

Date: 06.24.2021

To,

Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga,  
Government of Japan  
2-3-1 Nagatachō; Chiyoda-ku; 100-8968 Tokyo, Japan.

Re: Concern regarding conferring of the 'Order of the Rising Sun, Gold and Silver Star Award' on Mr. Dago Tshering, Former Home Minister of Bhutan

Dear Prime Minister,

The Bhutanese refugees living in the camps in Nepal and those resettled abroad would like to wish you personal peace and good health.

We have come to learn that the Japanese government has decided to confer the 'Order of the Rising Sun, Gold and Silver Star Award' to the former Home Minister of Bhutan (1991- 1998) Mr. Dago Tshering on 29th April 2021.

While we acknowledge the desire of your government to strengthen mutual relationship between Bhutan and Japan through the conferral of this award, we regret to state that this very gesture of goodness has unlocked deep seated injury and trauma that many of us Bhutanese have personally undergone during the Home Minister's tenure.

Therefore, and most respectfully, we the undersigned signatories desire to express our concern and reservation over the choice of the recipient candidate. We call upon your government to use wise counsel to review the decision and rescind the said award from Mr. Dago Tshering.

As the Home Minister, Mr. Dago Tshering exercised enormous power and authority, next only to the King. He misused his powers to silence and repress people often with no restraint or control. His first authoritarian streak came on August 17, 1990, when he issued one of the most appalling directives from his office revoking the citizenship of thousands of southern Bhutanese citizens and their families who fled the country amidst widespread State persecution. His directive ordered that a 'Bhutanese national leaving the country to assist and help the 'anti-nationals' shall no longer be considered as a Bhutanese citizen. It must also be made very clear that such people's family members living under the same household will also be held fully responsible and forfeit their citizenship'.

The directive was the basis of expulsion of over 130,000 innocent Bhutanese citizens including the southern Bhutanese and the Sharchhops of eastern Bhutan. In the aftermath of this directive, the Home Minister allowed the security forces a free hand in harassing innocent men, women and children with impunity. This converged in the arrest and beatings of civilians, killings, arbitrary detention, torture, intimidation, custodial deaths and rape. Houses were set on fire, crops were destroyed, citizenship was revoked and private properties were confiscated.

The arrest of several Buddhist monks in eastern Bhutan and the torturing to death of scores of innocent activists in school turned chamber of torture in southern Bhutan are but a few of the vindictive practices that testify the severity of State atrocities, which peaked from 1990-1993 during the Home Minister's tenure. Today, hundreds of Bhutanese torture and rape survivors inside Bhutan and in the diaspora continue to suffer from different levels of post-traumatic stress disorder. The local general practitioners and trauma specialists treating these Bhutanese PTSD patients around the globe can testify to this fact.

Under the Home Minister's watch, the Nepali speaking southern Bhutanese did not have the right to be educated in their own language. He derided the Nepali language by removing it from the schools, radio and the National Assembly. Hindu priests were asked to discard their religious practices and costumes. Free movement of people was restricted and free assembly was prohibited. People were fined or arrested for not wearing the national dress. Genuine citizens could not get counted under the Bhutanese census. The imposition of such restrictive policies and harsh measures further exacerbated sufferings and hardship among the people.

Further, political and human rights activists were arrested, imprisoned, tortured, killed and evicted. Many of them have been forced to serve jail terms without fair trial or legal access to remedial rights. They suffered cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment. These incidents of human rights violations have been well documented by several international organizations, many of whom have characterized such acts as a deliberate act of ethnic cleansing.

The Bhutanese people have sustained very difficult lived experiences defined by violence, political repression, discrimination, ethnic profiling, hostility, criminalization, stigmatization, persecution and eviction on grounds of their political beliefs, ethnicity or cultural belonging. The life of ordinary Bhutanese citizens during the Home Minister's tenure intersected between psychological burdens of social discrimination and persecution and the need for individual security and identity. These created deep psychological pressures of living inside Bhutan, during his time.

The Home Minister was personally involved in contravening the provisions of various international human rights treaties including but not limited to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide, to mention a few.

The Home Minister also disavowed public accountability by denying criticisms of atrocities and administrative excesses. He downplayed, misled or obstructed information by hiding facts or purposely stirring up stories in the media. He snubbed international journalists or blocked them if they desired to meet and investigate people affected by State violence. Thus, he forced them to suffer their agonies in darkness behind closed curtains.

Japan's position stands tall and revered in the international community. Diplomatic expediency

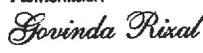
apart, we do not see much value or significance in the choice of the recipient whose name has already been tainted both at home and abroad. Rather, the conferring of this award to Mr. Dago Tshering may inflict a serious damage to Japan's international image. The Home Minister has a dubious reputation as the most controversial minister in Bhutan known for his infamous military crackdown on the peaceful activists of the pro-democracy and human rights movement in 1990, which forced a sixth of Bhutan's population to flee the country and take sanctuary elsewhere. One cannot possibly rule out a future investigation by an international tribunal for the excesses he has perpetrated during his term.

Amnesty International revoked the Ambassador of Conscience award conferred on Aung San Suu Kyi in June 2012 on grounds of her apparent indifference and silence over the treatment of Rohingya people in Rakhine State, Myanmar. Yet, it pains to know that an architect of another human crisis is conferred with such a prestigious honor. We express our deepest concern over this decision. It also defies the meaning and purpose for which the Japanese Government has instituted this award.

As the Japanese government proceeds to finally bestow the award to Mr. Dago Tshering, a perpetrator of human rights abuses, we sincerely urge your government to extricate itself from this commitment and withdraw the award from Mr. Dago Tshering.

We thank Your Excellency in advance for your consideration and cooperation.

Most Sincerely,

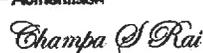
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6/24/2021 7:29:11 AM ADT  
Dr. Govinda Rizal  
Campaign Coordinator-Nepal

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6/24/2021 12:08:40 PM ADT  
Aiti Rai  
Campaign Coordinator-Youth-USA

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6/24/2021 7:01:17 AM ADT  
Yam Khadka  
Campaign Coordinator-UK

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6/24/2021 9:04:18 AM ADT  
Chuda Bajgai  
Campaign Coordinator-Canada

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Mohan Gautam  
Campaign Coordinator-Australia

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Champa Singh Rai  
Campaign Coordinator-Nepal

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6/24/2021 12:22:05 PM ADT  
Anuja Sharma  
Campaign Coordinator-Youth-USA

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6/24/2021 7:12:10 AM ADT  
Purna Dahal  
Campaign Coordinator-Denmark

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DB Gurung  
Campaign Coordinator-Canada

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Monu Chandra Rai  
Youth Coordinator-Australia

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*Bhuwan Pyakurel*  
 6/24/2021 9:42:35 AM ADT  
**Bhuwan Pyakurel**  
 Campaign Coordinator-USA

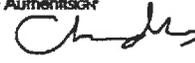
Authentisign  
*Ramesh Gautam*  
 6/24/2021 6:20:13 AM ADT  
**Ramesh Gautam**  
 Campaign Coordinator-Norway

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*Robin Gurung*  
 6/24/2021 9:44:03 AM ADT  
**Robin Gurung**  
 Campaign Coordinator-USA

Authentisign  
  
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**Durga Giri**  
 Campaign Advisor

Authentisign  
*Ratna P Subba*  
 6/24/2021 8:44:54 AM ADT  
**Ratna P Subba**  
 Campaign Advisor

Authentisign  
*Sudarshan Adhikari*  
 6/23/2021 11:19:31 PM ADT  
**Sudarshan Adhikari**  
 Campaign Coordinator-New Zealand

Authentisign  
  
 6/24/2021 10:08:49 AM ADT  
**Chandra Chhetri**  
 Campaign Coordinator-Norway

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 6/24/2021 9:53:51 AM ADT  
**Bhakta Ghimire**  
 Campaign Advisor-USA

Authentisign  
*Jogen Gazmire*  
 6/23/2021 10:48:43 PM ADT  
**Jogen Gazmire**  
 Campaign Advisor

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*Narayan P Sharma*  
 6/24/2021 7:59:46 AM ADT  
**Narayan Phuyal Sharma**  
 Campaign Advisor

*List of Bhutanese Community Organizations supporting Japan Campaign 2021*

<b>Name</b>	<b>Designation</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Country</b>
Om Prakash Karki	Chairman	Bhutanese Community Association of Southern Tasmania	Australia
Narayan Mishra	President	Cairns Bhutanese Community Inc	Australia
Mohan Gautam	Chairperson	Bhutanese Martyrs Memorial & Torture Survivors Society Inc.	Australia

*...Continued List of Bhutanese Community Organizations supporting Japan Campaign 2021*

Netra Prasad Dulal	Cofounder	2Star Studio	Australia
Dhan Kumar Rai	Chairperson	Adelaide Dragon Football Club Inc.	Australia
Deepak Sunar	President	Australian Biswakarma Samaj (Inc).	Australia
Himal Rai	Chairperson	DISKA-Australia	Australia
Padam Kafley	President	Association of Bhutanese in Australia-Sydney	Australia
Ichha Poudel	Coordinator	Balesi Australia	Australia
Kedar Dulal	Chairman	Bhutanese Community Melbourne Inc.	Australia
Kedar Sapkota	President	Bhutanese Association in Albury Inc.	Australia
Hema Adhikari	V-President	BACSGAW Inc.	Australia
Amrita Nepal	Coordinator	Bhutanese Refugee Women Forum (BRWF)	Bhutanese Refugee Camp Sanischare 10, Nepal
Purusotam Dhungel	Social Worker	Camp Management Committee	Bhutanese Refugee Camp Sanischare 10, Nepal
Champa Singh Rai	Camp Secretary	Camp Management Committee	Bhutanese Refugee Camp Sanischare 10, Nepal
Bal Krishna Ghimire	President	Bhutanese Society of New Zealand	New Zealand
Bhoj R Subba	Chairman	Bhutanese Society of Nelson NZ	New Zealand
Bedhav Mishra	Chairman	Bhutanese Society of Christ Church	New Zealand

*...Continued List of Bhutanese Community Organizations supporting Japan Campaign 2021*

Prem Giri	Chairman	Bhutanese Welfare Association in UK	United Kingdom
Som Subba	Chairperson	Sheffield Bhutanese Community UK	United Kingdom
Dhaka Tiwari	Secretary	Bhutanese Nepali Community of Regina Inc.	Canada
Narayan Dahal	President	Bhutanese Canadian Association (BCA)-Waterloo Region	Canada
Sudesh Gurung	President	Canadian Bhutanese Association Ottawa Region	Canada
Santosh Timsina	President	Canadian Bhutanese Society Lethbridge	Canada
Som N Baral	Chairman	Global Bhutanese Community Colorado INC	Colorado-USA
Dr. Laxmi N Dhakal	Director	Jyotish Evam Adhyatmik Anusandhan Kendra	Kentucky-USA
Hari Khanal	Chairman	Bhutanese Society of Western Massachusetts	Massachusetts-USA
Lamin Tamang	President	Bhutanese Nepali Community of Buffalo, INC	NewYork-USA
Keshari Khadka	Chairperson	Bhutanese Community of Syracuse	NewYork-USA
Yogesh Adhikari	Chairperson	Bhutanese Community of Greater Rochester	NewYork-USA
Jhuma Acharya	Chairperson	Bhutanese Community of Central OHIO	OHIO-USA
Tek Rizal	President	Vedic Welfare Society	OHIO-USA
Kamal Dhimal	President	Global Bhutanese Hindu Organization (GBHO)	N.Carolina-USA
Gopal Baskota	General Secretary	Shree Vaisnav Parishad America (SVPA)	OHIO-USA

*...Continued List of Bhutanese Community Organizations supporting Japan Campaign 2021*

Priya Sharma	Chairperson	Women of Knowledge and Excellence (WOKE)	OHIO-USA
Tika Acharya	President	Bhutanese American Student Organization (BASO)	OHIO-USA
Mahananda Luitel	President	Greater Akron Hindu Sewa Sammittee Inc.	OHIO-USA
DB Rai	President	Global Bhutanese Organization (GBO)	OHIO-USA
Santa Rai	President	Bhutanese Community Association of Erie (BCAE)	Pennsylvania-US A
Tularam Neopane	Chairman	Organization of Hindu Religion and Culture (OHRC)	Pennsylvania-US A
Tika R Dhungana	Chairman	Shree Vaisnav Parishad-Harrisburg	Pennsylvania-US A
Tanka Dhital	President	Hindu Cultural and Educational Center	IOWA-USA
Harka Biswa	President	Bhutanese Community in IOWA	IOWA-USA
Parma Bastola	Coordinator	Bhutanese Community of Cincinnati	Ohio-USA
Puspa Bhandari	Program Director	Bhutanese Community Organization of Minnesota	Minnesota-USA
Yogita Khanal	President	Nepali Cultural Dance Club	USA