



Chad – Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on 28 September 2015

Would a member of the 'Union des Forces Pour la Democratie et le Developpement - 'UFDD' - be at risk of ill-treatment and/or arbitrary arrest and/or arbitrary killing in Chad? Would a family member of a UFDD fighter and 'martyr' (killed in 2007) be at risk of ill-treatment and/or arbitrary arrest and/or arbitrary killing in Chad?

The Freedom House report on Chad for the events of 2008 states:

“At year's end, the ongoing fighting involved several rebel groups, including the FUC, the Union of Forces for Democracy and Development (UFDD) (which later absorbed the FUC), and the Rally of Forces for Change (RFC). On February 2 and 3, 2008, a 2,000-strong coalition of the UFDD, the RFC, and the UFDD-Fundamental – a recently-formed UFDD splinter group – attacked the capital. Deby's regime responded harshly, beginning with the February 3 arrests of three prominent opposition politicians – Lol Mahamat Choua, Ngargely Yorongar, and Ibni Oumar Mahamat Saleh. The government and rebels agreed to a ceasefire several days later, and by February 11, the rebels had begun to withdraw to the east. Deby nonetheless declared a state of emergency between February 14 and March 15, on top of a countrywide curfew imposed after the clashes. The new order suspended due process rights and tightened already harsh media restrictions. Human rights groups accused the regime of extrajudicial detention and killing of suspected rebels, their supporters, and members of the Goran ethnic group, some of whom were involved in the coup attempt.” (Freedom House (16 July 2009) *Freedom in the World 2009 – Chad*)

An Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada response to a request for information, in a paragraph headed “Situation of Ethnic Groups”, states:

“Various groups have expressed concern about the government's reaction to the attempted coup. In a press release dated 7 February 2008, the deputy program director for Africa at Amnesty International (AI) expressed concern that the government was launching a ‘major witch-hunt’ against people suspected of supporting the rebels.” (Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada (25 August 2008) *Chad: The attempted coup; treatment of certain tribes and members of political parties since the attempted coup*)

A 2008 Human Rights Watch report states:

“State security forces arrested at least 15 persons and held them without charge since Chadian rebels attempted a coup on February 2-3, but the actual number is likely to be higher. A Human Rights Watch investigation in Chad and Cameroon received numerous reports of arbitrary arrest from credible sources, but many reports could not be verified, often because former detainees, family members and eyewitnesses declined to be

interviewed for fear of government persecution.” (Human Rights Watch (20 March 2008) *Chad: Charge or Release Political Detainees*)

This report also states:

“The Chadian government is using the recent coup attempt as a pretext to arbitrarily arrest people who have no apparent connection to the insurgency,” said Georgette Gagnon, Africa director at Human Rights Watch. ‘Detainees should be released immediately or charged with a crime and accorded all their rights, including immediate access to a lawyer and a hearing before an impartial judge to determine the lawfulness of their detention.’ Eleven of the 15 cases of apparent arbitrary detention documented by Human Rights Watch since the coup attempt are members of the Goran ethnic group, raising concerns that the government is targeting people for arrest at least in part on account of their ethnicity. The Goran predominate in the Chadian rebel group that led the coup attempt, the Union des Forces pour la Démocratie et le Développement (Union of Forces for Democracy and Development, UFDD).” (ibid)

An IRIN News report states:

“The head of a local Chad human rights group Human Rights Without Borders (DHSF), Deuzoumbe Daniel Passalet, said the number of detainees is at least 20 and that many members of the opposition as well as apolitical citizens have fled the country out of fear of being arrested. ‘The situation has deteriorated markedly since February,’ Passalet told IRIN from Cameroon, where he had recently fled. ‘Certainly the authorities were aggressive before the rebel attack in February,’ he said. ‘But after February they became vengeful. Anyone who was suspected of supporting the rebels was arrested and sometimes their houses were demolished.’” (IRIN News (20 March 2008) *Chad: Civilians flee as govt targets critics*)

A report from Radio France Internationale states:

“In Chad, the UFDD [Union of the Forces of Democracy and Development] rebel group has denounced the arrest in Ndjamena of its four members upon their return home. Those arrested are Gen Taher Guinassou, ex-security advisor to President Deby, Tahir Wodji an ex-army chief of staff of UFDD and two senior members of Mahamat Nouri's movement. Authorities have confirmed the arrests and explained that there was a warrant out for these ex-rebels, and that there is no agreement that grants them amnesty.” (Radio France Internationale (10 November 2010) *Chad arrests four returning ex-rebels* (translated from French))

An Amnesty International report, in a section titled “Blatant Impunity”, states:

“On 8 November 2010 the Chadian authorities arrested at least four members of Chadian opposition armed groups in N'Djamena and detained them in unknown locations. Their groups had earlier joined government forces. Those arrested included General Taher Guinassou (former UFDD leader and adviser to President Déby), General Tahir Ahmad Kosso Wodji (former UFDD and UFR member), Djougourou Hemichi (former UFDD commissioner) and Moïta Tourki Ahmat (former UFDD member). The government said that a warrant had been issued for the arrest of the men by a Chadian court in 2008

for attacking the country and destroying public property. No mention was made to the fact that the armed groups to which these four people belonged recruited and used children. On 10 January 2011 the President of Chad, Idriss Deby, pardoned the above mentioned members of armed groups by issuing a decree. The same day, President Deby signed an ordinance extending the amnesty to crimes committed by members of Chadian armed opposition groups who had been imprisoned.” (Amnesty International (10 February 2011) *A compromised future: Children recruited by armed forces and groups in eastern Chad*, p.32)

A Thomson Reuters Foundation report, in a section headed “Insurgency” states:

“The rebel groups – which have often splintered and formed new coalitions – are now weak militarily. In 2009, some groups suffered heavy military losses and, when Sudan and Chad signed a peace deal in January 2010, Khartoum began disarming them. Most rebel soldiers have now defected or been expelled from Sudan, and the key leaders are in exile.” (Thomson Reuters Foundation (1 January 2011) *Chad troubles*)

The 2014 country report on Chad from the Bertelsmann Foundation, in a section headed “Consensus-Building” (section 16), states:

“On the 50th anniversary of Chadian independence, Déby pardoned and gave amnesty to former leaders of the rebel Union of Forces for Democracy and Development (Union des Forces pour la Démocratie et le Développement, UFDD), who had been arrested on arrival in Chad in November 2010. Additional leaders who in August 2008 had been sentenced to death in absentia for trying to overthrow the regime were also pardoned. The government released a further 370 or so detainees arrested during or after the rebel attacks on N’Djamena and Am Dam in 2008.” (Bertelsmann Foundation (January 2014) *BTI 2014: Chad Country Report*, p.30)

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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