

Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada

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> Responses to Information Requests

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](#).

8 July 2015

DJI105243.FE

Djibouti: Treatment of members of the Movement for Democratic Renewal and Development (Mouvement pour le renouveau démocratique et le développement, MRD) by authorities, particularly since the position taken by the party against the framework agreement of December 2014 between the Union for National Salvation (Union pour le salut national, USN) and the government (2014-July 2015)
Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa

1. Overview of the MRD

Sources state that in July 2008, a presidential decree dissolved the MRD; the party was accused of being in contact with the Eritrean authorities (ARDHD 2 July 2015; MRD 2 May 2015). According to *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2014*, published by the US Department of State, the government of Djibouti continues to ban the party (US 25 June 2015, 16). A summary of the party's history, published on 2 May 2015 on the MRD website, reads: [translation] "a party is made up of women and men united by the same ideals and values. Only they can decide their destiny: it will continue as long as they continue their duty to serve their country" (MRD 2 May 2015). In addition, the party states that it inaugurated its new head office at "PK12" in May 2015 (ibid. 4 May 2015). PK12, or [translation] "Kilometre Point 12," is a community situated 12 kilometres from the city of Djibouti (US 15 July 2013).

For further information on the ban of the MRD in 2008 and the subsequent treatment of its members, until November 2010, see Response to Information Request DJI103638.FE.

2. Ties between the MRD and the USN

According to sources, the President of MRD is Daher Ahmed Farah (US 25 June 2015, 16; MRD 4 May 2015; Agence de presse Xinhua 14 Aug. 2013); he is [translation] "more commonly known by his initials, DAF" (ibid.). Sources state that he is also the spokesperson of the USN (US 25 June 2015, 7; *La Lettre de l'océan Indien* 10 Apr. 2015; Freedom House 2014). The USN is a coalition of opposition parties (US 25 June 2015, 16; PHW 2014, 395; Agence de presse Xinhua 14 Aug. 2013). Sources explain that it was formed by opposition political parties in anticipation of the legislative elections of 2013 (Freedom House 2014; PHW 2014, 395). According to *Political Handbook of the World 2014 (PHW)*, the MRD is one of the parties that formed the coalition (ibid., 395, 399).

For further information on the USN and the treatment of its members from 2011 to February 2014, see Response to Information Request DJI104771.

For further information on the treatment of USN members from March 2014 to June 2015 and on the framework agreement of December 2014 between the USN and the government, see Response to Information Request DJI105209.

3. Treatment of MRD Members by the Authorities

Sources note that Daher Ahmed Farah has been imprisoned a number of times (ARDHD 2 July 2015; Freedom House 2014) since his return from exile in January 2013 (ibid.). In correspondence sent to the Research Directorate, the president of the Association for Respect of Human Rights in Djibouti (Association pour le respect des droits de l'homme à Djibouti, ARDHD), an NGO in Paris that advocates for democracy, justice and human rights in Djibouti (ARDHD n.d.), states that Daher Ahmed Farah had been imprisoned and then convicted [translation] "each time he returned to the country (the last judgments date back to 2013)" (ibid. 2 July 2015). According to his statements, [translation] "[s]everal people [MRD members] were arrested, imprisoned and tortured. For example, there is Farah Abadid Heldid, who was imprisoned a number of times by reason of his membership in the MRD" (ibid.). Corroborating information could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

4. Treatment of the MRD Members by the Authorities Since the Party Took a Position Against the Framework Agreement of December 2014 Between the USN and the Government

La Lettre de l'océan Indien, a publication on the information portal Africa Intelligence, which focuses on political and economic news in the Indian Ocean countries (Africa Intelligence n.d.), states that Daher Ahmed Farah is the only one of seven members of the High Council of the USN to have voted against the framework agreement signed on December 30, 2014; he justified his action by the absence, in the agreement, of claims about the Independent National Electoral Commission and the status of the opposition (2 Jan. 2015). The ARDHD President stated that Daher Ahmed Farah [translation] "and his associates" had officially remained members of the USN despite having taken this position (2 July 2015). *La Lettre de l'océan Indien* explains that Ahmed Farah gave in to High Council's vote, to give the agreement a chance (*La Lettre de l'océan Indien* 2 Jan. 2015). The same source adds that, if solutions are not found [translation] "in the upcoming months," Daher Ahmed Farah and the MRD will leave the USN (ibid.).

According to the ARDHD President, [translation] "the MRD leaders have not been worried since 2014. It does not seem that DAF [Daher Ahmed Farah] was reprimanded for the position he took against the framework agreement of December 2014" (2 July 2015). Corroborating information could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

Further information on the treatment of MRD members by the authorities since the position taken by the party against the framework agreement of December 2014 between the USN and the government could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

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.

References

Africa Intelligence. N.d. "Qui sommes nous?" <<http://www.africaintelligence.fr/info/AboutAI.aspx>> [Accessed 7 July 2015]

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Additional Sources Consulted

Oral sources: The following persons and organizations were unable to provide information within the time constraints: Observatoire djiboutien pour la promotion de la démocratie et des droits humains; President, Ligue djiboutienne des droits humains.

Attempts to contact the following person were unsuccessful within the time constraints: President, Association cultures & progrès.

Internet sites, including: Africa Intelligence; Agence djiboutienne d'information; AllAfrica; Amnesty International; BBC; eoi.net; IRIN; *Jeune Afrique*; Pan-African News Agency; Radio France internationale; Reporters sans frontières; United Nations – Refworld; *La Voix de Djibouti*.

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