



Refugee Documentation Centre (Ireland)  
LEGAL AID BOARD

## **Sudan - Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on Monday 29 & Tuesday 30 April 2019**

### **Information on Girifna; &**

In April 2019 *Al Jazeera* states that:

“Sudan's military has overthrown and arrested President Omar al-Bashir after months of protests against his nearly 30-year rule” (*Al Jazeera* (11 April 2019) *Sudan's military seizes power from President Omar al-Bashir*).

This document also states that:

“Representatives of the anti-government Girifna resistance movement, which has helped organise the anti-government protests, said the group would also continue to protest until its demands for a political overhaul were met...” (ibid).

In February 2019 the *International Crisis Group* notes in a report that:

“More than in previous rounds of protests, Bashir's opponents have proved unexpectedly resilient. Protesters come from mixed political and economic backgrounds. Professionals, particularly doctors and engineers, have teamed up with opposition parties, many younger ruling party members and the Girifna, a coalition of youthful anti-regime university students formed in 2009. That some of the most intense protests have occurred in Bashir's strongholds, in the wealthier centre of the country, is a potent new development. The regime has veered between repression and promises of reform including supposedly fair elections in 2020, but all this has not been enough to stop the protests” (*International Crisis Group* (26 February 2019) *Bashir Moves Sudan to Dangerous New Ground*, p.3).

*Wagingnonviolence* in January 2019 points out that:

“...Girifna remains Sudan's most formidable non-partisan movement” (*Wagingnonviolence* (31 January 2019) *Repression strengthens mass movement aiming to topple Sudan's dictator*).

A compilation of COI sources issued by the *Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada* in December 2014 includes stating that:

“Sources indicate that the Girifna movement was established in October 2009 by university students...in Omdurman, Sudan...” (*Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada* (19 December 2014) *Sudan: The Girifna movement, including origin, objectives, members, regions of operation, activities, methods of communication within the group, funding; treatment of group members by authorities* (2010-December 2014), p.1).

This report also notes that:

“Girifna members reportedly engage in mukhatabat (street talks) in the marketplace and distribute leaflets challenging the NCP in marketplaces, universities, schools, and on public transportation...” (ibid, p.3).

A report issued in September 2012 by *Amnesty International* states that:

“Girifna, which translates as “we’re fed up”, is a Sudanese youth group calling for nonviolent resistance to the government in Sudan. The movement, composed mainly of university students, was set up in October 2009. Since then, its members have been targeted by the authorities, including by being arbitrarily arrested, detained, tortured and sexually assaulted. They have also had laptops and other items confiscated from their homes, and several have been forced to flee from Sudan” (Amnesty International (30 September 2012) *Sudan: Write for rights: Girifna*).

### **Information on anti-government protests in Khartoum from June to December 2018**

In January 2019 the *International Crisis Group* states in a report that:

“Protests broke out in mid-December in Atbara, a mid-size town 350km from the capital Khartoum, and quickly spread to towns and cities across the country” (International Crisis Group (14 January 2019) *Improving Prospects for a Peaceful Transition in Sudan*, p.1).

This document also states that:

“The feared Rapid Support Forces, a government militia renowned for its brutal counterinsurgency tactics, has been active, particularly in Khartoum, but less prominent than during previous protests, when they were responsible for many deaths” (ibid, p.2).

It is also pointed out in this document that:

“Protesters come from mixed political and economic backgrounds. They include members of Sudan’s longstanding leftist movements, the Sudanese Communist Party and the Sudanese Congress Party (whose members are particularly active on social media) and a number of other political parties, along with professional trade unions, notably doctors, who are currently on strike... The newly-formed Sudanese Professionals Association – an umbrella group encompassing several professional unions – organised a march on the presidential palace on 25 December and again on 31 December demanding Bashir’s resignation. The association is coordinating with Girifna, a loose coalition of youth movements formed by anti-regime university students in 2009 to agitate for reform in Sudan and a change in the country’s leadership.<sup>5</sup> The bulk of the protesters, however, are ordinary Sudanese with no strong political affiliation and who blame their dire economic plight on the NCP’s economic mismanagement and kleptocracy” (ibid, p.4).

A report issued in January 2019 by the *New Humanitarian* states that:

“The immediate cause of the protests, which began on 19 December 2018, was the slashing of bread subsidies in the northern Nile-side town of Atbara. Citizens saw the price of bread triple overnight and took to the streets, burning down the ruling National Congress Party (NCP) headquarters, and breaking into stores to distribute

grain to the people. The protests quickly spread across the rural north, soon reaching the major cities of Port Sudan, Wad Madani, and Khartoum. Protesters called for an end to al-Bashir's 29-year reign, which has been marked by near-constant civil war, extreme hunger and famine in 1993 and 1998, and persistent economic malaise following the secession of the oil-rich south in 2011" (New Humanitarian (9 January 2019) *Briefing: Sudanese call for bread and freedom*, pp.1-2).

A report published in March 2019 by the *United States Department of State* commenting on events of the preceding year points out that:

"In response to protests that broke out on December 19 and spread throughout the country, security forces fired live ammunition in Gadaref city, Atbara city, and the Al haj Youssef neighborhood in Khartoum, resulting in credible reports of at least 30 deaths..." (United States Department of State (13 March 2019) *Sudan 2018 Human Rights Report*, p.3).

In December 2018 *Amnesty International* states that:

"Since 14 December, tens of thousands of people have been taking part in protests in different parts of the country including in Wad Madani, Port Sudan, Gebeit, Al-Qadarif, Atbara, Berber, Dongla, Karima, Al-Damazin, Al Obeid, Al Fasher, Khartoum and Omdurman. Security officers on Wednesday and Thursday shot at protestors to disperse them killing six people in Al Qadarif, one in Berber and two in Karima" (Amnesty International (21 December 2018) *Sudan: Shooting of protestors must be immediately investigated*).

## References

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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.

## **Sources Consulted**

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