



Sudan - Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on 25 June 2010

Information on the treatment of those who are members or are perceived to be members of the Tunjer ethnic group by the government and/or society. Whether they are being discriminated against by the government, or by other groups in Sudan. NGOs working with and supporting these minority groups.

There were limited references to the Tunjer ethnic group of Sudan among the sources available to the RDC. The only reference to be found among the sources within time constraints is a January 2009 document from the *UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights*, under the heading 'Background and context', which states:

"The incident at Kalma IDP camp should be analysed in the context of the long-standing tension between the residents of the camp and the Government of Sudan regarding control of the camp. South Darfur governmental authorities have frequently asserted that there is a presence of political, criminal and armed movement elements within the camp. Kalma camp was established in February 2004. As one of the largest camps in Darfur, the total population of Kalma camp is estimated at approximately 80,000 individuals: the majority being from the Fur, followed by the Dajo, Zaghawa Massalit, Birgit and Tunjer tribes. The camp is one to two kilometres' long and extends seven kilometres' along the railway track from east to west." (UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (23 January 2009) *Eleventh periodic report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the situation of human rights in the Sudan Killing and injuring of civilians on 25 August 2008 by government security forces: Kalma IDP camp, South Darfur, Sudan*, p.3)

No further information could be found on the Tunjer.

The book, *'The Peoples of Africa – An Ethnohistorical Dictionary'*, by James Olsen refers to the 'Tunjur' of Sudan as follows:

"In the sixteenth century, there was a powerful Tunjur kingdom in Sudan, but its power was eclipsed by the rise of the Fur empire in the seventeenth century.Approximately 10,000 people in Chad and Sudan identify themselves as Tunjur today. They live primarily in Darfur Province in Chad and across the border in Sudan. The Chadian Tunjur live near the Batha River in Wadai Province, in Dar Ziyud, and in the Abu Telfan hills. They no longer speak the Tunjur language, for it has been replaced by Fur, Arabic, or Beri as their primary tongue. They live in settled villages of reed-walled, conical-roofed houses built on hilltops or elevated ridges. They are farmers, raising a variety of crops, including millet, beans, sorghum, and haricot beans, but they are best known for their skill at cultivating date palms. The Tunjur are devout Sunni Muslims of the Maliki school." (Olson, James S. (1996)

The Peoples of Africa – An Ethnohistorical Dictionary Westport Greenwood Press, pp. 570-1)

Under the heading 'Darfur', in the Sudan entry of the July 2008 *Minority Rights Group International World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples*, the Tunjur are referred to as follows:

"This ploy has clearly been seen in the Darfur conflict. For centuries African farmers and Arab nomads existed side-by-side, accommodating each other's needs in the semi-arid desert region. Desertification placed strains on these traditional arrangements, but even more decisive was the Sudanese government's intentional exacerbation of these tensions to dissipate opposition to central rule. Its divide-and-rule tactics spurred many (but not all) nomadic Arab peoples to band together to form militias now known as Janjaweed that targeted people from African ethnic groups. The government organized, armed and trained these militias.

In response, beginning in the late 1980s, the Fur, Masalit, Zaghawa and other, smaller ethnic groups began to form their own militias. The Fur and Masalit dominate the southern Darfuri Sudan Liberation Army/Movement (SLA/M), and the Zaghawa are dominant in the northern and western Darfuri Justice and Equality Movement (JEM), which may have ties to Hassan al Turabi and his party.

Beyond the three main groups, other Darfuris of African descent have come under attack by the government of Sudan and the Janjaweed. These include the Dajo, Abu Darak, Kietinga, Medoob, Sinyar/Singar (considered part of the Fur tribe), Tama and Tungor/Tunjur." (Minority Rights Group International (July 2008) *World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples, Sudan: Overview*)

A report by *Human Rights Watch* from April 2008 states under the heading, 'Summary' as follows:

"Five years into the armed conflict in Sudan's Darfur region, women and girls living in displaced persons camps, towns, and rural areas remain extremely vulnerable to sexual violence. Sexual violence continues to occur throughout the region, both in the context of continuing attacks on civilians, and during periods of relative calm. Those responsible are usually men from the Sudanese security forces, militias, rebel groups, and former rebel groups, who target women and girls predominantly (but not exclusively) from Fur, Zaghawa, Masalit, Berti, Tunjur, and other non-Arab ethnicities." (Human Rights Watch (6 April 2008) *Five Years On: No Justice for Sexual Violence in Darfur*, p.1)

The same report states under the heading 'Sexual Violence in Darfur in 2007-2008':

"Tawila, a once-thriving town, is now mostly empty but hosts several IDP camps, including the sprawling "Rwanda" camp (named after the Rwandan contingent of AMIS troops who deployed there in 2005). Most cases of sexual violence reported are committed by Zaghawa gunmen who support the Minni Minawi faction, targeting women and girls of Fur and Tunjur ethnicities as they collect firewood or hay or return to their home villages periodically to

farm and collect food. Men have also been attacked, beaten, and robbed by the same perpetrators while traveling to and from the camp.” (ibid, p.14)

The same report also states:

“In one example, a Tunjur woman described how a group of women and girls went to collect wood in a valley and were intercepted by two Arab men with knives. The men called the women “Torabora” and beat them with sticks and stones. In another example, a 15-year-old Fur girl reported she was raped on the outskirts of town by two militia men she identified as ethnically Gimir (an ethnic group allied with Arab ethnicities) as she and three women were returning home from collecting wood. “They stopped us and told us to get off our donkeys. We tried to run away but they shot bullets in the air. They managed to catch me. Two of them beat me and raped me. When they finished, they took the donkeys and the firewood and left me.” “ (ibid, p.16)

A footnote in a *Human Rights Watch* report from January 2005 states under the heading ‘Background’:

“Numerous smaller ethnic groups, such as the Tama, Eringa, Berti, Bergit, Dorok and Tunjur, have also been targeted by the government-militia forces, especially as the conflict has broadened geographically over time.” (Human Rights Watch (21 January 2005) *Targeting the Fur: Mass Killings in Darfur*, p.3)

References

Human Rights Watch (6 April 2008) *Five Years On: No Justice for Sexual Violence in Darfur*

<http://www.hrw.org/en/reports/2008/04/06/five-years>

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<http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/11thOHCHR22jan09.pdf>

(Accessed 25 June 2010)

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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BBC News

European Country of Origin Information Network

Freedom House

Human Rights Watch

International Crisis Group

International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH)

Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada

IRIN News

Lexis Nexis

Minority Rights Group International

Refugee Documentation Centre Query Database

United Kingdom: Home Office

UNHCR Refworld

UN News Service

UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

United States Department of State