

Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada

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Responses to Information Requests

Responses to Information Requests (RIR) respond to focused Requests for Information that are submitted to the Research Directorate in the course of the refugee protection determination process. The database contains a seven-year archive of English and French RIRs. Earlier RIRs may be found on the UNHCR's [Refworld](#) website. Please note that some RIRs have attachments which are not electronically accessible. To obtain a PDF copy of an RIR attachment, please email the [Knowledge and Information Management Unit](#).

16 December 2013

TCD104695.E

Chad: The Gorane and Zaghawa ethnic groups, including their history and relationship; treatment of Gorane women by Zaghawa men; whether a single woman can relocate from N'Djamena to another area of the country, including treatment by society and authorities, access to social services (2012-December 2013)
Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa

1. The Gorane Ethnic Group

Two sources consulted by the Research Directorate indicate that the term Gorane [also known as Goran, Gorani] refers to the ethnic group of speakers of Daza [also known as Dasa, Dazaga] language (Swiss Refugee Council 3 July 2013, 3; *Ethnologue* 2013a). According to a professor of linguistics interviewed by the Swiss Refugee Council, a Bern-based NGO, Gorane is another term for Daza (Swiss Refugee Council 3 July 2013, 3). Minority Rights Group International (MRG) indicates that Gorane is the Arabic term for the Daza people (n.d.). The US Department of State's Background Notes on Chad indicate that the Daza are a sub-group of the Gorane (11 Jan. 2012).

Ethnologue: Languages of the World, a "comprehensive reference work cataloguing all of the world's known living languages" published by SIL International, a nonprofit organization "committed to serving ethnolinguistic minority communities worldwide and building capacity for sustainable language-based development by means of research, translation, training and materials development" (2013b), reports that, based on 2006 data, there are 331,000 Dazaga speakers in Chad (*Ethnologue* 2013a). Sources indicate that the Gorane are traditionally Muslim (MRG n.d.; *Ethnologue* 2013a).

According to two sources, the Gorane live in the Borkou-Ennedi-Tibesti region of Chad, in the north of the country (*Ethnologue* 2013a; MRG n.d.). MRG specifies that the Daza peoples are one of two nomadic peoples in the region, collectively known as Toubou, and are concentrated in the south and east of the region (ibid.). In contrast, the website of the embassy of Chad in Washington, DC, indicates that the Gorane are nomadic peoples of the Sahara and are divided into the Toubou and the Daza of Borkou (Chad n.d.). *Jeune Afrique* states that the Gorane originate primarily from the Borkou region (4 Apr. 2012). *Ethnologue* also indicates that they live in the Kanem region [western Chad] (2013a). According to International Crisis Group, the Gorane migrated to Biltine [eastern Chad] in the early 1980s from the north, which was affected by drought (15 Apr. 2009, 2, note 10).

The former leader of Chad, Hissène Habré, who ruled the country between 1982 and 1990 (Freedom House 2013; *PHW* 2012, 258), belongs to the Gorane ethnic group (MRG n.d.; International Crisis Group 15 Apr. 2009, 2). According to International Crisis Group, Habré is of the Anakaza sub-clan (ibid., 3). MRG notes that Habré's ethnic roots are from a "small eastern Gorane sub-group" (n.d.).

Sources indicate that the members of the Union of Democratic Forces for Development (Union des forces démocratiques pour le développement, UFDD) political party are primarily Gorane (International Crisis Group 15 Apr. 2009, 16; *PHW* 2012, 265).

2. The Zaghawa Ethnic Group

Sources indicate that the Zaghawa [also spelled Zagawa] are a transnational ethnic group from Chad and Sudan (ACCORD 2008, 27; Conciliation Resources 2011, 40). MRG writes that the Zaghawa peoples "have been salient in recent history in the Ouaddai prefecture bordering Sudan to the east" (n.d.). International Crisis Group describes the Zaghawa as "one of the principal ethnic groups in the east [of Chad]," noting that they migrated to the south of Ennedi and Biltine in the 1980s because of the drought (15 Apr. 2009, 2, 3, note 28). The same source indicates that in the Wadi Fira region in the east, where administrative departments are organized "on a broadly ethnic basis," the Zaghawa are a majority group in the department of Dar Kobé, a large minority in the department of Dar Tama, and are also a prominent group in the department of Biltine, along with the Gorane (International Crisis Group 15 Apr. 2009, 1).

Sources provide varying estimates of the percentage of Zaghawa people among the Chadian population: between one and two percent (MRG n.d.), less than two percent (ACCORD 2008, 27), less than three percent (US 1 July 2010, 3), and approximately five percent (*PHW* 2012, 256). The President of Chad, Idriss Déby, who deposed Hissène Habré in 1990 (Freedom House 2013; *PHW* 2012, 259), belongs to the Bidéyat subclan of the Zaghawa (MRG n.d.; US 19 Apr. 2013, 17).

Various sources note that members of the Zaghawa ethnic group hold a large degree of power in the government and in Chadian politics despite their minority status (US 19 Apr. 2013, 17; ACCORD 2008, 27; Freedom House 2013). The US Department of State's *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2012* describes Zaghawa people and other northerners as "overrepresented in key institutions of state power, including the military officer corps, elite military units, and the presidential staff" (19 Apr. 2013, 17). The 2012 *Political Handbook of the World (PHW)* notes that the Zaghawa have "dominated political affairs since the installation of the Déby regime in 1990" (256). Freedom House asserts that the members of the Zaghawa and other northern ethnic groups "control Chad's political and economic systems, causing resentment among the country's more than 200 other ethnic groups" (2013).

Nevertheless, sources indicate that there are conflicting factions within the Zaghawa ethnic group (Freedom House 2013; US 1 July 2010, 3). There are also Zaghawa factions that oppose Déby's regime (ACCORD 2008, 28; *PHW* 2012, 265). In 2009, International Crisis Group identified the Rally of Forces for Change (Rassemblement des forces pour le changement, RFC) as a political party bringing Zaghawa fighters together (15 Apr. 2009, 16). The *Political Handbook of the World* describes the RFC as a rebel faction dedicated to the overthrow of Déby that was founded by nephews of President Déby after withdrawing their support for the regime (2012, 265-266).

3. Relationship Between the Gorane and Zaghawa Ethnic Groups

In a report on the relationship between the Gorane and the Zaghawa ethnic groups, Australia's Refugee Review Tribunal writes that the relationship between the two groups, which it describes as "historical rivals," is "complex, and is influenced by historical events, shared ambition, and personal rivalry" (Australia 3 June 2011, 6). The report notes that Gorane and Zaghawa leaders have worked together in both government and rebel alliances (*ibid.*).

A 2009 report by International Crisis Group indicates that Gorane and Zaghawa forces were allied in 1982 in support of Hissène Habré's rise to power (International Crisis Group 15 Apr. 2009, 2, note 10). The report indicates that the alliance ended in 1989 when Zaghawa officers, including Idriss Déby, launched an anti-regime rebellion (*ibid.*). For its part, the *Political Handbook of the World* notes that an April 1989 coup attempt "allegedly involved a number of senior government officials," including Déby, a former commander in the Chadian National Armed Forces (Forces armées nationales tchadiennes, FANT) (2012, 259). The African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes ACCORD also states that the anti-Habré insurgency was Zaghawa-based and originated in Darfur, with support from Libya (2008, 27).

International Crisis Group explains that, under Habré, leaders of eastern ethnic groups that were historical rivals, including the Gorane, Zaghawa, and Tama, worked together in positions of power, but no policy of reconciliation between the groups was implemented at the local level, leading to a resurgence of the rivalry between the Gorane and the Zaghawa (15 Apr. 2009, 3). The report asserts that the Zaghawa were "dissatisfied with their subordinate role at the national level and feeling victimised at the local level by the abuses of Gorane troops," which ultimately led to the overthrow of the Habré regime (International Crisis Group 15 Apr. 2009, 2, 3, note 10). In partial corroboration, Freedom House indicates that the Habré regime was "characterized by widespread atrocities against individuals and ethnic groups seen as threats to the

regime" (2013). Similarly, the Australian Refugee Review Tribunal report states that the Habré regime "was alleged to have committed acts of ethnic cleansing against several ethnic groups, including the Zaghawa" (Australia 3 June 2011, 6).

Regarding the resurgence of ethnic conflict under the Déby regime in the eastern administrative department of Dar Tama, the International Crisis Group report explains that the first incidents of inter-communal violence

were reported in the early 1990s when Zaghawa leaders, although still a minority in southern Biltine, began to behave like a dominant group, encouraged by the fact that one of their own, Idriss Déby, was now head of state. A stake in power, and the goodwill of local authorities, produced a sense of superiority among Zaghawa leaders; they began to behave aggressively towards neighbouring ethnic groups, particularly the Gorane, the Tama and the Massalit. This hostile attitude took the form of condescension, contempt and acts of violence that became increasingly humiliating for the victims (15 Apr. 2009, 5)

With respect to the situation in 2008, the same report states that,

faced with a rise in insecurity, the various communities became even more mistrustful of each other. Those, such as the Gorane, Zaghawa and Tama, that had harboured a several generation-old innate rivalry, suspected each other of seeking to profit from the instability, to avenge past or continuing causes of grievance. (International Crisis Group 15 Apr. 2009, 16)

For its part, ACCORD writes in its periodical *Conflict Trends* that, since his rise to power, President Déby has "relied on the Zaghawa in Chad and Sudan to maintain power and suppress resistance" (2008, 27). Freedom House's 2013 report on Chad indicates that "[h]uman 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 had been involved in the rebel assault [of 2008]" (2013).

In contrast, a 2012 *Jeune Afrique* article commenting on the apparent political stability in Chad cites the opinion of an unnamed [translation] "expert" in Chadian affairs, who states that the Gorane are "generally well integrated" and that the Déby regime has taken pains to "look after" them (4 Apr. 2012). Thus, the expert concludes that, at the moment, the Gorane do not have good reason to turn against the regime (*Jeune Afrique* 4 Apr. 2012). Corroboration could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

Information on interethnic relationships between Gorane and Zaghawa people could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response. In correspondence sent to the Research Directorate, a representative of the Association of Women Jurists of Chad (Association des Femmes Juristes du Tchad, AFJT), a women's rights NGO based in N'Djamena, indicated that no research has been done on the topic (6 Dec. 2013).

4. Situation of Single Women in Chad Outside N'Djamena

Information on the situation of single women in Chad was scarce among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

In correspondence sent to the Research Directorate, the representative of the AFJT indicated that women have some liberty of movement in Chad and that it is possible for a single woman to relocate from the capital to another part of the country (AFJT 6 Dec. 2013). The representative noted, however, that a single woman should nevertheless [translation] "pay attention" to her personal security and that a woman who lives somewhere where she does not have "clear support" is at risk of mistreatment by "people with bad intentions" (ibid.). Corroborating information could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate.

The representative indicated that there are no laws or regulations preventing women from working or accessing housing, and that more and more girls are putting off marriage so that they can live independently while working and renting or owning their own house (ibid.). However, the representative stated that the government does not provide support services to single women, unless they are part of a women's organization that specifically seeks funding for its projects (ibid.).

In contrast to the above, Freedom House indicates that the government "restricts" the movement of citizens within the country (2013). Additionally, the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination notes that some ethnic groups in Chad continue to restrict women's rights, particularly their rights to own or to inherit land (UN 23 Sept. 2013, 4). Similarly, *Country Reports 2012* indicates that although "formal property and inheritance laws do not discriminate against women, local leaders adjudicated most inheritance cases in favor of men, according to traditional practice" (US 19 Apr. 2013, 20). The report also indicates that women experience discrimination in accessing education, training, employment, and pay equity, and in owning and

managing businesses, due to "cultural norms," and describes discrimination against women and exploitation of women as "widespread" (ibid.). According to Chad's 2012 report to the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, the government has run information campaigns in partnership with local organizations to raise awareness of women's inheritance and property rights (Chad 29 Sept. 2013).

Sources also report that gender-based violence is a problem in the country (Centre for Human Rights Mar. 2013, 1; US 19 Apr. 2013; Freedom House 2013). The Centre for Human Rights of the Faculty of Law at the University of Pretoria, South Africa, notes that gender-based violence is "extremely high," particularly in eastern Chad (Mar. 2013, 1). Amnesty International indicates that sexual violence, female genital mutilation, and forced marriages are all "widespread" in all of Chad and are not restricted to the eastern region (Oct. 2011, 6). Sources note that perpetrators of violence against women are usually not brought to justice (US 19 Apr. 2013; Centre for Human Rights Mar. 2013, 1; AI Oct. 2011, 6).

This Response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research Directorate within time constraints. This Response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim for refugee protection. Please find below the list of sources consulted in researching this Information Request.

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Additional Sources Consulted

Oral sources: Attempts to contact the following organizations were unsuccessful: Association tchadienne pour la promotion et la défense des droits de l'homme; Cellule de liaison d'informations des associations féminines du Tchad; FAWE du Tchad. Attempts to contact academics specializing in Chad at Coventry University and the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology were unsuccessful.

Internet sites, including: African Arguments; Al Jazeera; Bertelsmann Stiftung; Cellule de liaison d'informations des associations féminines du Tchad; ecoi.net; Encyclopaedia Britannica; Human Rights Watch; IAL Tchad presse; International Relations and Security Network; *Journal du Tchad*; Minorities at Risk Project; Norwegian Refugee Council; Radio France Internationale; Tchad Actuel; United Nations – Integrated Regional Information Networks, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Refworld, ReliefWeb, Secretary-General's Database on Violence Against Women; United States – Library of Congress; Voice of America; World Bank.

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