

Examine the view that a country should protect its own citizens first.

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In recent years, countries have been turning increasingly inward, as we see political parties championing for 'citizens first' and anti-immigration movements gaining momentum. This is especially exemplified by the European countries of Britain and Germany, and even the United States, which has been traditionally viewed as one of the most open countries in the world. With the uneven effects globalisation has on different groups of people, citizens of many countries have been calling for their governments to protect their people first. Protecting the people can refer to safeguarding their safety and welfare, preserving their way of life, or protecting them from punishments in foreign countries. However, while countries should definitely protect their people first whenever possible, there are exceptions to this, such as when doing so hurts the welfare of a larger community.

The fundamental role of a country is that of a home to its citizens, a safe haven where its people can always seek refuge in times of trouble. Furthermore, it is the basic responsibility of a country to ensure the safety of its people. This would provide everyone in the world with basic security, as everyone could rely on their country of origin to keep them safe. For instance, when Singaporeans experience natural disasters while abroad, the first thought on their minds is to get home safely. This is further illustrated by the fact that countries tend to have their embassies in many different other countries, through which they can provide consular support when necessary. Embassies play the predominant role of assisting citizens of the respective countries they represent, in protecting the interests of their citizens. Besides such functions an embassy performs, it plays an additional, minor role in providing consular assistance like sending medical and financial aid to the people of other countries. In addition, citizens residing in their own country expect to be able to live in a safe environment. This is why countries tend to prioritise internal security and defence over international collaboration. A country can only provide help to other nations when its citizens' interest are protected. Hence, countries have the fundamental responsibility of protecting their citizens first.

Unfortunately, this issue is not a black-and-white one; it gets complicated when there are both locals and foreigners within the geographical boundaries of a country. Such is the case in modern

- *Gives a factual background to the topic and explains how the question is relevant now*

- *Identifies the issue and provides definition of the topic in question*

- *Plan of essay could be clearer by stating points to be debated in introduction*

- *Clear signal of counter-argument*

societies, with the endless stream of people across borders. Nevertheless, a country should protect the welfare of its own citizens first. This helps the government to get the political support it needs to continue leading the country. The mandate, which political leaders get through elections from the people, comes with a responsibility - to safeguard the interests of their people and their voters first. When political leaders do not put in sufficient effort to protect the interests of the people first, their popularity plunges and they are at risk of losing their grip on power. This issue has been reflected in new popularity polls of German Chancellor Angela Merkel, who leads the pro-immigration Christian Democratic Union (CDU), where support for the CDU fell under the 30% mark for the first time in history. On the other hand, the anti-immigration, anti-refugee Alternative for Germany (AfD) party garnered an unprecedented percentage of vote share after campaigning to protect Germans' welfare first in the 2016 Berlin State elections. The defeat of CDU, according to political analysts, was in large part due to the Chancellor's refusal to cease her open-door policy for refugees. The Germans, who were already struggling with weakening physical infrastructure and dwindling standards in transportation services, now had to contend with overcrowding too, as over seventy thousand refugees were relocated to Berlin alone. This clearly shows the need for a country to protect its citizens' welfare before making provisions for foreigners. Therefore, protecting citizens' interests first is important, as it helps the government to secure political support.

However, it would be too naive a view to think that a country should always protect its citizens first. As with other areas of governance, nothing is absolute, and there are always exceptions. Countries should not protect their own citizens first, if doing so hurts the interests of the broader community in the region, as they are also obliged to be responsible players on the global stage. For instance, it is wrong for countries like Indonesia to shield their citizens from legal persecution if those citizens cause environmental troubles, such as chronic haze, to neighbouring regions. Companies in Indonesia use the cheap yet unsustainable slash-and-burn method to destroy large patches of forests annually, to fulfill their profit motive. This had not only led to health problems for the citizens of neighbouring countries such as Malaysia and Singapore, but also economic consequences around the world, due to the ripple effects arising from economic losses in international financial hubs like Singapore. In a bid to protect some of its citizens, Indonesia has refused to disclose the identities of the local directors and companies who have contributed to the burning of forests, resulting in haze which has plagued the region for years. In such a case, a nation should protect the interests of the larger community in the

- ***Topic sentence should be at the start to be clearer***

- ***Use of signposting to indicate change in stand***

- ***Example of Indonesia is relevant and well explained***

region, which has been suffering due to the actions of a few citizens. In addition to safeguarding the interests of the broader community, countries should also give great consideration to the interests of society as a whole. An example of this would be the case of a Canadian who robbed the Standard Chartered Bank in Holland Village a few months ago. Despite the Canadian's government obligation to protect its citizens from persecution in foreign countries, it should not do so in this situation. Respecting the rule of law in a sovereign state like Singapore is of a greater importance than protecting their own citizen. Thus, countries should not protect their own citizens first, if doing so harms the welfare of the broader community of nations as a whole.

In conclusion, I feel that a country should protect its citizens first. However, countries should be flexible, and assess the trade-offs in each unique situation before doing so. A country should not trade the welfare of the larger regional community or of society in exchange for the protection of a few of its citizens. The interests of its own citizens should not blind the country to the welfare of the wider community. In other words, while a country should protect its citizens first, it must recognize that it does not exist in a bubble, and should consider the interests of other nations, exemplifying the mutual respect for each other's sovereignty and the rule of law that exists.

Comments:

Good, clear introduction. However, beware of example-driven arguments for the first topic sentence. In general, there are some insightful ideas with a good understanding of the issues at hand. A comfortable read that flows nicely. Answers the question and issue. Easy to read and understand. Sophisticated examples that show understanding and awareness of global current affairs.

- **Example is unclear.**
i.e. did Canada protect its citizen? Avoid speculative examples

- **Begins conclusion by reiterating stand to tie up arguments above**

- **Good call-to-action**

