

Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada

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Responses to Information Requests

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23 January 2014

TCD104738.FE

Chad: The Chadian Non-Violence Association (Tchad Non Violence, TNV), including its leaders, structure, mission and activities; treatment of the organization's members by the authorities
Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa

1. Overview, mission and objectives

In correspondence sent to the Research Directorate on 22 January 2014, the president of the Chadian Non-Violence Association (Tchad Non Violence, TNV) stated that TNV was founded on 11 August 1991, and was [translation] "officially recognized by the security department" on 12 July 1992 (TNV 22 Jan. 2014a).

The organization's primary mission is to [translation] "strengthen democracy and build peace through values and means that are non-violent" (ibid.). The president of TNV indicated that the organization's objectives are as follows:

Help create a non-violent society that respects human values

Help build peace through non-violent action

Help create respect for human dignity

Combat all forms of violence with constructive dialogue

Defend the human rights and fundamental freedoms that are guaranteed in international human rights legislation

Combat all forms of social and economic injustice (ibid.)

2. Structure and Membership

TNV exists only in Chad (ibid.). In a telephone interview with the Research Directorate, the president of TNV stated that his organization has branches in six cities in Chad (ibid. 22 Jan. 2014b). TNV has a branch in the capital, N'Djamena, with 200 members (ibid.). The organization also has branches in Bongor, Pala, Lere and Doba, four cities that are located in the south of the country, as well as in Mongo (ibid.).

All of TNV's members [translation] "work on a volunteer basis and make financial contributions to keep the organization operational" (ibid. 22 Jan. 2014a). Some of TNV's members are "government officials", "mostly" teachers (ibid. 22 Jan. 2014b). TNV does not receive any financial assistance from the government (ibid.).

In the correspondence from 22 January 2014, the president of TNV stated that the organization comprises two sections: the board of directors and the national coordination team (ibid. 22 Jan. 2014a). In

other correspondence, the president of TNV stated that between 11 August 1991 and March 2012, the organization was composed of only the national coordination team (ibid. 18 Jan. 2014). The board of directors began working with the coordination section in March 2012 (ibid.).

The board of directors is the [translation] "political wing" of the organization (ibid. 22 Jan. 2014a). The board of directors is composed of the following positions:

President

Vice-president

Spokesperson

Two members (ibid.)

All members of the board of directors are TNV members with seniority (ibid. 18 Jan. 2014). The president of the board of directors is Pafing Guirki (ibid. 22 Jan. 2014a).

The national coordination team is the [translation] "operational wing" of the TNV, and includes the following positions:

National coordinator

Executive secretary

Treasurer general

Assistant treasurer general

Training supervisor (ibid. 22 Jan. 2014a)

The president of TNV stated that the treasurer general and the assistant treasurer general are not government officials, but that the national coordinator, the executive secretary and the training supervisor are government officials (ibid. 22 Jan. 2014b). Again according to the president of TNV, the national coordinator is also the [translation] "chief of staff for the justice minister" even though, "in principle", the position is "at odds" with that of the national coordinator (ibid. 22 Jan. 2014a). The president added that since TNV is meant to be a [translation] "political counterweight," its members "should not be part of the government" (ibid. 22 Jan. 2014b).

Within the national coordination team, there are many specialized commissions, including the following:

peace brigade commission

human rights and detention conditions commission

anti-corruption commission

gender and vulnerable persons commission

environmental protection commission (ibid. 22 Jan. 2014a)

During the telephone interview on 22 January 2014, the president of TNV provided the following information about the five commissions (ibid. 22 Jan. 2014b):

- The peace brigade commission raises awareness about and provides training on peace in school settings (ibid.).
- The human rights and detention conditions commission organizes trips to prisons to assess the living conditions in prison (ibid.). As a follow-up to those visits, TNV makes [translation] "proposals to the government" (ibid.).
- The anti-corruption commission, created in 2006, offers training in school settings on corruption in schools (ibid.).
- The gender and vulnerable persons commission focuses on seniors, persons with HIV/AIDS, persons with disabilities, women and children. Its objective is to inform those persons about their rights and ensure that [translation] "the laws that protect them are effectively enforced" (ibid.).
- The environmental protection commission organizes tree planting in order to combat [translation] "the environmental devastation caused by the government" (ibid.).

Corroborating information could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

The president of TNV indicated that each commission is led by a president and a spokesperson and that each commission plans its activities independently (ibid. 22 Jan. 2014a). The president added that the national coordination team [translation] "relies" on the commissions to carry out activities (ibid.).

3. Activities

The president of TNV stated that his organization has organized many activities, including the following:

Training on non-violent conflict resolution

Training on the philosophy of active non-violence and mechanisms used to protect human rights

Training for school mediators for peace in school settings

Training on techniques to combat corruption in school settings

[Disseminating] press releases and radio and television programming

Publishing annual reports on human rights violations in Chad

Writing shadow reports and participating in committee sessions of treaty bodies

Observing elections (TNV 22 Jan. 2014a)

Corroborating information could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

TNV is a member of the Human Rights Associations' Collective (Collectif des associations de défense des droits de l'homme, CADH), which also includes the Chadian Human Rights League (Ligue tchadienne des droits de l'homme, LTDH) (Namati n.d.; LTDH 18 Jan. 2014). In correspondence sent to the Research Directorate, the national coordinator for the LTDH, an organization created in 1991 that defends and promotes the human rights enshrined in international and national legislation (ibid. n.d.), stated that in 2013, TNV chaired the CADH (ibid. 18 Jan. 2014). The president of TNV stated that his organization chaired the CADH from September 2012 to 30 January 2014 (22 Jan. 2014b).

In a press release published jointly with the National Justice and Peace Commission (NJPC), a commission that provides [translation] "legal assistance...to the public" (Pax Christi International n.d.), the CADH noted that it has [translation] "for some time," noticed that "democracy is on the decline, civil rights and liberties are being restricted, and justice is being used to muzzle those who disagree with the government" (CADH and NJPC 13 Oct. 2012). In addition, the CADH and the NJPC drew attention to the fact that the government [translation] "is targeting peaceful citizens...who are shouting out loud what everyone else is whispering" with respect to the poor governance in Chad (ibid.). In the same press release, signed by the president of the CADH, the two organizations call on the government to [translation] "stop threatening and harassing the people who, because of their convictions, are helping entrench democracy and good governance in Chad" (ibid.).

In a press release published on 21 July 2010, the CADH condemned the [translation] "Chadian authorities' decision to welcome Omar Hassan al-Bashir [President of the Republic of Sudan] to the country" (CADH 21 July 2010). The CADH also [translation] "expressed its outrage and strongly condemned the arrival of al-Bashir in N'Djamena" (ibid.). In addition, the CADH "demanded" that Chadian authorities arrest al-Bashir so that he could be "brought before the ICC [International Criminal Court]" (ibid.). In that same press release, signed by Pafing Guirki, the president of TNV and the CADH call on the people of Chad to [translation] "oppose al-Bashir's arrival by every legal means" (ibid.).

The national coordinator for the LTDH confirmed that his organization and TNV work [translation] "on common projects" such as "strengthening organizational capacity building" and producing "shadow reports" (LTDH 18 Jan. 2014). According to the director of TNV, those shadow reports contain [translation] "supplementary information that has not been presented by the government" (22 Jan. 2014b). During the telephone interview on 22 January 2014, the national coordinator for the LTDH noted that as part of the organizational capacity building projects, the two organizations had organized seminars and workshops on how to [translation] "document cases of violence" against human rights defenders and on how to "increase the management capacity of NGOs" such as theirs (LTDH 22 Jan. 2014). The national coordinator for the LTDH added that TNV and the LTDH are currently working on a project to [translation] "protect human rights defenders and prevent threats" (ibid. 18 Jan. 2014). This project is designed to develop a support system for human rights defenders in the event that they find themselves in a difficult situation (ibid. 22 Jan. 2014). Corroborating information could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

4. Treatment of Members of TNV by the Authorities

According to an article published by the Chadian Press Agency (Agence Tchadienne de Presse, ATP), a website that provides national news coverage (Africetime.com n.d.), the CADH [of which TNV is a part] held a joint press conference on 11 April 2012, during which it stated that [translation] "since the beginning of 2012, the already precarious human rights situation in Chad has only gotten worse" (ATP [April 2012]).

In correspondence on 22 January 2014, the president of TNV stated that the relationship between his organization and the authorities [translation] "varies" (TNV 22 January 2014a). In this same correspondence, the president explained that [translation] "the relationship is good" if TNV does not disclose "violations committed by the regime" (ibid.). The relationship between the government and TNV becomes "complicated" when TNV "condemns poor practices by agents of security forces" (ibid.). In addition, the president of TNV added that the relationship between his organization and the government also deteriorates when the government [translation] "covers up human rights violations" that the organization has condemned (ibid.). According to the director of TNV [translation], "the conflict begins" when the organization condemns the detention conditions in prisons (ibid.). Corroborating information could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

The national coordinator for the LTDH stated that he is not [translation] "aware of any threats" made towards members of TNV (18 Jan. 2014). Corroborating information could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

For more information about the LTDH and the treatment of human rights defenders in general, please refer to Response to Information Request No. TCD104555.

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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