



Sudan – Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on 28 June 2016

Are there any entry/exits rules regarding Sudan - ie if someone illegally exits, are they arrested on return and what is sanction in law and in practice. If someone has arrest warrant against them, are they likely to be picked up on return to Sudan in the airport and are they likely to be detained /tortured etc. What is the treatment of failed returned asylum seekers in Sudan?

The 2015 US Department of State country report for Sudan, in a section titled “Freedom of Movement, Internally Displaced Persons, Protection of Refugees, and Stateless Persons” (paragraph headed “Foreign Travel”), states:

“The government requires citizens to obtain an exit visa if they wish to depart the country. Issuance was usually pro forma, but the government continued to use the visa requirement to restrict some citizens’ travel, especially persons of political or security interest. To obtain an exit visa, children must receive the permission of both parents.” (*US Department of State (13 April 2016) 2015 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices – Sudan*, p.49)

A report published by the London-based NGO Waging Peace, in a section titled “Immigration and Diaspora Communities”, states:

“Sudanese visa procedures impose restrictive rules and surveillance on national and international travellers who wish to enter or exit the country. All travellers must produce a valid entry visa upon arrival. In addition, Sudan is one of the few countries where you need an exit visa in order to leave. Travellers can obtain an exit visa from the Ministry of Interior’s main office in Khartoum or the transit office at Khartoum International airport. Travellers may be prevented from leaving the country and questioned about their future movements and activities, as happened in the well publicised case of Meriam Ibrahim. Government officials working in the immigration department are known to work for NISS. Recently, travellers to Uganda, Kenya and Egypt have been subject to further questioning on exit, possibly because these countries have large Sudanese refugee populations and are home to the exiled political opposition.” (*Waging Peace (September 2014) The Long Arm of the Sudanese Regime: How the Sudanese National Intelligence and Security Service monitors and threatens Sudanese nationals who leave Sudan*, p.5)

This section of the report also states:

“Those Sudanese who are outside Sudan without identification and who are forced to return to Sudan are required to go through a process of re-documentation whereby their nationality is confirmed and they are given

documents with which to travel. In 2007 and 2011 Waging Peace and Article 1 produced reports showing significant procedural inadequacies in the re-documentation procedure of Sudanese asylum seekers in the UK. Asylum seekers were re-documented by the UK Border Agency before their right to appeal the refusal of refugee status was exhausted. During this process Sudanese embassy officials asked asylum seekers for personal information which was far in excess of what was required to verify nationality and obtain travel documents, including details about the whereabouts of their family members in Sudan. Asylum seekers felt vulnerable, with insufficient Home Office support and little or no translation services for the Home Office to understand the threats that were being made towards them and their family.” (ibid, pp.5-6)

In a section titled “Arrest in Sudan” this report states:

“Of those interviewed for the report, four were detained at Khartoum airport on arrival in Sudan and were then taken away to be questioned, three others were detained and questioned at Khartoum airport and one was questioned at Geneina Airport in Darfur sometime after arrival in Sudan. One interviewee was detained at a later time while in Sudan. Most of the individuals interviewed returned to Sudan voluntarily, with the exception of three individuals who were involuntarily returned back to Sudan – two of whom had been returned to Sudan from the UK where they had claimed asylum, and the other had been returned from France.” (ibid, p.15)

This report quotes from a letter compiled by staff of the British Embassy in Khartoum as follows:

“We have contacted the office of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees here in Khartoum. They are the lead agency for dealing with refugee issues in Sudan and have large protection teams operating throughout the country in Sudan. They had no knowledge of returned asylum seekers being mistreated by the Sudanese security agencies. We also contacted the German and Netherlands Embassies. None were aware of any cases of returnees being mistreated on return to Sudan, although they do not actively monitor every case of Sudanese being returned from their countries. We have also raised our concerns about allegations of returnees being mistreated verbally with EU partners at EU Human Rights meetings. Again EU partners had no knowledge of mistreatment of returnees but were also concerned at the reports. However there is evidence from domestic and international human rights groups to show that those who openly oppose the Government from abroad will likely be arrested on return. Recently a number of opposition leaders who signed a political manifesto (New Dawn Charter) in Uganda calling for reform and the overthrow of the Government of Sudan were detained for a number of weeks. These were widely reported in the Sudanese press and acknowledged as fact by the Sudanese Government. One of the arrestees was a dual Sudanese/British National and this Embassy has had direct contact with the Government of Sudan about the case. We have also received credible reports from political parties and human rights groups in Sudan that those who are overly critical of the government are usually subject to surveillance and intimidation by security services. Reports from human rights groups suggest that Darfuris and Nubans are also more likely to be at risk from this type of persecution.” (ibid, p.33)

The English-language Summary of a report in Norwegian published by the Landinfo Country of Origin Information Centre of Norway states:

“Political activity inside Sudan is not the sole focus of the Sudanese regime, which also tries to limit such activity among Sudanese abroad through monitoring exile communities. Although there is no concrete evidence to support that forced returnees to Sudan face problems with security forces, Landinfo can see no reason why Sudanese authorities should differentiate between political activities outside and inside Sudan, provided their aim is to change the political situation in Sudan in ways threatening president Umar al-Bashir’s regime.” (Landinfo Country of Origin Information Centre (11 November 2013) *Sudan: Handlingsrom for regime-kritisk politisk aktivisme*, p.3)

A report published by the UK Home Office, in a section titled “Surveillance operations by the Government of Sudan overseas” (paragraph 9.1.4), summarises a report published by Waging Peace as follows:

“The Waging Peace report, ‘The Danger of Returning Home: The perils facing Sudanese immigrants when they go back to Sudan’, dated September 2012, referred to several cases in which returnees had claimed the Sudanese authorities held information specifically on their activities in the UK. For example the testimony of Mr Badoui Malik Badoui noted that the people questioning him knew he had attended demonstrations whilst in the UK and that they had videos to prove these allegations. Similarly Mr A, who visited London in 2010 and returned in November 2010, claimed that on detention at Khartoum airport he was shown photographs of his attendance at a meeting in the UK and questioned him about a meeting at Abrar House on Edgware Road in London. In the case of Mr Y, his testimony reported that shortly after his return to Sudan, Mr Y was questioned repeatedly about a meeting in December 2010 he had attended in Parliament whilst in the UK.” (UK Home Office (May 2016) *Sudan: Persons involved in ‘sur place’ activity in the UK*, p.25)

More detailed descriptions of the cases referred to above may be found in the attached report from Waging Peace (Waging Peace (September 2012) *The Danger of Returning Home: The perils facing Sudanese immigrants when they go back to Sudan*)

An article from UK newspaper The Telegraph states:

“Badaoui Malik Badaoui, a Dafur refugee, was arrested at Khartoum airport in July last year to face questions about his attendance at demonstrations at Downing St and outside the Sudanese embassy in St James in 2010. Over a period of nine days in detention, he suffered daily beatings after undergoing questions for shaming Darfur. Another activist, who has applied for asylum, known only as Yassir said he was also held last January just months after attending an even in the House of Lords about Sudan descent in conflict in three restive provinces. He is convinced that the security agents at Khartoum airport were acting on intelligence gathered in London.” (The Telegraph (9 January 2013) *Sudanese ‘diplomats spying for agents that torture in Khartoum’*)

An article from the Paris-based newspaper Sudan Tribune states:

“Security authorities at Khartoum airport arrested an activist who is also the deputy general coordinator of Sudan’s Tamarud (rebellion) campaign, Mohamed Hashim, in the middle of this month and seized his passport upon his return from Cairo to spend Eid al-Adha (Feast of the Sacrifice) holiday with his family. Hashim was interrogated and questioned about his role in Tamarud, his Facebook posts critical of the government and his links with the rebel Sudan Revolutionary Front (SRF). Afterwards, he was transferred to the National Intelligence and Security Services (NISS) headquarters for further questioning.” (Sudan Tribune (27 October 2013) *Sudanese authorities arrest official in youth movement at airport*)

This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research and Information Unit 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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