



Detention of 'Foreigners' in Assam

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- Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (**CHRI**) **has expressed concerns over the apex court's remark** on the detention of 'foreigners' in Assam.
 - As per the body, the remark defies India's constitutional and international obligations.
- The concern is in reference to Chief Justice of India's admonition of Assam Chief Secretary for proposing a methodology for the release of a handful of foreign prisoners who have been in detention beyond their term of sentence for illegal entry.
 - The bench referred that **Assam has only 900 detainees despite lakhs of illegal foreigners being identified**. Most of them have already intermingled with the local population.
 - The CJI said that the stand of the Government of India and the State of Assam should be that **foreigner detainees should be deported as soon as possible**.
- CHRI has argued that **detainees languish in jail in inhumane conditions, in violation of their human rights, referring to Article 21 of the Constitution** that says that no person in India can be deprived of her/his right to life and liberty without due process.
 - International law lays down that **deportations can take place only with the consent of the country of origin** and India has no such agreement with Bangladesh. Also, Bangladesh has consistently refused to accept that its citizens migrate in large numbers to India.
- Currently, the **National Register of Citizens (NRC)** exercise is going on in Assam.

Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (CHRI)

- The Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (CHRI) is an independent, non-partisan, **international non-governmental organisation, headquartered in New Delhi**, working for the practical realisation of human rights across the Commonwealth.
- The Commonwealth is a voluntary association of 53 independent and equal sovereign states.
 - It is **one of the world's oldest political associations of states**. Its roots go back

to the British Empire when some countries were ruled directly or indirectly by Britain. Some of these countries became self-governing while retaining Britain's monarch as Head of State. They formed the British Commonwealth of Nations.

- **In 1949, the Commonwealth came into being.** Since then, independent countries from Africa, the Americas, Asia, Europe and the Pacific have joined the Commonwealth.
- **Membership today is based on free and equal voluntary cooperation.** The last two countries to join the Commonwealth - **Rwanda and Mozambique** - have no historical ties to the British Empire.