party-embraces-new-leadership/>

³ Editorial. (2020, November 24). The Chhoekhor-Tang message. *The Bhutanese*. Retrieved from <https://thebhutanese.bt/the-chhoekhor-tang-message/>

Norbu with 36 ballots while Dawa received 16 and 10 rejected. The constituency had 6,219 registered voters – 2,904 males and 3,315 females. Of them 4,596 voters turned out to cast votes. Of the 1,530 voters who requested for postal ballot, only 1,281 returned the postal ballots⁴.

The resignation of Opposition Leader Gyamtsho has once again generated much discourse on whether elected leaders or representatives can be allowed to leave by tendering their resignation in absence of clear legislation⁵. The political question for such trend is if DPT leadership had indirect pressure from any power centre to abandon party and politics, failing to decimate the party during election.

Several by-elections for the post of *Gup* and *Tshogpas* for the local government were held in five districts. The by-elections were held after the demise of former local leaders, removed from the office and some with prolonged health issues.

As per Election Commission of Bhutan (ECB), 43-year-old Phub Thinley is the new *Gup* of Boomdeling *Gewog* in Trashiyangtse. He was the lone candidate contesting for the post. He secured 419 Yes and 109 No votes.

From the three male candidates contesting for *Mangmi* in Goenshari *Gewog* in Punakha, Lhap Tshering was elected as the new *Mangmi* securing 131 votes. Tendel and Tashi Pelden were elected as the new *Tshogpas* from Balam Morphu *Chiwog* under Balam *Gewog* and Thrinaphu *Chiwog* under Narang *Gewog* in Mongar securing 142 and 99 Yes votes respectively.

With 251 Yes and 69 No votes, Karma Jurmey was elected as the *Tshogpa* of Ngangmala Zorjoog *Chiwog* under Zobel *Gewog* in

⁴ Declaration of the results of bye-election for National Assembly member of Chhoeckhor Tang Demkhong of Bumthang dzongkhag. (2020, November 20). *Election Commission of Bhutan*. Retrieved from https://www.ecb.bt/declaration-of-the-results-of-bye-election-for-national-assembly-member-of-chhoeckhor_tang-demkhong-of-bumthang-dzongkhag/

⁵ Dema, C. (2020, August 6). Debate on elected leaders' resignation continues. *Business Bhutan*. Retrieved from <http://www.businessbhutan.bt/2020/08/06/debate-on-elected-leaders-resignation-continues/>

Pemagatshel and Krishna Lal Sanyasi is the new *Tshogpa* of Peljorling *Chiwog* under Phungtenchhu *Gewog* in Chirang. The lone candidate secured 125 Yes and 7 No votes.

Neten Zangmo formally exited Bhutan Kuen-Nam Party (BKP) in July⁶, taking responsibility of party's loss during the elections in 2018. Vice president Sonam Tobgay was given the charge of the party leadership⁷.

Departure of the leader and remaining quiet on a number of issues, people are of the perception that the opposition party in the parliament has become weak. The party did not question the government on duty free outlets selling tobacco, relocation of Centenary Farmers Market (CFM), home minister's conviction in court and political nomination of Tenzin Lekphell for the post of Secretary-General of BIMSTEC⁸. The party also did not question the harsh restrictions imposed by the government under COVID disguise but publicly supported⁹. Question would arise if DPT would be able to play an active and constructive role of opposition party for the rest of the term to keep the government in discipline.

The parties outside of the parliament remain more active compared to in the past. People's Democratic Party (PDP), led by former prime minister Tshering Tobgay, remained in limelight with frequent statements. It objected government's decision to sell tobacco, appointment of DNT member as BIMSTEC boss and on many other issues. However, it failed to question the abuse of power in the name of COVID. The primary reason behind this is King's direct involvement in imposing restrictions and deployment of non-constitutional paramilitary force *De-Suung*, of which Tobgay is a member.

⁶ Gyem, P. (2020, July 29) Dasho Neten resigns from BKP. *Bhutan Broadcasting Service*. Retrieved from <http://www.bbs.bt/news/?p=135193>

⁷ Dasho Neten Zangmo exits BKP. (2020, July 29). *Kuensel*. Retrieved from <https://kuenselonline.com/dasho-neten-zangmo-exits-bkp/>

⁸ Has the opposition turned weak? (2020, October 29). *Business Bhutan*. Retrieved from <http://www.businessbhutan.bt/2020/10/29/has-the-opposition-turned-weak/>

⁹ Staff Reporter. (2020, December 29). Opposition commits support and solidarity to fight Covid-19. *Business Bhutan*. Retrieved from <http://www.businessbhutan.bt/2020/12/29/opposition-commits-support-and-solidarity-to-fight-covid-19/>

The High Court of Bhutan upheld the lower court's verdict on the fake insurance claim on the Home Minister Sherab Gyeltshen on October 9¹⁰¹¹. The ruling party, however, continued to support the home minister claiming that he had every right to appeal against the verdict and the verdict of high court is not final. The action of the DNT leadership is against the established precedence. The incident is opening path for unethical politics.

Opposition party and other parties outside parliament criticised the government over its flamboyancy and glory in State of the Nation report. The political parties said, "The State of the Nation report does make little to no sense, flooded with rhetoric when the country is drowning in heavy debt, and rising unemployment with businesses shattered to the ground"¹². The country's StartUp sector was hit hard by the COVID-19 pandemic, with many struggling to stay in business¹³. The report ignored this and the inflation that affected people's daily life.

The parliament endorsed Civil and Criminal Procedure Code (Amendment) Bill with far reaching consequences. The amendment includes no bail for individuals charged with offence against the security and sovereignty of the country. This is purely targeted to individuals who have been languishing in jails since 1990s on political charges and any possible political dissidents in future who oppose the government and the palace.

The amended version of the law also include provision where rape of a child above 12 years, voluntary manslaughter, corruption offences valued more than 35 years national wage rate are graded as second-

¹⁰ Dolkar, S. (2020, October 10) High Court upholds the District Court's judgment convicting the Home Minister in the false vehicle insurance claim case. *Bhutan Broadcasting Service*. Retrieved from <http://www.bbs.bt/news/?p=137323>

¹¹ Dema, C. (2020, October 21). Home Minister's case: Will the govt. walk the talk? *Business Bhutan*. Retrieved from <http://www.businessbhutan.bt/2020/10/21/home-ministers-case-will-the-govt-walk-the-talk/>

¹² Tshedup, Y. (2020, December 15). Political parties criticise PM's State of the Nation report. *Kuensel*. Retrieved from <https://kuenselonline.com/political-parties-criticise-pms-state-of-the-nation-report/>

¹³ Dolkar, S. (2020, April 27). Startups struggle to stay afloat amid COVID-19 crisis. *Bhutan Broadcasting Service*. Retrieved from <http://www.bbs.bt/news/?p=131530>

degree felony. While the National Council recommended removal of the 199.8A(b), the joint committee for CCPC recommended that court should not grant bail to an offence of or above first-degree. Murder, statutory rape, treason, terrorism and offences against *Ku*(statue), *Sung* (holy scripts), *Thukten* (stupa) or *Zung* (sacred mantra)¹⁴.

A Prime Minister's Office was created independent of the Office of Cabinet. PMO is headed by Principal Secretary¹⁵.

The political parties in exile Druk National Congress (DNC), Bhutan's Peoples Party (BPP) and Bhutan National Democratic Party (BNDP) continue to be banned. Following the conclusion of resettlement programme, these political parties virtually remain silent and dormant, no plans and prospect of any political activities.

RIGHT TO EXPRESSION & FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

The year 2020 saw the full cooperation of the Bhutanese media in fighting COVID-19 pandemic. The media gave extensive coverage to the government's pandemic initiatives. Bhutanese citizens extensively used social media such as Wechat and Telegram to disseminate government orders. All authentic, raw, hard news and fake news¹⁶¹⁷ were shared

¹⁴ Dema, T. (2020, December 11). First-degree felony and above will not be granted bail. *Kuensel*. Retrieved from <https://kuenselonline.com/first-degree-felony-and-above-will-not-be-granted-bail/>

¹⁵ Dem, K., Dolkar, S. (2020, December 7). National Assembly decides to provide a legitimate stand for the PMO. *Bhutan Broadcasting Service*. Retrieved from <http://www.bbs.bt/news/?p=140268>

¹⁶ Lhaden, Y. (2020, December 26). Media Council urges citizens to stop sharing fake news. *Kuensel*. Retrieved from <https://kuenselonline.com/media-council-urges-citizens-to-report-fake-news/>

¹⁷ Yuden, K. (2020, March 14). Tackling fake news. *The Bhutanese*. Retrieved from <https://thebhutanese.bt/tackling-fake-news/>

through the social media platforms. More and more people are relying on these two platforms than traditional media outlets. These platforms supply the personal unedited, raw information along with pictorial or video representation at faster speed than traditional media. The government attempts to control these exchanges of information by pretending to remove fake news but has failed so far. Increasing popularity of social media in the country is gradually posing challenges for the survival of traditional media. People now rely more on social media to get an update compared to reading a newspaper or watching TV.

Working with COVID guidelines and still managing to inform the public on important updates on pandemic was a challenge for journalists¹⁸.



Ministry of Education (MoE) in collaboration with Royal Education Council (REC), Bhutan Council for School Examinations and Assessment (BCSEA) and Royal University of Bhutan (RUB) proposed third BBS channel¹⁹ dedicated to education. The channel was supposed to go on air

in May but was delayed. This abrupt proposal was accepted while applications and plans for a private TV channel was scrapped.

ECB increased its censorship on media for election coverage. The media personnel were asked to register with ECB for permit to cover any election related events. The media outlets were asked to submit all news published in print or online to ECB following the elections. The micro-management of the commission directly contravenes the freedom and independence of media in the country²⁰.

¹⁸ Gyem, P. (2020, May 2). Media houses and COVID-19. *Bhutan Broadcasting Service*. Retrieved from <http://www.bbs.bt/news/?p=131744>

¹⁹ Drukpa, U. (2020, April 4). Proposed third BBS channel to be dedicated to education. *Business Bhutan*. Retrieved from <https://thebhutanese.bt/proposed-third-bbs-channel-to-be-dedicated-to-education/>

²⁰ Editorial. (2020, October 24). Elections and freedom of expression. *The Bhutanese*. Retrieved from <https://thebhutanese.bt/elections-and-freedom-of-expression/>

Bhutan Media Foundation (BMF) trained over 25 journalists from broadcast and print media²¹ on how to cover climate change related issues. The three-day training was facilitated by climate change experts. Highlighting rural communities that have been impacted by climate change and knowing the basics of climate change were emphasised during the training²².

Journalists Association of Bhutan (JAB) announced that it will recognise social media impact of the media houses from next year²³ during its Annual Journalism Awards. With too small media industry and few journalists, the award virtually is given to every journalist in the country.

Bhutan InfoComm and Media Authority (BICMA) banned PDP from publishing and circulating e-newsletter on June 10²⁴, the day the inaugural edition of its quarterly publication was launched. The e-newsletter was published through party's Facebook page. BICMA claimed, publishing a newsletter without getting a permit is against the law. It further said, a political party would not receive a permit to publish books, newsletter or any other form of media outlet.

The restriction is an act of suppression of freedom of expression. The ECB compared e-newsletter to be equivalent



²¹Lhamo, T. (2020, July 23) Media workshop highlights climate change reporting challenges. *Business Bhutan*. Retrieved from <http://www.businessbhutan.bt/2020/07/23/media-workshop-highlights-climate-change-reporting-challenges/>

²²Dendup, T. (2020, July 16). BMF trains journalists in reporting climate change issues. *Bhutan Broadcasting Service*. Retrieved from <http://www.bbs.bt/news/?p=134670>

²³JAB to change award rules from next year. (2020, May 6). *Journalist Association of Bhutan*. Retrieved from <http://www.jab.bt/jab-to-change-award-rules-from-next-year/>

²⁴Dema, C. (2020, July 14). BICMA asks PDP to stop publishing E-Newsletter. *Business Bhutan*. Retrieved from <http://www.businessbhutan.bt/2020/07/14/bicma-asks-pdp-to-stop-publishing-e-newsletter/>

to newspaper or book. According to English dictionaries, newsletter is a form of document containing organisation's activities and circulated within the party members. If e-newsletters are illegal, party manifesto must also be illegal – they are more of formal books and were not registered with BICMA. Further, many other agencies and government institutions are publishing newsletters and BICMA has not stopped them from doing so. The BICMA action of PDP is direct interference to political freedom, freedom of expression and opinion.

Our research does not show that a political party is not permitted to produce newsletter in a democracy. For example, BJP in India runs its own news portal 'Kamal Sandesh'. Within the country, institutions like Bhutan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Ministry of Education, Royal Society for Conservation of Nature, Bhutan Ecological Society, National Assembly publish newsletters while National Council also publishes Bi-Annual Magazine. None of these publications were registered with BICMA by the time this report was prepared.

Political parties around the world publish their own newspapers, run TV or radio channels, have their own research institutes and social organisations. They have affiliated trade unions and sub-party organisations. All these essentials required for political parties to strengthen public engagement, widen their vision, conduct intellectual discourses and connect with their supporters are not permitted in Bhutan. In real sense, political parties in Bhutan are a small group of individuals who jointly fight for a seat in parliament. The act of BICMA will certainly support for strengthening and maturity of democracy in Bhutan. We would not wonder, if in future BICMA requires any political parties get permission from BICMA to give a statement, hosting websites or having social media accounts.

Parliamentary reporting is a challenge for journalists. The media focuses on the parliament only during the parliamentary sessions, remaining unaware of what happens in the Houses beyond the sessions. Reporters lack knowledge on parliamentary reporting in the sense of understanding of the parliament processes, as it can be quite cumbersome to go through the literature that exist on the parliamentary processes. To address this, a two-day training on parliamentary reporting was held by the BMF on November 9-10. Twenty-two reporters

and a few editors from print and broadcast media attended the workshop²⁵.

The media industry in Bhutan is still very young but its already facing tough adversary – social media. The Bhutanese media face dilemma whether to stick to traditional media format or adopt to changing journalistic landscape. Readers are now more engaged through social media than traditional media outlets²⁶. There has been no support of any form from the government for private media, though they struggle to survive. The survival challenge for Bhutanese private media grew stronger with the COVID and dwindling business environment.

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Though the country has constitutional guarantee of religious freedom, the state is biased in favour of Buddhism. Of the Buddhist faiths, Drukpa Kagyurpa sect receives highest state support. While other religious functions and gatherings were banned, the Central Monastic Body of the Kagyurpa completed its nationwide preaching of the Buddhism just before COVID ban announced. There were no cases of religious rights impediments during the reporting period.

The siblings, Bhimraj Rai and Aiti Maya Rai, converted to Christianity more than a decade ago, were ritually reconverted to Hinduism, their

²⁵ Lhamo, T. (2020, November 19). Challenges beset journalists in parliamentary reporting. *Business Bhutan*. Retrieved from <http://www.businessbhutan.bt/2020/11/19/challenges-beset-journalists-in-parliamentary-reporting/>

²⁶ Sonam, T. (2020, November 17). Way forward for media is to integrate traditional and new journalism, say professionals. *Business Bhutan*. Retrieved from <http://www.businessbhutan.bt/2020/11/17/way-forward-for-media-is-to-integrate-traditional-and-new-journalism-say-professionals/>

religion by birth²⁷. Christians are encouraged to return to their former religions – partially influenced by similar campaigns in India. The annual Durga Puja of Hindus was held at the Devi Panchayan temple in Thimphu with strict COVID-19 safety protocols. The king, queen, prime minister and senior cabinet members attended the Dasain festival.



PC: Facebook page of King Jigme Khesar Wangchuk

Condition of the Christian believers has not improved. Christians are denied registration with the Commission for Religious Organisations (CRO) and building of Church is prohibited. Bhutanese Christians continue to practice their faith behind closed doors. However, there has not been any report any Christians being arrested or coerced for being Christian in 2020.

²⁷ Rai, R. (2020, March 4). Siblings return to their religion by birth. *Kuensel*. Retrieved from <https://kuenselonline.com/siblings-return-to-their-religion-by-birth/>

MINORITY ISSUES

Work has begun on development of Dzongkha Standard Testing System (DSTS), similar to English Language Testing System. If the project is successfully implemented, a candidate requires formal education of Diploma in Dzongkha to stand for any elections or public services. This has been categorically designed to exclude Lhotsampas from standing in any election and to permanently eliminate their representation in any public offices. We have already observed the difficulties Lhotshampas facing at the parliament sessions, where Dzongkha is the only language allowed for discussions. “Such measures are being developed to exclude the Lhotshampa community from the political mainstream once and for all” said a former parliamentarian.

The system will further push Tshangla (language of the Sharchops) towards extinction. The script-less language is used only for local communication. The leaders and scholars from the eastern districts prefer to speak Dzongkha – to be politically correct and be closer to the palace. There have been no efforts made to preserve this dying language.

The status of a large number of stateless people in Bhutan is still continuing. The discriminatory law that denied the nationality to children born to one non-Bhutanese parent is still not amended. Children whose father was not determined also remain stateless. The country neither has law to recognise these children, nor has there been any efforts made to change the culture to reduce this population. Yashi’s story²⁸ represents (see the full story in the highlighted box below) the worries mothers face about the future of their children, when their father has not been determined. The government continue to deny their existence and avoid census to find their numbers. There are no programmes ever initiated to transform the culture that hinders new-born child being not the citizen of the country.

²⁸ Limbu, T. (2020, March 10). Separate laws on men for fatherless children? *Bhutan Broadcasting Service*. Retrieved from <http://www.bbs.bt/news/?p=57678>

Separate laws on men for fatherless children?

*Tara Limbu, Trashy Yangtse
Mar 10, 2016*

Many mothers in Trashy Yangtse are today caught in a complex, almost impossible situation of sourcing the identity of their husbands as required by existing laws. Those with kids in school are even more worried about the future of their children.

Yeshey Yangdon has already knocked many doors, to get her son's census registration. Although the mother and son continued on with their lives after the husband left, by the time the son reached class nine, the school asked for a copy of the father's identity card.

Since then, Yangdon has been introduced to a host of harrowing experiences of having to visit numerous offices and dealing with paper works. Having not gone to school herself in her early years, she is finding the process increasingly burdensome.

Although, she managed to get in touch with her previous husband, the husband refused to cooperate even after involving the gewog office.

"My brother went to the man several times to get the photocopy of his citizenship identity card, but the father refused to give him a copy," Yeshey Yangdon said who is thinking of now taking the matter to court.

Cases, mostly such as this, have affected mostly women across the country. In Yangtse Gewog alone, there are 10 such cases today.

Meanwhile, local leaders, while appearing empathetic to the case, say the situation was difficult and complicated. Yangtse Gup Karma Wangchuk said any individual not registered with the census are likely to be sidestepped from many rights and privileges, like completing schools, getting jobs etc.

He said, there was an urgent need to resolve such issues, "A child without a census shouldn't be left like that."

He said the gewog office also received such cases with a mentally ill woman, for whom the local leaders vouched citizenship of the children.

He also said, while women go through all these harrowing experiences,

there should also be separate laws to hold men, responsible while abandoning their children. These women's experiences have evoked some debate on whether existing laws within the country fully supported gender parity.

Trashi Yangtse Dzongkhag officials did not comment on the number of such cases involving women.

Respect, Educate, Nurture and Empower Women (RENEW), a civil society organization, which looks after the welfare of women received more than a thousand such cases from 2005 to 2014. The National Commission for Women and Children say they receive lesser number of such cases as compared to RENEW.

Sangay Zam, Member of a political party, Druk Nyamrup Tshogpa, said. "Bhutanese laws are gender neutral and we are supposed to believe that that is fair. Personally, I have big problems with it. Gender neutral means gender blind and gender blind laws have never served women right."

She said more inclusive democracy is the best bet Bhutan has.

Boomdeling-Jamkhar MP Dubthob said all those who have approached him for help have been women. Not a single man has approached him till now.

But he still believes that all the laws related to women are not discriminatory in nature.

"We have equal rights for both men and women but when it comes to fatherless children, the implication has been more on women not getting equal rights."

"If it is because of situations, the policy makers need to be mindful to formulate policies that are favourable to both the genders so that such situation does not arise in the future. All those involved in the related agencies and offices should work towards eliminating such problems in the future.

Meanwhile, Yeshe Yangdon hopes the laws in the country to change and that her son be able to go to college and find a job thereafter.

Additionally, the country reportedly has large number of stateless Lhotshampas – the number ranging between 10,000 and 80,000. These include those whose at least one parent is non-Bhutanese or have supported 1990 uprising or have their relatives evicted. While Tibetans who fled in 1950s and entered Bhutan, were granted Bhutanese citizenship, Lhotshampas who migrated prior to them face prosecution on charges of being illegal immigrants.

Lhotshampas are discriminated while providing opportunities in executive positions^{29,30}. Of the many political appointments³¹ made throughout the year, only one Lhotshampa was included – a justice in the High Court. The discrimination in the appointments and promotion remain despite the availability of competitive candidates from the Lhotshampa community.

Some 6,500 Bhutanese refugees still waiting for their destiny in eastern Nepal. There are still a considerable number of Bhutanese in exile who have been denied refugee status, including those who have recently arrive Nepal after serving jail sentence in Bhutan. The UNHCR has stopped providing the basic assistance in 2019 and informed the Government of Nepal of its decision to shut Damak office by the end of 2020³².

The Government of Nepal had formed a three-member task force to seek the lasting resolution for the remaining refugees in 2019. The task force

²⁹ His Majesty grants Dhar to the newly appointed officials. (2020, November 19). *Bhutan Broadcasting Service*. Retrieved from <http://www.bbs.bt/news/?p=139261&fbclid=IwAR34HD7SIlAcItsHZQA4nY5-WPpP9Qg7nGTAGrzRIQhFk5WsaWaOt-d-E4>

³⁰ HM Appoints new Secretaries and Ambassadors (2020, March 14). *The Bhutanese*. Retrieved from <https://thebhutanese.bt/hm-appoints-new-secretaries-and-ambassadors/?fbclid=IwAR15b1UsOKFTzohxV-pTPgPjhgbsF9nwaM3wQrLQcPrF32ZdSf7VJk-W7hs>

³¹ His Majesty appoints Constitutional Post Holders (2020, October 14). *Bhutan Broadcasting Service*. Retrieved from http://www.bbs.bt/news/?p=137475&fbclid=IwARo-eb-pQTHl2PQ5Y1eoklJ6YskRRdYYwLcyQ4Pds7ChKqFy5IQnr0r73_g

³² UN Refugee agency to shut down Damak office. (2019, August 18). *Online Khabar*. Retrieved from <https://english.onlinekhabar.com/un-refugee-agency-to-shut-down-damak-office.html>

report was submitted to the government in 2020. No action has been taken yet and the report has not been made public. The Government of Nepal has repeatedly said it is committed to the right of refugees to return home safely and peacefully in its Foreign Policy Document released on December 5, 2020, as per the wish of the refugees. No concrete action is taken.

WOMEN ISSUES

Bhutanese women face challenges from patriarchal norms and systematic barriers. Domestic violence against women and children is a norm in northern Bhutanese culture, and it increased³³ during lockdown^{34,35}. Violence against women and girls study found 44.6% Bhutanese female have experienced partner violence in their lifetime³⁶.

The bordering town of Phuentsholing saw 34 cases of domestic and gender-based violence until October according to the RENEW³⁷. The organisation reported that five women in Thimphu fell victim to gender-based violence only in the month of December when government

³³ Dem, K. (2020, November 25). Gender-based violence on the rise. *Bhutan Broadcasting Service*. Retrieved from <http://www.bbs.bt/news/?p=139613>

³⁴ Dolkar, S. (2020, August 30). Domestic violence cases almost double during the nationwide lockdown. *Bhutan Broadcasting Service*. Retrieved from <http://www.bbs.bt/news/?p=135967>

³⁵ Drukpa, U. (2020, August 29). Domestic Violence cases increase during lockdown. *The Bhutanese*. Retrieved from <https://thebhutanese.bt/domestic-violence-cases-increase-during-lockdown/>

³⁶ Special panel on violence against women and girls. (2020, November 25). *National Commission on Women and Children*. Retrieved from <https://www.ncwc.gov.bt/notifications/437>

³⁷ Rai, R. (2020, November 26). Phuentsholing reports highest domestic and gender-based violence so far. *Kuensel*. Retrieved from <https://kuenselonline.com/p-ling-reports-highest-domestic-and-gender-based-violence-so-far/>

announced second phase of nationwide lockdown³⁸. In the span of 10 days of the second nationwide lockdown, 31 women were reportedly victimised by domestic violence, RENEW said. It is a huge increase compared to the same period during the previous lockdown. Three children were also reportedly abused. A total of 41 people sought support from the RENEW and its community-based volunteers. The majority of them were women³⁹. 27 of them were physically abused by their spouses while 11 were emotionally abused. Likewise, one was sexually abused, and two were exposed to economic abuse.

In the first half of the year, country registered 32 cases of domestic violence^{40,41}.

Royal Bhutan Police separately reported 13 cases of domestic violence only in the month of March, when lockdown had just started⁴². The focus of the government is to keep



people inside doors, in fear of COVID transmission but have hardly discussed or channelised any resources to address the growing domestic violence.

³⁸ Lhaden, Y. (2020, December 29). Five women abused in past eight days in Thimphu. *Kuensel*. Retrieved from <https://kuenselonline.com/five-women-abused-in-past-eight-days-in-thimphu/>

³⁹ Gyem, P. (2020, December 31). Surge in domestic violence during the second lockdown. *Bhutan Broadcasting Service*. Retrieved from <http://www.bbs.bt/news/?p=141635>

⁴⁰ Lhaden, Y. (2020, August 31). 102 crimes reported during lockdown. *Kuensel*. Retrieved from <https://kuenselonline.com/102-crimes-reported-during-lockdown/>

⁴¹ Lhaden, Y. (2020, August 24). 32 domestic violence cases during lockdown. *Kuensel*. Retrieved from <https://kuenselonline.com/32-domestic-violence-cases-during-lockdown/>

⁴² Drukpa, U. (2020, April 25). Domestic violence likely to increase if the COVID-19 situation prolongs. *The Bhutanese*. Retrieved from <https://thebhutanese.bt/domestic-violence-likely-to-increase-if-the-covid-19-situation-prolongs/>

Rape is an ingrained culture in northern Bhutanese society. The parliament recently amended the penal code⁴³ by bringing harsher penalties for rapists. A punishment for statutory rape has been increased to life imprisonment. Parliament members debated ‘harsher penalties would guarantee a drop in such crimes.’ The Penal Code of Bhutan 2004 graded these acts as fourth-degree crimes with a sentence of three to five years in prison. The amendment of the sections means now a person convicted of rape or rape of a married person would be sentenced to a prison term ranging between five and nine years⁴⁴.

Wangduephodrang District Court sentenced a 34-year-old man to 18 months in prison for the offence of attempt to rape a 41-year-old woman in Phobji *Gewog* in October last year. The judgment also asked the convict to pay a compensation of Nu 4,000 to the woman⁴⁵.

The trafficking of women and children were not reported due to closure of international borders. However, 15 Bhutanese women who were trafficked to Iraq in 2019 finally repatriated to the country⁴⁶.

In what is the first case of its type in Bhutan of a major management or senior figure losing a job over sexual harassment complaints, the State Trading Corporation of Bhutan Limited (STCBL) board compulsorily retired the CEO Kuenga Namgay over sexual harassment complaints made by three women employees of the company⁴⁷.

In May 2019, RUB suspended its 10 staffs from College of Language & Cultural Studies and Tagtse College following sexual harassment

⁴³ Palden, T. (2020, December 11). Parliament passes harsher penalties for rapists. *Kuensel*. Retrieved from <https://kuenselonline.com/parliament-passes-harsher-penalties-for-rapists/>

⁴⁴ Palden, T. (2020, December 11). Parliament passes harsher penalties for rapists. *Kuensel*. <https://kuenselonline.com/parliament-passes-harsher-penalties-for-rapists/>

⁴⁵ Dorji, C. (2020, January 16). A 34-year-old man sentenced to 18 months in prison for attempt to rape. *Bhutan Broadcasting Service*. Retrieved from <http://www.bbs.bt/news/?p=126970>

⁴⁶ Dema, T. (2020, November 7). Escape from Iraq. *Kuensel*. Retrieved from <https://kuenselonline.com/escape-from-iraq/>

⁴⁷ Lamsang, T. (2020, May 16). STCBL CEO compulsorily retired for sexual harassment complaints. *The Bhutanese*. Retrieved from <https://thebhutanese.bt/stcbl-ceo-compulsorily-retired-for-sexual-harassment-complaints/>

complaints from students. Seven of these staff appealed to the court against the dismissal. Following several hearings, Trongsa District Court, instead of delivering verdict, asked both sides to come into agreeable compromise⁴⁸. The case is still waiting final verdict.

Abortion is illegal in Bhutan and as such there are no reported incidents of infanticide in the country. In past, many Bhutanese women and young girls travelled across the border into India for abortion. The border lockdown has put immense pressure on young women denying their access to safe abortion and rights to have children, when not to, and how many.

CHILDREN ISSUES

The 2020 was not a good year for Bhutanese children. All schools were shut as part of the strategy to control COVID. The government initially said many of the children would be promoted without having to appear annual exams⁴⁹ but the offer dramatically changed towards the end of the year. The government said students would be promoted based on the previous records held by teachers, not automatically⁵⁰ - which means

⁴⁸ Pasang. (2020, January 13). Trongsa Court asks the parties to reach a settlement in the reinstatement case of the CLCS former staff. *Bhutan Broadcasting Service*. Retrieved from <http://www.bbs.bt/news/?p=126824>

⁴⁹. Circular on assessment, examination, and promotions for the academic year 20202. (2020, September 17). *Ministry of Education*. RGOB. Retrieved from <http://www.education.gov.bt/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Circular.pdf>

⁵⁰ Pem, S. et all (2020, December 8). No automatic promotion of students of classes PP-VIII, National Assembly. *Bhutan Broadcasting Service*. Retrieved from <http://www.bbs.bt/news/?p=140336>

those who had performed poorly in the previous sessions are not able to demonstrate they have improved and as such may not be promoted. Schools have not opened by the time this report was prepared.

Office of Attorney General received 37 cases of rape of children above 12 years of age in 2020.

Children born in or residing in Bhutan are restricted from attending schools (public or private) unless evidence is provided that both their parents are Bhutanese citizens. It's mandatory that both parents must produce their citizenship identity card to admit their kids in schools. Parents who were rendered stateless due to their relations with those in exile or who have married from across the border, are forced to send their children across the border for education. Restriction on border movement this year meant these children failed to attend school for the whole year. There is no indication when and if this issue will be addressed. This is violation of the basic right of a child, under CRC, to which Bhutan is a member.



PC: Bhutan Canada Foundation

There was high school drop-out rate. At least 15 students left the school in 2020, only in Mongar district⁵¹. Nationwide, 210 students left the school as of July 2020⁵². Though the annual report of the Education Ministry claims Bhutan is closed to attaining universal primary education⁵³, the report fails to include those children who have been denied education, only because not both their parents had Bhutanese citizenship.

With schools closed nationwide and restrictions on social gathering amid the COVID-19 pandemic, several initiatives were taken to keep children meaningfully engaged at home. The Bhutan Foundation launched three e-books with an objective to engage children at home while at the same time raise awareness on snow leopard and conservation efforts in the region. The e-books titled ‘Who am I?’, ‘Snow Leopard and Norbu the Cat’, and ‘Ap Nado’s Calf’ were made available in both Dzongkha and English versions⁵⁴.

Running private tuition was not permitted for teachers employed in public schools⁵⁵. Private tuition would have been supplementary support for children while not attending schools.

The MoE lost 163 teachers between June 2019 to July 2020, according to the Annual Education Statistics 2020⁵⁶. Of the total, 112 teachers voluntarily resigned citing personal reasons. This means on average 10 teachers voluntarily resigned every month (Table 1).

⁵¹ Namgyel, T. (2020, July 30) 15 students in Mongar drop out. *Kuensel*. Retrieved from <https://kuenselonline.com/15-students-in-mongar-drop-out/>

⁵² Rinzin, Y. (2020, July 30). 210 Classes X and XII students dropped out. *Kuensel*. Retrieved from <https://kuenselonline.com/210-classes-x-and-xii-students-dropped-out/>

⁵³ Annual Education Report 2019-2020. Ministry of Education, Royal Government of Bhutan. Retrieved from <http://www.education.gov.bt/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Annual-Education-Report.pdf>

⁵⁴ Dolkar, S. (2020, April 2). Bhutan Foundation releases e-books for children. *Bhutan Broadcasting Service*. Retrieved from <http://www.bbs.bt/news/?p=130546>

⁵⁵ Leveling the playing field? (2020, January 22). *Business Bhutan*. Retrieved from <http://www.businessbhutan.bt/2020/01/22/leveling-the-playing-field/>

⁵⁶ Annual Education Statistics 2020. Ministry of Education, Royal Government of Bhutan. <http://www.education.gov.bt/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/AES-2020-Final.pdf>

Table 1: Number of teachers leaving their profession

Year	Voluntary resignation	Compulsory resignation	Retired	Expiry of contract	Others	Total
2015	142	1	27	3	25	198
2016	200	6	42	31	11	290
2017	260	4	56	9	161	345
2018	263	7	60	10	15	355
2019	277	8	57	103	35	480
July 2020	112	3	27	6	15	163

Violence against children is almost a norm. There are several cases of sexual violence reported to the police throughout the year. The physical or mental violence that children face, are never reported.

A year later, police have not been able to solve the mystery of rape and murder of the eight-year-old girl Dena Koirala in Paro⁵⁷. The police say they are still investigating the cases.

An eight-year-old girl was raped and murdered in Satsam, Paro in September 2020. Paro police say, they are investigating and sending blood samples of suspects abroad for DNA testing. The DNA test result came negative for all the samples sent before. Paro Police have yet again collected blood samples of more than 100 suspects who failed to declare their whereabouts during the crime. Police say the crime scene is frequented site, but people were not coming forward to help.

Similarly, Thimphu Police were asking family members and people around to help with the investigation on the death of a nine-year-old girl in Dangrina in Thimphu, 2019. Although, Thimphu police have sent the blood samples of few suspects for DNA test abroad, they have not arrested anyone so far since they could not prove anyone guilty beyond

⁵⁷ Pem, D. (2020, October 3). Parents of the Paro case and Dena Koirala await justice. *The Bhutanese*. Retrieved from <https://thebhutanese.bt/parents-of-the-paro-case-and-dena-koirala-await-justice/>

a reasonable doubt. The girl went missing on December 9 and was found dead on a nearby stream on December 11⁵⁸.

Police in Bumthang arrested a 24-year-old man for alleged molestation of a 14-year-old student on November 11. The incident, according to police, happened when the student was at home, as schools were closed because of the pandemic, but was reported when school briefly reopened⁵⁹.

Punakha police arrested 72-year-old man from Thimphu on October 6 for alleged rape of a nine-year-old girl. The victim's mother reported the matter to Punakha police, after health officials in Wangduephodrang told her that the child was raped. The mother took the daughter to hospital after she complained of stomach-ache⁶⁰.

Mongar police arrested a 29-year-old *tshampa* (hermit) for having an alleged illicit physical relationship with a 17-year-old nun. The incident took place in September. Police said the accused confessed to the crime and claimed the sex was consensual⁶¹.

Bumthang police arrested a Trongsa-man for allegedly raping a minor. The case surfaced after the victim, a 17-year-old girl, was hospitalised at Wangdicholing General Hospital with suspected miscarriage in July⁶².

Gaylephug Sub-Divisional Court sentenced a 26-year-old man from Samchi to 10 years in prison for raping a 15-year-old girl. The employee of a Gaylephug-based private company was found guilty of raping the

⁵⁸ Chenzom, S. (2020, October 22). Police have no leads on last year's rape and murder case of a minor in Paro and the death of a minor in Thimphu. *Bhutan Broadcasting Service*. Retrieved from <http://www.bbs.bt/news/?p=137840>

⁵⁹ Bumthang police detains man for child molestation. (2020, November 21). *Kuensel*. Retrieved from <https://kuenselonline.com/bumthang-police-detains-man-for-child-molestation/>

⁶⁰ Lhamo, P. (2020, November 19). Man charged for statutory rape. *Kuensel*. Retrieved from <https://kuenselonline.com/man-charged-for-statutory-rape/>

⁶¹ Namgyal, T. (2020, October 10). Tshampa detained for alleged sex with a minor nun. *Kuensel*. Retrieved from <https://kuenselonline.com/tshampa-detained-for-alleged-sex-with-a-minor-nun/>

⁶² Man arrested for rape of a minor. (2020, August 4) *Kuensel*. Retrieved from <https://kuenselonline.com/man-arrested-for-rape-of-a-minor/>

minor in August 2019 after picking her and a friend from a far-flung village and spending the night with her in a hotel in Gaylephug⁶³.

Punakha District Court sentenced a 79-year-old man from Punakha to 15 years in prison for statutory rape of a five-year-old child. The judgment stated that the man from Punakha visited the five-year-old child's house to watch television on September 16 and attempted to rape her⁶⁴.

Trongsa District Court on October 7 sentenced a 23-year-old man to nine years for rape of a minor on May 26. The medical report of the victim confirmed that they had a sexual relationship⁶⁵.

Wangduephodrang District Court sentenced a 35-year-old man from Punakha to six and a half years in prison for attempting to rape his 11-year-old stepdaughter in November 2019. The judgement also asked the convict to pay a compensation of Nu 7,500 to the girl. The incident happened near Dangchu River while the stepdaughter and the convict were returning home from Punakha⁶⁶.

Samdrupchhoeling Sub-Divisional Court sentenced a 23-year-old man from Phuentshogthang *Gewog* in Samdrup Jongkhar to 20 years in prison for the rape of an 8-year-old girl⁶⁷.

The Office of the Attorney General (OAG) has charged a 19-year-old student for statutory rape, incest, and child battery of an 11-year-old girl

⁶³ Man found guilty for rape of minor in Gelephu. (2020, March 2). *Kuensel*. Retrieved from <https://kuenselonline.com/man-found-guilty-for-rape-of-minor-in-gelephu/>

⁶⁴ Lhamo, P. (2020, November 19). 79-year-old man convicted for statutory rape. *Kuensel*. Retrieved from <https://kuenselonline.com/79-year-old-man-convicted-for-statutory-rape/>

⁶⁵ Rapist slapped 9 years in prison. (2020, October 9). *Kuensel*. Retrieved from <https://kuenselonline.com/rapist-slapped-9-years-in-prison/>

⁶⁶ Dorji, C. (2020, January 21). A 35-year-old man sentenced to six and a half years in prison for attempting to rape his minor stepdaughter. *Bhutan Broadcasting Service*. Retrieved from <http://www.bbs.bt/news/?p=127229>

⁶⁷ Dorji, C. (2020, February 11). A 23-year-old man sentenced to 20 years for statutory rape, Samdrup Jongkhar . *Bhutan Broadcasting Service*. Retrieved from <http://www.bbs.bt/news/?p=128142>

in Pemagatshel⁶⁸. Bumthang police arrested 24-year-old man from Samchi in November for allegedly molesting a 14-year-old girl in October⁶⁹.

A 33-year-old man from Trashigang was arrested by Trongsa police for the alleged rape of his 14-year-old stepdaughter. The girl in her statement to police alleged that the stepfather under the influence of alcohol attempted to rape her on two occasions in December 2019. Mother of the child works overseas⁷⁰.

Jigme Dorji Wangchuck National Referral Hospital (JDWNRH) received 36 cases of teenage pregnancy in 2020. RBP reported another 8 cases. There are cases where underage girls are made pregnant by their own uncles and stepfathers⁷¹. In most cases, adult men were involved. There were rare cases of teenage boys abusing underage girls. At least one child was sexually abused every week in the capital according to reports with the national referral hospital⁷².

⁶⁸ Dorji, C. (2020, May 14). 19-year-old student charged for statutory rape, incest and child battery in Pema Gatshel . *Bhutan Broadcasting Service*. Retrieved from <http://www.bbs.bt/news/?p=132273>

⁶⁹ Kipchu. (2020, November 20). A 24-year-old man under custody for allegedly molesting a minor, Bumthang. *Bhutan Broadcasting Service*. Retrieved from <http://www.bbs.bt/news/?p=139340>

⁷⁰ Passang. (2020, November 15). Man under custody for allegedly raping his 14-year-old stepdaughter and infecting her with STIs, Trongsa. *Bhutan Broadcasting Service*. Retrieved from <http://www.bbs.bt/news/?p=138997>

⁷¹ Pem, D. (2020, December 5). The reality of Teenage pregnancies in Bhutan. *The Bhutanese*. Retrieved from <https://thebhutanese.bt/the-reality-of-teenage-pregnancies-in-bhutan/>

⁷² Tshendup, Y. (2020, June 9). 16 minors sexually assaulted in five months. *Kuensel*. Retrieved from <https://kuenselonline.com/16-minors-sexually-assaulted-in-five-months/>

EMPLOYMENT AND LABOUR

Nearly, 30,000 Bhutanese were seeking jobs in 2020. When the pandemic hit Bhutan, another 14,000 lost their jobs while 11,000 returned from overseas adding to the already existing unemployment pool. The youth unemployment rate stands at 11.9%. Local media reported prime minister describing it “worrying, which if not solved, would lead to a social crisis.” The authorities are speculating that jobseekers have increased by 3% while job opportunities have decreased by 3%. If this trend continues, the workplace will shrink by 10%⁷³. The Ministry of Finance (MoF) in a report said that even in the best-case scenario, the unemployment level in 2020 is expected to be 8.3% up from 2.7% in 2019⁷⁴. However, a government minister says the unemployment rate is not alarming⁷⁵.

More than 70 students replaced Indian labourers for sgrading and packing mandarin and oranges at depots in Samdrupjongkhar. Shortage of workers was reported following the exodus of Indian workers when COVID restrictions were announced. Students said they were happy as they earn Nu 12,000 a month and get free food⁷⁶. Bhutanese youth have replaced the foreign workers in Phuentshogling. From loading and unloading of consignment, parking fee collection, hair cutting to waste collection, Bhutanese youth are now taking up all kinds of odd jobs

⁷³ Editorial. (2020, August 5). Resolving the unemployment conundrum. *Business Bhutan*. Retrieved from <http://www.businessbhutan.bt/2020/08/05/resolving-the-unemployment-conundrum/>

⁷⁴ Lamsang, T. (2020, October 10). Unemployment to jump from 2.7% in 2019 to 8.3% in 2020 in best case scenario: MoF. *The Bhutanese*. Retrieved from <https://thebhutanese.bt/unemployment-to-jump-from-2-7-in-2019-to-8-3-in-2020-in-best-case-scenario-mof/>

⁷⁵ Dema, C. (2020, February 10). Tackling youth unemployment. *Bhutan Broadcasting Service*. Retrieved from <http://www.bbs.bt/news/?p=128119>

⁷⁶ Wangchuck, K. (2020, December 10). Students fill in labour shortage at orange depots. *Kuensel*. Retrieved from <https://kuenselonline.com/students-fill-in-labour-shortage-at-orange-depots/>

previously carried out by foreign workers from across the border⁷⁷, giving some relief to the growing unemployment pool.

With business hit-hard by the COVID-19 pandemic, Scan Café, located at the Thimphu Tech Park, laid off 29 employees⁷⁸. Without movement beyond the Rinchending check post, many truckers in Phuentsholing were rendered jobless. There were more than 100 trucks lying idle in different locations⁷⁹. At least 164 individuals were left unemployed following the completion of Mangdechu Hydro Project and handed over to Druk Green Power Corporation (DGPC) in January 2020⁸⁰.

Supporting those rendered jobless due to COVID restrictions was a challenge. The initial support⁸¹ these jobless people received quickly vanished. Build Bhutan Project (BBP) employed 131 men and 85 women jobseekers under the direct engagement scheme. Most of them were placed in Thimphu (128) followed by Wangduephodrang (64), and Chukha and Sarpang seven each, among others⁸². As of October 1, the project received expression of interest from over 3000 individuals seeking jobs⁸³. Some 80 tour guides, who were unemployed due to the travel ban, were offered temporary jobs in waste management and construction in Thimphu. The guides, divided into several smaller

⁷⁷ Penjor, S. (2020, April 25). Bhutanese youth in Phuentsholling fill in jobs carried out by foreign workers. *Bhutan Broadcasting Service*. Retrieved from <http://www.bbs.bt/news/?p=131459>

⁷⁸ Lhaden, Y. (2020, June 24). Scan Cafe relieves 29 employees. *Kuensel*. Retrieved from <https://kuenselonline.com/scan-cafe-relieves-29-employees/>

⁷⁹ Rai, R. (2020, September 25). Phuentsholing truckers are jobless. *Kuensel*. Retrieved from <https://kuenselonline.com/phuentsholing-truckers-are-jobless/>

⁸⁰ Seldon, P. (2020, January 25). 164 MHPA employees unemployed after project completion. *The Bhutanese*. Retrieved from <https://thebhutanese.bt/164-mhpa-employees-unemployed-after-project-completion/>

⁸¹ Wangmo, C. (2020, August 22). Feeding the workforce rendered jobless by lockdown. *Kuensel*. Retrieved from <https://kuenselonline.com/feeding-the-workforce-rendered-jobless-by-lockdown/>

⁸² Namgay, T. (2020, August 8). Build Bhutan Project engages 354 job seekers. *Kuensel*. Retrieved from <https://kuenselonline.com/build-bhutan-project-engages-354-job-seekers/>

⁸³ Pem, D. (2020, October 3). 3,155 unemployed youths registered in 3 months for Build Bhutan. *The Bhutanese*. Retrieved from <https://thebhutanese.bt/3155-unemployed-youths-registered-in-3-months-for-build-bhutan/>

groups, worked at various sites in Bebena and Olakha for two months⁸⁴ at the beginning of the pandemic.

Bhutan employs thousands of Indian workers in big projects. When COVID restrictions were announced, Indian workers were almost trapped. They were neither allowed to leave Bhutan^{85,86}, nor provided any support for livelihood. Many villagers later received permit to leave Bhutan. However, the course was quickly reversed when Indian labourers started coming back. In October, 390 foreign labourers entered the country via Phuentsholing. Other 1,168 labourers had received re-entry permits⁸⁷.

A high-profile case in Wamrong, where wife of a judge beat local cleaner, still lingers in court. Wamrong Sub-Divisional Court initially handed a compoundable sentence of 18 months prison term to the judge's wife, Tshering Yangki for her involvement in the battery case⁸⁸. She was also concurrently sentenced to a year in prison for trespassing. She was ordered to compensate victim Sonam Peldon (Nu 225,000) for causing her injury which led to temporary-total disability and damages and another Nu 38,200 to cover medical expenses incurred during her medical treatment within 10 days from the date of the judgment⁸⁹.

⁸⁴ Dendup, T. (2020, April 27). Tour guides take up waste management and construction work. *Bhutan Broadcasting Service*. Retrieved from <http://www.bbs.bt/news/?p=131542>

⁸⁵ 26 foreign workers apprehended. (2020, July 10). *Kuensel*. Retrieved from <https://kuenselonline.com/26-foreign-workers-apprehended/>

⁸⁶ 26 foreign workers apprehended in Pasakha. (2020, July 10). *Bhutan Broadcasting Service*. Retrieved from <http://www.bbs.bt/news/?p=134447>

⁸⁷ Dem, D. (2020, October 31). 390 foreign laborers imported in 28 days while 1,168 are yet to come. *The Bhutanese*. Retrieved from <https://thebhutanese.bt/390-foreign-laborers-imported-in-28-days-while-1168-are-yet-to-come/>

⁸⁸ Darjay, S. (2020, June 22). Wamrong Dungkhang Court sentences wife of the Drangpoen to one year and six months in prison. *Bhutan Broadcasting Service*. Retrieved from <http://www.bbs.bt/news/?p=134904>

⁸⁹ Dorji, N. (2020, July 23). Court sentences drangpon's wife to 18 months in prison. *Kuensel*. Retrieved from <https://kuenselonline.com/court-sentences-drangpons-wife-to-18-months-in-prison/>

Yangki has appealed to the Trashigang District Court against the verdict of the lower court⁹⁰. Sonam has been bed ridden and was unable to work or take care of her children⁹¹.

According to a Report on the Sustainable Development Goal 5, Gender Equality prepared by Women, Children and Youth Committee of the National Assembly, the difference in the youth unemployment rate had increased from 0.7 to 3.7% since 2018⁹². The female youth unemployment rate was 12.9% while male unemployment rate was 9.2%. The labour force participation rate was significantly higher for males at 73.1% compared to 52.2% for female. Women were engaged in lower-quality jobs.

The government has pledged to increase the national minimum daily wage rate to Nu 450 from Nu 125⁹³. But its waiting for recommendations from World Bank before the decision was being enforced.

The Trongsa District Court sentenced a 37-year-old *Drayang* (discotheque) owner in Trongsa to 18 months in prison for employing a 17-year-old girl as a dancer in 2019⁹⁴. The court found the owner guilty of section 221 of the Penal Code of Bhutan, which states, “A defendant shall be guilty of the offence of a child abuse if the defendant subjects a child to an economic exploitation or any job that is likely to be hazardous.”

⁹⁰ Dorji, N. (2020, October 15). Wamrong assault case now in Trashigang court. *Kuensel*. Retrieved from <https://kuenselonline.com/wamrong-assault-case-now-in-trashigang-court/>

⁹¹ Dem, D. (2020, June 6). Bed ridden woman now unable to take care of children or earn from weaving: Wamrong Case. *The Bhutanese*. Retrieved from <https://thebhutanese.bt/bed-ridden-woman-now-unable-to-take-care-of-children-or-earn-from-weaving-wamrong-case/>

⁹² Dorji, P. (2020, January 26). Achieving gender parity still remains a challenge. *Bhutan Broadcasting Service*. Retrieved from <http://www.bbs.bt/news/?p=127396>

⁹³ PST. (2020, January 31). National minimum daily wage rate being studied. *Bhutan Broadcasting Service*. Retrieved from <http://www.bbs.bt/news/?p=127684>

⁹⁴ Passang. (2020, January 8). Trongsa Court sentences a Drayang owner to 18 months in prison for employing a minor. *Bhutan Broadcasting Service*. Retrieved from <http://www.bbs.bt/news/?p=126633>

Phuentsholing Sub-Divisional Court sentenced a site supervisor to four years, 11 months and 29 days in prison on charges of illegal entry of foreign workers at a private construction site at Pekarzhing under Phuentsholing municipality on July 10. The RBP had apprehended three foreign workers without any documents at a private construction site on May 26⁹⁵.

LGBT RIGHTS

The members of LGBTIQ community in Bhutan had a reason to rejoice in 2020. The Bhutanese parliament adopted law to decriminalise⁹⁶ the homosexuality by amending the sections 213 and 214 of the Penal Code of Bhutan 2004.

The amended Section 213 states, ‘A defendant shall be guilty of the offence of unnatural sex, if the defendant commits any sexual conduct that is against the order of nature. However, any consensual sexual conduct that is against the order of nature committed in private between any adult human beings shall not be considered unnatural sex.’

Similarly, the amended Section 214 says, the offence of unnatural sex is a petty misdemeanor; a third-degree felony if unnatural sex is conducted or committed without consent as described within the exception of this section; a second-degree felony if unnatural sex is conducted or committed between minors between the ages of sixteen to eighteen years with or without consent.

⁹⁵ Penjor, S. (2020, July 11) The site supervisor involved in the illegal entry of foreign workers gets four years, 11 months and 29 days prison sentence. *Bhutan Broadcasting Service*. Retrieved from <http://www.bbs.bt/news/?p=134479>

⁹⁶ Subba, M. (2020, November 11) NA reconsiders its resolution to decriminalise homosexuality. *Kuensel*. Retrieved from <https://kuenselonline.com/na-reconsiders-its-resolution-to-decriminalise-homosexuality/>

The previous amendment by National Assembly recommended removal of the clauses as they criminalised the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer communities. However, the NC's legislative committee recommended retention of the clauses reasoning that it might be a rushed decision for the country to remove the clauses. NC retained and amended section 213 on 'Unnatural Sex' and section 214 on grading of unnatural sex⁹⁷.

Some of the members said that the removal would encourage sexual intercourse with animals and corpses. Others sought clearer definition of unnatural sex.

The LGBT community welcomed the changes⁹⁸ and expected changes in the community behaviour towards the LGBT persons following the enforcement of law.

However, the law categorically does not recognise the existence of third gender. They must still mention 'male' or 'female' in any official documents. The idea of third gender 'other' is yet to born.

PRISON SITUATION

The prisons in Lungzor (Trashigang), Samdrup Jongkhar, Lodrai (Gaylegphug) and others were off limits to international visitors. The majority of prisons continue to lack separate buildings for male and female. There were no reports during the monitored period of any violation of rights of the inmates. Yet, there were no reports to say that

⁹⁷ Chenzom, S. (2020, February 10). The NC amends sections on unnatural sex. *Bhutan Broadcasting Service*. Retrieved from <http://www.bbs.bt/news/?p=128140>

⁹⁸ Dem, K. (2020, December 15). LGBTQ community applauds parliament's decision to decriminalize homosexuality. *Bhutan Broadcasting Service*. Retrieved from <http://www.bbs.bt/news/?p=140761>

the situation in the prisons has improved compared. Primary reasons are lack of independent monitoring of the situation. The Bhutan Red Cross Society (BRCS) has become the pawn of the government and ICRC has stopped it's all forms of services to the country. Formation of BRCS was meant to stop ICRC travelling to Bhutan and continue monitoring the prisons that would bring out facts about inmates being mistreated.

There are many political prisoners still incarcerated for demanding human rights and democracy in the 1990s and early 2000s. They had been held without fair trial or access to a proper legal counselor. All were imprisoned under the absolute monarchical law which considered dissent as treasonable offence. With the change in governance and Bhutan being projected as 'democratic' and protector of human rights, the political prisoners who demanded political change and human rights must be released and be allowed to live in Bhutan.

See annex for full list of political prisoners.

Also read Democracy and Political Prisoners of Bhutan by Ram Karki in our The Bhutan Journal, Issue 2.1

SECURITY & CRIME

The definition of crime dramatically changed in Bhutan in 2020. Not adhering to government orders was treated as crime for disrupting peace. Jail sentence was given for COVID restriction violators, for crossing the borders with no reference to any specific laws. This arbitrary prison sentences have damaged the life of many individuals as getting employment or running a business is almost impossible for someone who has been in jail once.

The year 2020 saw reduced cases of crimes in Thimphu⁹⁹, thanks to COVID restrictions and national lockdowns. Similarly, overall crime rates in the country in comparison to last year were decreased. On the other hand, there were several arrested and many were jailed for breaking COVID restrictions – even though incidents were very minor.



Thimphu police have registered 1,060 criminal cases in 2020 until October, including 202 cases of drug abuse. The other common cases were battery with 178 cases, larceny with 143 cases, burglary with 71 cases and auto stripping with 48 cases. In 2019, they had registered 1,999 cases with larceny being the highest with 390 cases followed by drugs with 303 cases. Other crimes were battery cases at 265, burglary at 158 cases and auto stripping with 101 cases¹⁰⁰.

The RBP registered 31 illicit drug trafficking cases between closure of borders on March 23 and end of April. Of which, 10 of them were

⁹⁹ Dem, K. (2020, July 6). Crime rate drops drastically in the capital. *Bhutan Broadcasting Service*. Retrieved from <http://www.bbs.bt/news/?p=134300>

¹⁰⁰ Dem, D. (2020, October 24). 2020 sees reduced crime due to COVID. *The Bhutanese*. Retrieved from <https://thebhutanese.bt/2020-sees-reduced-crime-due-to-covid/>

sentenced between three years to 10 years in prison¹⁰¹. By August, RBP registered 45 criminal cases from all over the country and arrested 61 people in connection to these cases¹⁰². Thimphu has contributed the highest with 21 cases followed by Sarpang RBP with 8 cases. Rest just has 2 to 3 cases each. The registered cases include voluntary manslaughter, child molestation, illicit drug trafficking, substance abuse, accidental death, un-natural death, homicide, suicide, malicious mischief, public intoxication, assault, battery, burglary, larceny, harassment, missing of person, gambling, criminal nuisance and breach of public order.

Wangduephodrang District Court sentenced a 45-year-old man to nine years in prison for voluntary manslaughter on May 25. The court also asked the convict to pay a compensation of Nu 492,875 to the victim's family within three months from the date of the judgment¹⁰³¹⁰⁴.

In a separate case this court sentenced five men to one year in prison for gambling on May 5. The court charged the five men, aged between 30 to 40 years, with the highest grading of petty misdemeanour¹⁰⁵.

In 2020, 13 cases of substance abuse were reported in Wangduephodrang¹⁰⁶. Of over 90 cases of substance abuse reported to a drop-in centre in the district since its establishment in 2017, nearly 40 percent of the abusers are minors or students.

¹⁰¹ Dorji, P. (2020, May 8). 31 illicit drug trafficking cases since the border closure. *Bhutan Broadcasting Service*. Retrieved from <http://www.bbs.bt/news/?p=132002>

¹⁰² Dem, D. (2020, August 22). 45 criminal cases in 20 Dzongkhags reported since lockdown. *The Bhutanese*. Retrieved from <https://thebhutanese.bt/45-criminal-cases-in-20-dzongkhags-reported-since-lockdown/>

¹⁰³ Lhamo, P. (2020, May 28). Man sentenced for voluntary manslaughter. *Kuensel*. Retrieved from <https://kuenselonline.com/man-sentenced-for-voluntary-manslaughter/>

¹⁰⁴ Dorji, C. (2020, May 27). Wangdue Phodrang District Court sentences a man to 9 years for voluntary manslaughter. *Bhutan Broadcasting Service*. Retrieved from <http://www.bbs.bt/news/?p=132728>

¹⁰⁵ Dorji, C. (2020, May 7) Five men sentenced in Wangdue Phodrang for Gambling. *Bhutan Broadcasting Service*. Retrieved from <http://www.bbs.bt/news/?p=131950>

¹⁰⁶ Lhamo, P. (2020, November 21) Substance abuse common among students. *Kuensel*. Retrieved from <https://kuenselonline.com/substance-abuse-common-among-students/>

Two men were arrested by Lhuentse police for their alleged involvement in collecting hashish and transacting it to other districts. They allegedly collected hashish from two separate places of Kupinyelsa and Minje in Lhuentse¹⁰⁷.

Bumthang Police arrested seven men in connection with two cases of marijuana harvesting and possession of hashish. The first group of suspects, three men, and a class XI student were arrested on July 15 in Thangbi village under Chhoekhor *Gewog*. The suspects were in possession of three pieces of hashish weighing more than eight grams and over 100 grams of cannabis. All of them also tested positive for marijuana use¹⁰⁸.

Instances of smuggling from China starting to appear, with six men convicted this year, for smuggling sex toys¹⁰⁹. They were sentenced 306 months in prison¹¹⁰.

The Thimphu District Court sentenced four men aged 30 to 37 years to 15 months in prison on charges of gambling. They were charged for playing cards in a restaurant. The judgment states that the convicts had also violated the government's social gathering restrictions during the COVID-19 pandemic. They were awarded four months imprisonment for gambling and the highest prison term of petty misdemeanour of 11 months each for violating the government's order¹¹¹.

There were rampant arrests and many jailed, on pretext of violating COVID restrictions. They were charged for disturbing peace – usually

¹⁰⁷ Namgyal, T. (2020, October 7). Two apprehended for illegal transaction of hashish. *Kuensel*. Retrieved from <https://kuenselonline.com/two-apprehended-for-illegal-transaction-of-hashish/>

¹⁰⁸ Tshering, K. (2020, July 202). Seven arrested in Bumthang for marijuana harvesting and possession of hashish. *Bhutan Broadcasting Service*. retrieved from <http://www.bbs.bt/news/?p=134798>

¹⁰⁹ Dem, P. (2020, September 26). Paro court convicts six in smuggling case. *Kuensel*. Retrieved from <https://kuenselonline.com/paro-court-convicts-six-in-smuggling-case/>

¹¹⁰ Wangchuk, N. (2020, September 26). Six men involved in smuggling of sex toys sentenced to three months to six months, Paro. *Bhutan Broadcasting Service*. Retrieved from <http://www.bbs.bt/news/?p=136772>

¹¹¹ Dorji, C. (2020, May 29). Four men sentenced for gambling in Thimphu. *Bhutan Broadcasting Service*. Retrieved from <http://www.bbs.bt/news/?p=132790>

applied to political opponents and those who carry out violent activities. Youths were largely targeted and pursued. Family connection across the border was banned. Crossing border during restrictions was considered as non-bailable offence. Many of these arrests were made by *De Suung* volunteers, not by any legal security agency personnel, and without any legal notice. Only a handful of these arrests, detention and jail sentences were covered in media.

Accusations were minor – such as attending a grocery shop to buy household items. The arrested people were treated as criminal and faced up to five years in jail – some landing in the notorious Chemgang jail. For instance, fetching one cigarette from a shop across the border was slapped with 3.5 years in jail.

Samchi District Court sentenced a 16-year-old child from Gomtu to two years in prison for breach of the COVID restriction¹¹². She had gone to visit relatives across the border into India and had to return home to help children attend schools. Her sister was also jailed for helping her cross the border. Bumthang district court sentenced six men and a woman to 11 months in prison for violating the government’s directive¹¹³ to close shop at 7pm. They were charged for breach of public order and tranquillity, which is a pretty misdemeanour where each of the defendants can pay restitution of Nu 41,250 in lieu of the imprisonment¹¹⁴. Samchi police arrested 30 men for breaching border security in May. All arrests were made in the two *gewogs* of Samchi and Tintaray (renamed as Norbugang). Samchi police were granted power of attorney by the OAG to prosecute these cases and is pushing for

¹¹² Rinzin, Y. (2020, August 6). Illegal entry cases along the border increasing. *Kuensel*. Retrieved from <https://kuenselonline.com/illegal-entry-cases-along-the-border-increasing/>

¹¹³ Kipchu. (2020, May 12). Six men and a woman sentenced to 11 months in prison for Breach of Public Order and Tranquility. *Bhutan Broadcasting Service*. Retrieved from <http://www.bbs.bt/news/?p=132170>

¹¹⁴ Dorji, N. (2020, May 14). Seven sentenced for “breach of public order and tranquility”. *Kuensel*. Retrieved from <https://kuenselonline.com/seven-sentenced-for-breach-of-public-order-and-tranquility/>

maximum sentencing for the culprits¹¹⁵. A man was convicted to four years in prison for visiting Indian border town, in Samchi. The man had ordered 2kg flour from the border town and went to get it the next day. Patrolling team caught him while returning¹¹⁶. In addition, scores of business licenses were seized con charge of defying COVID-19 guidelines and business owners were released on bail.

Sarbhong District Court sentenced two men in relation to a case of illegal entry across the international border on July 6. One was sentenced to four years, six months and his accomplice a taxi driver was handed two years, three months in prison. The man was charged for aiding and abetting entry of a lady from across the border into Shawaley on June 3, and the taxi driver was charged for ferrying unauthorised individual from Shawaley to Gaylegphug town that day¹¹⁷.

On March 30, Gaylegphug police caught two women with tobacco products on their way back from neighbouring Tokura village across the border. On April 2, two women and two men were caught trying to smuggle in cigarettes and tobacco. In a separate incident on March 31, a Bhutanese man was caught returning from Tokura Village. An Indian man trying to enter Gaylegphug was sent back¹¹⁸ and another two were arrested in July¹¹⁹ in the same place.

Thimphu District Court sentenced a man to four years in prison in connection with the clandestine entry and false declaration of travel

¹¹⁵ Dorji, S. (2020, May 11). 30 men arrested in Samtse for breaching border security. *Bhutan Broadcasting Service*. Retrieved from <http://www.bbs.bt/news/?p=132078>

¹¹⁶ Rinzin, Y. (2020, August 6). Illegal entry cases along the border increasing. *Kuensel*. Retrieved from <https://kuenselonline.com/illegal-entry-cases-along-the-border-increasing/>

¹¹⁷ Two sentenced to prison in illegal trespassing case. (2020, July 13). *Kuensel*. Retrieved from <https://kuenselonline.com/two-sentenced-to-prison-in-illegal-trespass-case/>

¹¹⁸ Wangdi, K. (2020, April 3). Six Bhutanese arrested in Sarpang border for smuggling tobacco products. *Bhutan Broadcasting Service*. Retrieved from <http://www.bbs.bt/news/?p=130615>

¹¹⁹ Wangdi, K. (2020, July 18). Sarpang police arrest two for smuggling of tobacco products. *Bhutan Broadcasting Service*. Retrieved from <http://www.bbs.bt/news/?p=134737>

history to immigration officials in Phuentsholing¹²⁰. He had travelled to Nepal, which he did not disclose to the immigration officers¹²¹.

The Phuentshogling Sub-Divisional Court sentenced a 47-year-old man from Pangnatoed (Pana A) under Samphelling *Gewog* in Chhukha to four years, 11 months and 29 days in prison for breaching the COVID-19 protocol along the border. The man had crossed the border and spent a night in the neighbouring Indian village of Pana in August. It was his second time breaching the protocol¹²².

The Bumthang District Court sentenced a man in his late twenties to a concurrent prison term of two years and three months for loitering around Bumthang town after 7 pm¹²³. Bumthang district court sentenced a man from Dagana to a concurrent prison term of 27 months for violating the government's directive to close shop at 7pm¹²⁴.

The government operated secret patrol to force the business owners to shut their shops¹²⁵. Business owners in Thimphu were alleged of deceiving police and *De Suups* on duty and operating businesses after prescribed time. This resulted in arrests of 10 people in November¹²⁶ and

¹²⁰ Wangchuk, R. (2020, July 24). From quarantine to prison. *Kuensel*. Retrieved from <https://kuenselonline.com/from-quarantine-to-prison/>

¹²¹ Dem, D. (2020, July 28). Three men convicted in connection to crossing the border. *The Bhutanese*. Retrieved from <https://thebhutanese.bt/three-men-convicted-in-connection-to-crossing-the-border/>

¹²² Penjor, S. (2020, October 30). Man sentenced to nearly five years for breaching COVID-19 protocol, Phuentshogling. *Bhutan Broadcasting Service*. Retrieved from <http://www.bbs.bt/news/?p=138218>

¹²³ Kipchu. (2020, June 25). Man sentenced to over two years in prison for breach of public order and tranquility in Bumthang. *Bhutan Broadcasting Service*. Retrieved from <http://www.bbs.bt/news/?p=133890>

¹²⁴ Dorji, N. (2020, June 30). Men sentenced for “breach of public order and tranquility”. *Kuensel*. Retrieved from <https://kuenselonline.com/men-sentenced-for-breach-of-public-order-and-tranquillity/>

¹²⁵ Lhaden, Y. (2020, December 10) MoEA officials conduct night patrolling. *Kuensel*. Retrieved from <https://kuenselonline.com/moea-officials-conduct-night-patrolling/>

¹²⁶ Lhaden, Y. (2020, November 24). Police arrest 10 business operators in five days. *Kuensel*. Retrieved from <https://kuenselonline.com/police-arrest-10-business-operators-in-five-days/>

another 19¹²⁷ and four¹²⁸ in December. Business owners were banned from all forms of travel¹²⁹. Several business owners were arrested for opening their business late¹³⁰¹³¹¹³².

CCTVs have been installed in main entry points along the border with India and patrolling by *De Suups* has increased in recent months¹³³. Along with *De Suung* volunteers, substantial number of security personnel were deployed along the southern border on disguise to monitor border movement.

Bhutan banned the sale of tobacco and related products some 16 years ago. It received international attention – being the only country to do so. Has the mission accomplished? Certainly not. Today, smoking in public may be viewed negatively but a thriving black market, a stark reality. Tobacco found the route into Bhutan along with other illicit drugs. As

¹²⁷ Lhaden, Y. (2020, December 9). Police charge 19 business operators for violating govt. directive. *Kuensel*. Retrieved from <https://kuenselonline.com/police-charge-19-business-operators-for-violating-govt-directive/>

¹²⁸ Tshering, P. (2020, December 7). Police arrest four more businesses for operating after 9 pm, Thimphu. *Bhutan Broadcasting Service*. Retrieved from <http://www.bbs.bt/news/?p=140266>

¹²⁹ Nima. (2020, November 23). Gelephu police investigate quarantine protocol breach. *Kuensel*. Retrieved from <https://kuenselonline.com/gelephu-police-investigate-quarantine-protocol-breach/>

¹³⁰ Dorji, S., Choden, K. (2020, November 26). Police arrest three more business owners for operating after 9 pm. *Bhutan Broadcasting Service*. Retrieved from <http://www.bbs.bt/news/?p=139684>

¹³¹ Lhadron, K. (2020, November 20). Three bar owners caught operating after 9 pm, Thimphu. *Bhutan Broadcasting Service*. Retrieved from <http://www.bbs.bt/news/?p=139301>

¹³² Dorji, S., Choden, K. (2020, November 23). Seven more bar/shop owners arrested in the last three days for operating after 9 pm. *Bhutan Broadcasting Service*. Retrieved from <http://www.bbs.bt/news/?p=139434>

¹³³ Dem, D. (2020, April 25). Patrolling and CCTV to curb smugglers across the border. *The Bhutanese*. Retrieved from <https://thebhutanese.bt/patrolling-and-cctv-to-curb-smugglers-across-the-border/>

part of addressing¹³⁴ the growing¹³⁵¹³⁶ black market of the tobacco products¹³⁷, the government introduced duty-free shops¹³⁸ early in the year. Tobacco use among youths remained high¹³⁹, despite ban¹⁴⁰. Though oppositions attacked this being against the law¹⁴¹, the government remained unabated in reversing its decision. Law to retract Tobacco Control Act 2010 has not been adopted yet. Residents in Thimphu were allowed to purchase tobacco products from the various identified outlets¹⁴². Districts oppose the decision¹⁴³¹⁴⁴, but they are forced to accept¹⁴⁵.

¹³⁴ Tsendup, Y. (2020, July 31). A solution to end the illegal tobacco trade. *Kuensel*. Retrieved from <https://kuenselonline.com/a-solution-to-end-the-illegal-tobacco-trade/>

¹³⁵ 6 arrested for tobacco smuggling. (2020, April4). *Kuensel*. Retrieved from <https://kuenselonline.com/6-arrested-for-tobacco-smuggling/>

¹³⁶ Wangchuk, K. (2020, April 6). Four of 12 arrested for smuggling tobacco quarantined. *Kuensel*. Retrieved from <https://kuenselonline.com/four-of-12-arrested-for-smuggling-tobacco-quarantined/>

¹³⁷ Rai, R. (2020, October 12). Tobacco worth more than Nu 0.5M busted from Toorsa area. *Kuensel*. Retrieved from <https://kuenselonline.com/tobacco-worth-more-than-nu-0-5m-busted-from-toorsa-area/>

¹³⁸ Tshendup, Y. (2020, July 31). A solution to end the illegal tobacco trade. *Kuensel*. Retrieved from <https://kuenselonline.com/a-solution-to-end-the-illegal-tobacco-trade/>

¹³⁹ Drukpa, U. (2020, October 17). Tobacco use on the rise among the Youth finds STEPS Survey. *The Bhutanese*. Retrieved from <https://thebhutanese.bt/tobacco-use-on-the-rise-among-the-youth-finds-steps-survey/>

¹⁴⁰ Tshendup, Y. (2020, June 1). Tobacco use among youth remains high. *Kuensel*. Retrieved from <https://kuenselonline.com/tobacco-use-among-youth-remains-high/>

¹⁴¹ Namgay, T. (2020, December 10). Tobacco smuggling reduced due to its duty-free outlet: Prime Minister. *Kuensel*. Retrieved from <https://kuenselonline.com/tobacco-smuggling-reduced-due-to-its-duty-free-outlet-prime-minister/>

¹⁴² Lhadron, Y. (2020, September 14). Identified outlets in zones to sell tobacco products. *Kuensel*. Retrieved from <https://kuenselonline.com/identified-outlets-in-zones-to-sell-tobacco-products/>

¹⁴³ Tshering, S. (2020, September 4). Local leaders and Dzongkhag Rabdhey want the district administration to stop distributing tobacco products, Lhuentse. *Bhutan Broadcasting Service*. Retrieved from <http://www.bbs.bt/news/?p=136120>

¹⁴⁴ Lhadron, Y. (2020, September4). Gups in Dagana refuse to distribute tobacco. *Kuensel*. Retrieved from <https://kuenselonline.com/gups-in-dagana-refuse-to-distribute-tobacco/>

¹⁴⁵ Namgyal, T. (2020, September 11). Lhuentse proposes to forgo tobacco product distribution. *Kuensel*. Retrieved from <https://kuenselonline.com/lhuentse-proposes-to-forgo-tobacco-product-distribution/>

Over 3000 people queued¹⁴⁶¹⁴⁷ to get the first dose of tobacco products in Thimphu, the first day it come into sale formally¹⁴⁸.

Even though the tobacco is back in market, through limited government-prescribed shops, the black market continues to thrive. It is very likely that it will remain active. Because private individuals and groceries are not authorised to trade any form of tobacco products.

Gomtu Police arrested three men and two women in connection with border security breach and selling of drugs and tobacco products in July in Samchi. One woman was arrested for selling cigarettes and chewing tobacco, while the other woman was arrested for selling spasmoproxyvon, popularly known as SP capsule along with her husband who brought in the capsules¹⁴⁹.

Gaylegphug Police arrested two men in their twenties in Namkhaling village for possessing tobacco products on July 12. Police intercepted the suspects with 1,096 packets of tobacco, 154 packets of cigarettes and 39 packets of *bidi* (non-brand cigarettes made with plant leaves filled with tobacco flakes)¹⁵⁰.

Lalai (renamed as Umling) Sub-Divisional Court in Sarbhang sentenced four men to more than 10 years in prison on May 5 for drug smuggling and two women for six years in prison on May 6 for smuggling tobacco products. Six of them were arrested at the border area by patrolling teams at different locations. Four men were arrested on March 23 at

¹⁴⁶ Dendup, T. (2020, September 16). Crowding at the duty-free limited's tobacco outlet at Chubachhu continues. *Bhutan Broadcasting Service*. Retrieved from <http://www.bbs.bt/news/?p=136433>

¹⁴⁷ Dendup, T. (2020, September 11). Crowding at the duty-free tobacco outlet. *Bhutan Broadcasting Service*. Retrieved from <http://www.bbs.bt/news/?p=136315>

¹⁴⁸ Dema, C. (2020, August 15). 3,000 call for tobacco products on the first day. *Kuensel*. Retrieved from <https://kuenselonline.com/3000-call-for-tobacco-products-on-the-first-day/>

¹⁴⁹ Dorji, S. (2020, July 202). Gomtu Police arrests five for sale of drugs and tobacco products. *Bhutan Broadcasting Service*. Retrieved from <http://www.bbs.bt/news/?p=134774>

¹⁵⁰ Wangdi, K. (2020, July 14). Two men arrested in Gelegphu for smuggling tobacco products. *Bhutan Broadcasting Service*. Retrieved from <http://www.bbs.bt/news/?p=134582>

Tashiling near the airport with 112 files of illicit drugs. They were sentenced to prison for 10 years and four months. Similarly, the two women were sentenced to non-compoundable prison terms of 6 years 5 months and 28 days for smuggling tobacco products. One woman was found in possession of 600 pieces of cigarettes and 120 grams of chewing tobacco and the other one was arrested with 139 pieces of cigarettes and 150 grams of chewing tobacco¹⁵¹.

The Lalai Sub-Divisional Court in Sarpang convicted two men to prison on July 23. 28-year-old Tashi Rabten was convicted to 3 years 5 months and 28 days in prison while 34-year-old Deepen Budathoki Magar was convicted to 1 year 8 months and 29 days in prison for aiding Rabten. They were charged of attempted buying of tobacco products from an Indian¹⁵².

De Suups in Phuentsholing detained five people including a teenage boy on October 9 for allegedly bringing tobacco products worth more than Nu 500,000. The tobacco products were transported through Amochhu river using tyre tubes by people from across the border¹⁵³.

A joint team of police, customs, officials Allay Land Customs Station (LCS), officials from the Association of Bhutanese Industries, and *De Suups* seized tobacco products worth Nu 2.7 million on November 8 in Phuentsholing¹⁵⁴. The consignment contained 30 sacks of chewing tobacco and 12 cartons of cigarettes and *bidis* heading to Thimphu¹⁵⁵.

¹⁵¹ Wangdi, K. (2020, May 9) Six people sentenced to 6 to 10 years in prison for smuggling in Geleghpu. *Bhutan Broadcasting Service*. Retrieved from <http://www.bbs.bt/news/?p=132042>

¹⁵² Dem, D. (2020, July 28). Three men convicted in connection to crossing the border. *The Bhutanese*. Retrieved from <https://thebhutanese.bt/three-men-convicted-in-connection-to-crossing-the-border/>

¹⁵³ Penjor, S. (2020, October 10). Five detained in connection with tobacco smuggling, Phuentshogling. *Bhutan Broadcasting Service*. Retrieved from <http://www.bbs.bt/news/?p=137320>

¹⁵⁴ Penjor, S. (2020, November 9). Nearly Nu 3 M worth of tobacco products seized from LCS at Ahlay in Pasakha. *Bhutan Broadcasting Service*. Retrieved from <http://www.bbs.bt/news/?p=138679>

¹⁵⁵ Rai, R. (2020, November 10). 47 arrested trying to smuggle controlled substances so far. *Kuensel*. Retrieved from <https://kuenselonline.com/47-arrested-trying-to-smuggle-controlled-substances-so-far/>

Police in Samdrup Jongkhar arrested 12 people in April first week trying to enter Bhutan after purchasing tobacco products from across the border. On April 2, two Bhutanese women were arrested for having in their possession 25 packets of cigarettes. And on April 3 a truck driver carrying grocery items for a shop in Samdrup Jongkhar town was arrested for bringing in two packets of *bidi*, 40 packets of chewing tobacco and a packet of cigarette. Police also arrested his three friends for asking to bring the tobacco products¹⁵⁶.

The Bumthang District Court sentenced a 43-year-old woman from Dagana to four years and two months in prison for smuggling cigarettes in December 2019 along with her two accomplices. The accomplices were a 33-year-old woman, a Paan Shop owner at Chamkhar town in Bumthang and a 29-year-old man from Pemagatshel, a corporate employee in Wangduephodrang. The woman was charged for smuggling 579 packets of cigarettes. The Paan shop retailer was sentenced to two years and two months in prison along with Nu 380,100 in fines, six times the amount she paid for the consignment¹⁵⁷.

Catering to the needs of people who are trying to quit smoking or chewing tobacco, Bhutan Narcotics Control Authority (BNCA) launched Nicotine Replacement Therapy in November¹⁵⁸. Although 22.2% of Bhutanese consume tobacco, Global Youth Tobacco Survey, Bhutan 2019 shows that more than 8 in 10 tobacco users wanted to stop the use of tobacco¹⁵⁹.

¹⁵⁶ Wangchuk, K. (2020, April 6). Police arrests 12 people in 2 days for smuggling and trying to cross border. *Bhutan Broadcasting Service*. Retrieved from <http://www.bbs.bt/news/?p=130685>

¹⁵⁷ Three sentenced for smuggling tobacco. (2020, May 1). *Bhutan Broadcasting Service*. Retrieved from <http://www.bbs.bt/news/?p=131732>

¹⁵⁸ Chenzom, S. (2020, November 11). BNCA launches Nicotine Replacement Therapy to help people quit using tobacco. *Bhutan Broadcasting Service*. Retrieved from <http://www.bbs.bt/news/?p=138794>

¹⁵⁹ Global Youth Tobacco Survey, Bhutan 2019. Regional Office for South East Asia, World Health Organisation. Retrieved from <https://www.who.int/southeastasia/publications-detail/9789290227724>

Within few months of selling tobacco, government has earned more than Nu144 millions on revenue¹⁶⁰.

Samchi police arrested a 44-year-old man from Rinchhenphu in Yoeseltse Gewog on suspicion of illegally crossing the border and re-entering. The police also found about 15 pieces of tobacco leaves, commonly known as *surti patta* from his home¹⁶¹.

A 40-year-old man from Bumthang was arrested by Jaigaon police for alleged possession of two improvised handguns, two bullets and few handsets in February. The man runs business in Gaylegphug¹⁶².

A couple aged 49 and 60 from Tsheldhang village under Nangkor Gewog in Zhemgang were arrested in February on alleged murder of an 80-year-old mother of the 49-year-old wife¹⁶³.

Samdrup Jongkhar District Court sentenced two men to 25 years each in prison for the murder of a 36-year-old man in Gomdar Gewog in May 2019. The convicts strangled the deceased to death after the main accused knew of his wife having an affair with the deceased¹⁶⁴.

Wangduephodrang police arrested a 45-year-old man from Nyishog Gewog for voluntary manslaughter. According to police, the suspect

¹⁶⁰ Dolkar, D. (2020, December 22). Govt. earns Nu 144.108mn through tobacco sale. *Business Bhutan*. Retrieved from <http://www.businessbhutan.bt/2020/12/22/govt-earns-nu-144-108mn-through-tobacco-sale/>

¹⁶¹ Dorji, S. (2020, December 20). Man arrested in Samtse for allegedly crossing border. *Bhutan Broadcasting Service*. Retrieved from <http://www.bbs.bt/news/?p=141575>

¹⁶² Penjor, S. (2020, February 29). 40-year-old man under Jaigaon police custody for alleged illegal possession of arms. *Bhutan Broadcasting Service*. Retrieved from <http://www.bbs.bt/news/?p=129016>

¹⁶³ Samdrup, P. (2020, February 11). A couple under custody for alleged murder of an 80-year-old mother of the wife, Zhemgang. *Bhutan Broadcasting Service*. Retrieved from <http://www.bbs.bt/news/?p=128150>

¹⁶⁴ Wangchuk, K. (2020, February 5). Two men sentenced to 25 years in prison for murder, Samdrup Jongkhar. *Bhutan Broadcasting Service*. Retrieved from <http://www.bbs.bt/news/?p=127876>

stabbed 50-year-old man from the same gewog who later succumbed to the injury and excessive bleeding¹⁶⁵.

A policeman was held in the quarter guard, a confinement cell for military personnel, in Samdrup Jongkhar police station for allegedly stabbing a 22-year-old man. The incident happened on the night of April 27, near the Food Corporation of Bhutan's office in Samdrup Jongkhar town¹⁶⁶.

Two police personnel were taken into custody in Paro after a 23-year-old policeman from Phuentsholing succumbed to stab injuries on September 22. The incident occurred in Baangdey town at the Paro police outpost¹⁶⁷.

The Wangduephodrang District Court sentenced a 25-year-old man from Zhemgang to five years in prison for extortion, battery and malicious mischief. The convict had snatched a wallet and a mobile phone from a man and battered another man who came to intervene¹⁶⁸.

Reports of persons missing is still a mystery. Police are yet to link if these incidents have anything to do with human trafficking, though there were no formal cases of human trafficking recorded in 2020. Police blame the parents being negligent as the cause of people going missing¹⁶⁹.

¹⁶⁵ Dorji, C. (2020, March 24). A 45-year-old man under custody for voluntary manslaughter, Wangdue. *Bhutan Broadcasting Service*. Retrieved from <http://www.bbs.bt/news/?p=130091>

¹⁶⁶ Wangchuk, K. (2020, May 1). Policeman detained for allegedly stabbing a man in Samdrup Jongkhar. *Bhutan Broadcasting Service*. Retrieved from <http://www.bbs.bt/news/?p=131659>

¹⁶⁷ Wangchuk, N. (2020, September 24). A policeman succumbs to stab injuries. *Bhutan Broadcasting Service*. Retrieved from <http://www.bbs.bt/news/?p=136745>

¹⁶⁸ Dorji, C. (2020, May 20). A 25-year-old man sentenced to five years for extortion, battery and malicious mischief, Wangdue. *Bhutan Broadcasting Service*. Retrieved from <http://www.bbs.bt/news/?p=132536>

¹⁶⁹ Dema, C. (2020, March 20). Parents' negligence main cause of minors gone missing, say Police. *Business Bhutan*. Retrieved from <http://www.businessbhutan.bt/2020/03/20/parents-negligence-main-cause-of-minors-gone-missing-say-police/>

Over 570 adults and children were reported to be missing between 2017 and 2019 from which 275 persons are still missing. The Social and Cultural Affairs Committee of the parliament revealed this in a Review Report on Legislation and Strategies for addressing human trafficking at the National Council¹⁷⁰. The department of law and order, under home ministry in collaboration with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime was preparing a national prevention strategy to intervene in such offence. The strategy is expected to outline the roles and responsibility of the different stakeholders, who are responsible for countering human trafficking issues¹⁷¹.

Bhutan-China relation is a sensitive political equation. Relations with China has not improved, that was badly damaged by Doklam confrontation. The skirmishes between the troops of China and India at Lhadak¹⁷² on June 16, meant the heightened security situation at Indo-Bhutan border and tri-junction border point in western Bhutan. In 2017 China and India staged 73 days of standoff at Doklam plateau, at the tri-junction of Bhutan, India and China.

The Indian media again reported in October that satellite images appear to show China building village inside Bhutanese territory¹⁷³ near Doklam. Bhutan's ambassador to India, Major General Vetsop Namgyel, said "there is no Chinese village inside Bhutan¹⁷⁴."

¹⁷⁰ Dem, K., Dorji, P. (2020, February 19). Addressing human trafficking, National Council. *Bhutan Broadcasting Service*. Retrieved from <http://www.bbs.bt/news/?p=128602>

¹⁷¹ Wangchuk, N. (2020, February 14). Tackling human trafficking issues. *Bhutan Broadcasting Service*. Retrieved from <http://www.bbs.bt/news/?p=128339>

¹⁷² India-China clash: 20 Indian troops killed in Ladakh fighting. (2020, June 16). *British Broadcasting Corporation*. Retrieved from <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-53061476>

¹⁷³ Griffins, J., Suri, M. (2020, November 25). Satellite images appear to show China developing area along disputed border with India and Bhutan. *Cable News Network*. Retrieved from <https://edition.cnn.com/2020/11/24/asia/china-india-bhutan-doklam-intl-hnk/index.html>

¹⁷⁴ China encroaches Bhutan border again: Indian media (2020, November 21). *Bhutan News Network*. Retrieved from <http://www.bhutannewsnetwork.com/2020/11/china-encroaches-bhutan-border-again-indian-media/>

In June 2020, China claimed Bhutanese land in the Sakteng Wildlife Sanctuary situated in eastern district, during the Global Environment Facility (GEF) Council meeting. The territory occupied by the Sakteng sanctuary was never mentioned 'disputed' during several rounds of Sino-Bhutan border talks. Bhutan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs clarified that Bhutan and China are yet to settle the boundary¹⁷⁵ but did elaborate if China had ever raised this dispute through formal diplomatic channels.

On September 2, Bhutanese army discovered the Chinese transgression at Bhutanese territory near Trashiyangtse district.

Bhutan by the virtue of Indo-Bhutan Friendship Treaty, 2007, is strategically inclined to India for defence and thus, is under threat from China. The geopolitics competition between two neighbors is going to increase and Bhutan will continue to face challenging national security situations in the foreseeable future.

Forceful displacement of border inhabitants

Several families living along the border were forced to evacuate and move to hilly areas northwards in June. Villagers from at least 48 villages are in risk of being moved off their ancestral land, under the pretence of COVID¹⁷⁶. These families were restricted to revisit their old place citing pandemic. They were later verbally notified that it was the order from the King to vacate their villages permanently, by end of 2020. *De Suung* volunteers were mobilised to enforce the orders. Villagers have reported BW that king had personally visited these vacated places and ordered construction of military infrastructures.

Security was given as reasons for vacating villages, even though these villages sustained peaceful settlements for centuries. The families were given chance to choose a public land upward in the north. It has not been clear if these new lands would ultimately be registered in their names.

¹⁷⁵ Adhikari, I. (2020, July 11). Bhutan Confronts China. *Bhutan Watch*. Retrieved from <http://www.bhutanwatch.org/bhutan-confronts-china/>

¹⁷⁶ Wangdi, K. (2020, October 1). TAG team identifies 48 villages as a high-risk area, Sarpang. *Bhutan Broadcasting Service*. Retrieved from <http://www.bbs.bt/news/?p=136999>

Since all flat lands vacated after 1990-eviction were distributed to northern migrants in 1996-7, these families were forced to seek settlement in hilly region where agricultural activities are impossible. We further fear, these farmers might be forced to leave country, failing to sustain their livelihood in the new but unproductive hilly lands.



One of the houses ordered to be vacated

Some of the villages to be vacated – completely or partially include:

- Jiti (renamed as Chhunchhungsa) in Chargharey (renamed Sang-ngag-Chhoeling) *Gewog* in Samchi district.
- Part of Nainital *Gewog* in Samtse district
- Duarpani (renamed Sa-tshamchhu) in Samchi *Gewog* in Samchi district.

- Bhimtar (renamed Yangphiltang) and Maghey (renamed Dawaling) villages in Chengmari (renamed Norbugang) *Gewog* in Samchi district.
- Golanti (renamed Jangsagom) in Daifam (renamed Langchenphu) *Gewog* in Samdrup Jongkhar district.
- Kharbandi in Ghumauney *Gewog* in Chukha District
- Samrang village in Samrang *Gewog* in Samdrup Jongkhar District.

List of political prisoners

S/N	Name	Date of Arrest	Quantum	Location	Family
1	Tshewang Rinzin	July 31 1998	Life imprisonment	Chemgang	
2	Yogi Prasad Subba	February 9 2008		Chemgang	Singye, Sarbhang
3	Rinzin Wangdi	June 25 1999	32 years 6 months	Chemgang	
4	Kharka Bahadur Mongar	February 9 2008		Chemgang	Singye, Sarbhang
5	Dorji Nidup	8/4/98	20 years 3 months		
6	Ugyen Dorji	8/4/98	20 years 9 months	Chemgang	
7	Ram Lal Rawat			Rabuna	Dagana
8	Bishnu Rai			Rabuna	Dagana
10	Ram Bahadur Rai	October 31 1995	24 years	Chemgang	USA
11	Ganga Ram Dhakal	November 16, 1992	Life imprisonment	Chemgang	Canada
12	Bhakta Bahadur Rai	September 23 1993	36 years	Chemgang	Beldangi
14	Modhukar Mongar	February 11 1994	Life+21 years	Chemgang	USA
19	Moni Kumar Pradhan	November 29, 1999	43 years	Chemgang	USA
20	Prakash Mongar	March 21, 1999	36 years	Chemgang	Australia

21	Kumar Gautam	February 26, 2008	Life Imprisonment	Chemgang	(Canada)
22	Hasta Bahadur Rai	February 26, 2008	Life Imprisonment	Chemgang	USA
23	Suk Man Mongar	February 26, 2008	Life Imprisonment	Chemgang	Bel-III, A/4-40
24	Birkha Bahadur Chettri	February 26, 2008	Life Imprisonment	Chemgang	Australia
25	Govinda Niroula	February 26, 2008	Life Imprisonment	Chemgang	USA
26	Nandalal Basnet	February 26, 2008	Life Imprisonment	Chemgang	USA
27	Om Nath Adhikari	February 26, 2008	Life Imprisonment	Chemgang	Bel-II C/3-104
28	Khagendra Khanal	February 26, 2008	Life Imprisonment	Chemgang	Canada
29	Aita Raj Rai	February 26, 2008	Life Imprisonment	Chemgang	USA
30	San Man Gurung	February 26, 2008	Life Imprisonment	Chemgang	Australia
31	Dambar Pulami	November 23, 2001	43 years	Chemgang	USA
32	Prem Rai			Rabuna	Chirang
33	Chatur Man Tamang	February 26, 2008	Life imprisonment	Chemgang	USA
34	Chandra Raj Rai	July 24, 2008	Life imprisonment	Chemgang	USA
35	Bhim Bhadur Rai	May 3, 2010	4 Life imprisonments	Chemgang	USA
37	Bala Ram Chamling	February 10 2008	15 years	Not at Chemgang	Singye, Sarbhang
38	Pratab Singh Bhattarai	February 14 2008	18 years	Chemgang	Singye, Sarbhang
39	Nayendra Prasad Kharel	February 4 2008	15 years	Chemgang	Singye, Sarbhang

40	Ghana Shyam Gurung	February 2 2008	15 years	Chemgang	Singye, Sarbhang
41	Ragu Prasad Subba (Yogi)	February 9 2008	18 years	Chemgang	Singye, Sarbhang
42	Madhulal Budathoki			Rabuna	Chirang
43	Chandra Man Subba	February 9 2008	18 years	Chemgang	Singye, Sarbhang
44	Ram Bahadur Khulal	February 9 2008	15 years	Chemgang	Singye, Sarbhang
45	M B Bhujel			Rabuna	Sarbhang
46	Harka Bahadur Gurung	June 10, 1999	32 years	Chemgang	USA
47	Ugyen Pelden	2009	14 years	Mongar	
48	Tendzin Gawa Zangpo	2009	Life imprisonment	S/jongkhar	
49	Lok Bahadur Ghaley			Rabuna	Chukha
50	Kumar Rai			Rabuna	Samchi
51	Sha Bahadur Gurung			Rabuna	Chirang
52	Kinley Penjor			Rabuna	Thimphu
53	Kinley Gyeltshen			Rabuna	Wangdi
54	Dechen Wangmo			Paro	Phuentsholing
55	Lok Nath Acharya	October 16, 2014		Rabuna	USA



9789937056144