



Refugee Documentation Centre (Ireland)
LEGAL AID BOARD

Sudan - Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on Thursday 22 September 2016

Treatment of Christians

A publication issued in September 2016 by *Human Rights Watch* states:

“Increasing restrictions on religious freedoms have been documented since 2013, particularly targeting members of Christian churches in Sudan” (Human Rights Watch (8 September 2016) *NGO Letter regarding the human rights situation in Sudan*).

In August 2016 *World Watch Monitor* notes:

“The trial of two Sudanese church leaders has started in Khartoum. They are among four Christians accused of trying to tarnish the image of Sudan's government” (World Watch Monitor (22 August 2016) *Sudan pastors charged for 'claiming persecution of Christians'*).

This report also states that:

“A number of other Christian leaders face restrictions, as Sudan's government continues to impose a unified Arab Islamic character on territories left under its rule since the independence of the largely African-Christian South in July 2011” (ibid).

A document published in August 2016 by the *United States Department of State* notes:

“The government closed or demolished places of worship and cultural centers affiliated with religious institutions. International observers noted Christian places of worship were disproportionately affected compared to Muslim institutions by zoning changes” (United States Department of State (10 August 2016) *2015 Report on International Religious Freedom: Sudan*).

This document also states:

“Individual Muslims and Christians reported generally good relationships between Muslims and Christians at the societal level and stated that instances of intolerance or discrimination by nongovernment entities were generally considered as isolated incidents” (ibid).

In July 2016 the *United Kingdom Foreign and Commonwealth Office* states:

“There have been further arrests of Christian Evangelical pastors in 2016, following similar cases last year” (United Kingdom Foreign and Commonwealth Office (21 July 2016) *Sudan - Human Rights Priority Country update report: January to June 2016*).

A document issued in July 2016 by Christian Solidarity Worldwide notes that:

“Members of the Khartoum Bahri Evangelical Church were arrested twice on 7 July, after protesting against the sale of the church's training school” (Christian Solidarity Worldwide (11 July 2016) *Khartoum Bahri Evangelical Church members arrested*).

This document also states that:

“The recent arrests occur at a time when the Christian communities in Khartoum and Omdurman are facing a campaign of repression that appear designed to pressurise them into leaving the country” (ibid).

A publication issued in June 2016 by the *European Parliament Intergroup on Freedom of Religion or Belief and Religious Tolerance* notes:

“...sectarianism amongst Christians and Muslims is growing...” (European Parliament Intergroup on Freedom of Religion or Belief and Religious Tolerance (30 June 2016) *Annual Report on the State of Freedom of Religion or Belief in the World 2015 [Sudan excerpt]*).

In May 2016 *Open Doors International* states in a report that:

“Christians in Sudan living in all parts of the country face persecution...” (Open Doors International (26 May 2016) *Sudan: Ethnic cleansing and the persecution of Christians*).

A publication issued in May 2016 by the *United States Commission on International Religious Freedom* notes:

“Since 2011, Sudan's minority Christian community has endured arrests for proselytization, attacks on religious buildings, closure of churches and Christian educational institutions, and confiscation of religious literature” (United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (2 May 2016) *USCIRF Annual Report 2016 - Tier 1 CPCs designated by the State Department and recommended by USCIRF – Sudan*).

A report issued in April 2016 by the *United Kingdom Foreign and Commonwealth Office* points out that:

“The lack of protection afforded to Christian churches remains an issue of concern” (United Kingdom Foreign and Commonwealth Office (21 April 2016) *Sudan - in-year update December 2015*).

In January 2016 *Freedom House* states:

“Religious freedom, though guaranteed by the interim constitution, is not upheld in practice. Approximately 97 percent of Sudan's population is Muslim, nearly all of them Sunni. The authorities have shown increased intolerance of Christians since 2013; they have destroyed or shuttered several churches, refused permits for new churches, closed church-affiliated nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), ordered expatriate Christian workers out of the country, and detained a number of evangelical Christians” (Freedom House (27 January 2016) *Freedom in the World 2016: Sudan*).

A report released in January 2016 by *Open Doors International* notes that:

“The persecution of Christians in Sudan is systematic and more reminiscent of a policy of ethnic cleansing. Historically, Islam is deeply embedded in Sudan's society. Sudan is one of the few African countries that has consistently been on the World Watch List since its first use in 1993 for internal research purposes. The country's rank on the list has been oscillating mostly between the top 10 and the top 20 countries. Sudan has been designated a "Country of Particular Concern" by the US State Department since 1999. Furthermore, for the past decades there has been no rule of law in Sudan; press and media laws have been restrictive, and freedom of expression and religion has been highly curtailed. The ethnic-cultural landscape is very diverse and complicated: Arab versus Black, Muslim versus Christian. The secession of South Sudan did not solve these problems. This is particularly true for black Africans, as a significant number are Christian and still living in the country. The government of Sudan is strictly implementing the policy of one religion, one culture and one language” (Open Doors International (13 January 2016) *World Watch List 2016: Persecution Dynamics – Sudan*).

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This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Refugee Documentation Centre within time constraints. This response is not and does not purport to be conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum. Please read in full all documents referred to.

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