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.

SDN105182.E
Sudan: Communist Party of Sudan (CPS), including history; treatment by government authorities since 1978, including members who return to the country after that year (1978-May 2015)
Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa

1. History of the Communist Party of Sudan (CPS)

- Some sources report that the CPS was established in 1946 (Gurtong Trust n.d.; Sudan: State and Society in Crisis 1991, 79; Al Jazeera 7 Apr. 2010). According to the Political Handbook of the World 2011 (PHW), the party was founded in 1944 and was a "leading force in the struggle for independence" (PHW 2011, 1358).
- Sources report that in 1958, the military regime in Sudan banned political parties (MRG 1995, 6; Holt and Daly 2014, 120). Without providing details, an article by Al Jazeera states that the CPS was opposed to the military government and "was forced underground where it continued its opposition activities through civil disobedience" (Al Jazeera 7 Apr. 2010).
- Gurtong Trust, a "peace and media project" that aims to "broaden its peace-building and information activities among South Sudanese at home and in the Diaspora," reports that according to information provided by electionnaire.org, in 1969, the CPS supported Colonel Jafaar Nimeri [also spelled Gaafar Muhammad al-Nimeiry, Numayri] in taking over the government (Gurtong Trust n.d.). Al Jazeera further indicates that the CPS "remained officially dissolved although some CPS members entered Nimeri's government" (7 Apr. 2010).
- In 1971, military officers affiliated with the CPS attempted to overthrow president Jafaar Nimeri (Al Jazeera 7 Apr. 2010; International Crisis Group 4 May 2011, 35). Those involved were executed (ibid.; University of Central Arkansas n.d.; PHW 2011, 1358).
- According to the Washington Post, there was a "widespread crackdown ... on leftists and Communists after Nimeri blamed them for the [1971] coup"; 11 officers were "shot by firing squad" and 2 civilians were hung, with approximately 30 other officers and "several civilians" also to stand trial in connection with the "pro-Communist coup" (The Washington Post 28 July 1971). The same source reports that Abdel Khalek Mahjoub, leader of the CPS, was hanged for "allegedly masterminding the short-lived coup that toppled the regime" (ibid.).
- 1985 - President Nimeri was overthrown (University of Central Arkansas n.d.; A Concise History of South Sudan 2014, 288; MRG 1995, 7) in a "popular uprising" (ibid.; A Concise History of South Sudan 2014, 288). A Concise History of South Sudan further states the coup was led by a coalition of "trade unions and professional organisations including the Umma Party and the Sudan Communist Party" (ibid.).
- According to PHW 2011, the CPS took part in the 1986 elections as a "recognized party" and called for opposition to "Islamic fundamentalism; repeal of sharia [law]; and the adoption of a
secular, democratic constitution" (PHW 2011, 1358). The same source notes that the CPS won three seats in the 1986 elections (ibid.).

- **In July 1989**, Lt. General Omar Hassan Ahmad al-Bashir took power in a military coup and political parties were banned (University of Central Arkansas n.d.; Sudan Tribune 22 Mar. 2012; MRG 1995, 7).

- In 1989, the CPS joined the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) (International Crisis Group 26 Nov. 2013, 3; Al Jazeera 7 Apr. 2010; MRG 1995, 7).

- According to the International Institute of Social History (IISH), a research institute based in the Netherlands specializing in the history of labour relations all over the world (IISH n.d.a), the main goal of the NDA was to "overthrow the [Bashir] government in Khartoum and reinstall democracy and political pluralism in the Sudan" (IISH n.d.b). The same source states that the leadership of the NDA was based in Cairo, unable to conduct political activities in Sudan, and in 1989 and 1990 many leaders of opposition parties in Sudan left the country (ibid.).

- **PHW 2011** states that during the early 1990s, the CPS operated "primarily from exile" and "remained active in the anti-[National Islamic Front [1]] opposition" (PHW 2011, 1359).

- In 1996, according to the IISH, "armed factions" of the CPS and the "Free Lions of Rashaida Tribe" joined other NDA military efforts and, "[a]lthough these armed factions made an impressive show at the beginning in 1996, they failed to achieve any progress" due to a shortage of resources, lack of coordination, and the "fierce competition that existed among the opposition groups" (IISH n.d.b).

- 2005 - The government of Sudan and the NDA signed a reconciliation deal (Historical Dictionary of the Sudan 2013, lxvi; University of Central Arkansas n.d.).

- Prior to the 2010 elections, the National Consensus Forces (NCF) is established as a coalition of opposition parties (International Crisis Group 11 Mar. 2015, 14; UN 26 July 2012). Sources indicate that the CPS is a member of the NCF (ibid.; Sudan Tribune n.d.a).

- According to PHW 2011, CPS "reformers" have urged the party to take a more left-of-center approach to "attract wider popular participation, but the group's 'older generation of leaders' has rejected the change (PHW 2011, 1359).


### 2. Treatment of Communist Party Members by Government Authorities

#### 2.1 1978-1990

In correspondence with the Research Directorate, an associate professor with the Department of Sociology at the University of Calgary, with research experience in Sudan, stated that between 1978 and 1986, the government "oppressed and eliminated leaders and regular members of the CPS," and that "most" CPS members were subjected to execution, assault, imprisonment or "forced into exile" during that time (Associate Professor 11 May 2015). The same source added that the period between 1986 and 1989, after the overthrow of President Nimeiry and before the coup by Al Bashir, "was generally democratic" (ibid.). Following the coup by Al Bashir, between 1989 and the present, "communists were met by similar brutality" as the 1978-1986 period and that "[a]lthough there are not many executions, leaders and members face imprisonment, torture, loss of jobs, kidnapping and are also forced into exile" (ibid.).

Other sources indicate the following:

- **1977-1978**: According to the US Department of State's *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 1978*, in 1977, President Nimeir began a "campaign of reconciliation" with political opposition and by the fall of 1978, "virtually all political prisoners, including communists, had been released" (US 8 Feb. 1979, 169).

- The 1979 *Country Reports* states that "Communists ... were dealt with sternly" (ibid. 4 Feb. 1980, 196). The same report states that "[s]everal hundred communists [were] still in prison following civil/labour disturbances in August" (ibid.).

- The 1980 *Country Reports* states that "during the course of the year several hundred persons, the majority allegedly communist, were detained for investigation of conspiracy against the government. Such people generally have been released after a short detention" (ibid. 2 Feb. 1981, 266).

- Both the 1981 and 1982 *Country Reports* indicate that the CPS is one of the few political parties that was not incorporated into the ruling one-party government and that "the

- Without providing details, the 1984 Country Reports states that by the end of the year, there were "230 Baathists and communists in detention" (ibid. Feb. 1985, 324).
- The 1986 Country Reports indicates that Sudan held "free and fair" elections for the first time since 1968, and that participating parties included "the Communists" (ibid. Feb. 1987, 314).
- According to PHW 2011, SCP Secretary General Muhammad Ibrahim Nugud Mansur was arrested after the 1989 coup and "four more party members were detained for alleged involvement in an anti-government protest" (PHW 2011, 1359).
- The 1990 Country Reports states that "torture and other forms of physical mistreatment by official and unofficial security forces were widespread in 1990" (US Feb. 1991, 381). The same source further states that "[h]ose detained included ... suspected Communists or other 'leftists'" and that "[d]etainees were subjected to varying forms of torture" (ibid.).

2.2 1990-2005

- The 1995 Country Reports states that in May and June of that year, "government security forces arrested over 100 members of the Sudanese opposition and a handful of underground Communist Party leaders" (ibid. Apr. 1996, 251). A 1996 Human Rights Watch report on "political repression" in Sudan similarly indicates that in August 1995, eight members of the CPS that had been held without charge since May 1995 were released (Human Rights Watch 1996, 60).
- According to the 2000 Country Reports, "[a]uthorities continued to detain political opponents" and in May of that year, six members of the CPS "were detained" (US 23 Feb. 2001, Sec. 1). The same source further states that in general, persons were detained for "a few days ... however, detentions of ... NDA members generally were much longer" (ibid.).
- The 2000 Country Reports, citing the NGO Sudanese Human Rights Group (SHRG), states that by the end of 2000, the six CPS members detained in May of that same year remained in detention (ibid.). The same report also states that the government carried out "military initiatives against NDA strongholds in Kassala State" (ibid., intro.).
- A 2001 fact-finding mission by the Danish Immigration Service states that ordinary members of opposition parties were typically not imprisoned, "although there had been occasional instances of members of the communist party ... being imprisoned" (Denmark 2001, 27).
- The 2003 Country Reports states that in July of that year, "14 leading Islamic scholars and 2 university professors issued a fatwah declaring communists ... as apostates who deserved to be killed" and that over 400 other professional individuals protested against the fatwah "in a public announcement" (US 25 Feb. 2004, Sec. 2).
- Without providing details, the 2005 Country Reports states that the Sudanese government "held an estimated 100 political detainees, such as members of opposition parties, and security forces reportedly tortured, detained without charge, and held incommunicado political opponents" (US 8 Mar. 2006, 3).

2.3 2006-2014

- A 2009 report by Human Rights Watch states that "[m]embers of the Communist party were arrested for distributing leaflets bearing the party name in Khartoum" (Human Rights Watch 6 Oct. 2009, 11).
- The 2011 Country Reports states that the CPS was not officially registered with the government (US 24 May 2012, 25).
- Following protests in June 2012, Human Rights Watch reported that some individuals were detained "for longer periods" and "face lengthy interrogations in which they [were] accused of being traitors, communists, or spies; several have reported harsh treatment" (Human Rights Watch 11 July 2012). The same report notes that among those still detained at the time of writing, at least one was a member of the CPS (ibid.).
- The 2013 Country Reports states that the CPS "formally registered" with the government during that year (US 27 Feb. 2014, 30).
- Following protests in September 2013, Human Rights Watch reported that a member of the CPS from Gedarif was arrested and interrogated about an "opposition party statement denouncing the government" and was beaten and questioned about who organized the Gedarif demonstrations (Human Rights Watch 28 Nov. 2013).
- In a 2014 follow-up report on the September 2013 protests, a member of the CPS "told Human Rights Watch he was arrested at his workplace ... before the protests began, and held incommunicado for over a month" (ibid. 2014, 20).
In reference to the same protests, Amnesty International (AI) reports that "at least 17 members of the Sudanese Communist Party have been arrested in and around Sudan's capital Khartoum since the protests began" (2 Oct. 2013).

2.4 April 2015 Elections

Sources indicate that opposition parties boycotted the April 2015 elections in Sudan (Sudan Tribune 28 Apr. 2015; ACJPS 18 Apr. 2015; Reuters 2 Feb. 2015). A March 2015 report by the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office states that in January 2014, "President Bashir launched a 'National Dialogue' that would be open to all political parties ... However, the arrest of opposition leaders and civil society figures continued to raise serious concerns" (UK 12 Mar. 2015). The same source further states that "[p]olitical and individual freedoms continued to be restricted by the government during 2014" and that "[o]pposition parties experienced harassment by security forces, notably raids on the offices of the ... Sudanese Communist Party" (ibid.).

Sources indicate that leading up to the elections, political opposition party members associated with "Irhal (Go!)," a campaign run by the NCF, have been subjected to "arbitrary arrest and ill-treatment" by security forces (ACJPS 18 Apr. 2015; FIDH 12 Apr. 2015). A news report published by the International Federation for Human Rights (Fédération internationale des ligues des droits de l'homme, FIDH), further states that on 7 February, a CPS member, Yousef Babiker, was detained by security forces and "interrogated about a message he distributed to friends ... in support of the election boycott" (ibid.). The same source also notes the following arrests:

- "[T]hree members of the Sudanese Communist Party" on the 12 February 2015 (ibid.);
- "Eight members of the Sudanese Communist Party" on 27 March 2015, six of whom were released on the same day and two who were held overnight, "interrogated on the Irhal campaign, denied sleep and beaten with water pipes" (ibid.);
- A senior member of the Communist Party was released on bail "after being charged under article 66 (publication of false news) and 69 (disturbance of public peace) of the 1991 Sudanese Penal Code" (ibid.).

Sources also state that opposition activist Dr. Sandra Kadoda was detained in April 2015 (Associate Professor 11 May 2015; ACJPS 13 Apr. 2015; Sudan Tribune 15 Apr. 2015); she is a member of the CPS (ibid.; Associate Professor 11 May 2015). The Associate Professor further stated that after her detention, she was found "a few days later on a street sick, weak and beaten" (ibid.). According to the Sudan Tribune, the National Intelligence and Security Services "has denied arresting [her] and warned they hold the security apparatus responsible for her safety" (Sudan Tribune 15 Apr. 2015). Further and corroborating information could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

2.5 Treatment of Members Returning to Sudan

Information on the treatment of CPS members who returned to Sudan, or attempted to return to Sudan, was scarce among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

Without providing details, the Associate Professor stated that when CPS members return to Sudan, "they are arrested, and in many cases jailed and brutalized ... at present most of the returnees are met with suspicion" and that "being [part of] a group that is considered a threat, some communists avoid traveling because some who returned to visit or stay were investigated, imprisoned and harassed" (11 May 2015).

According to a 2013 report by AI, on 27 September 2013, Dr. Sidgi Kaballo, a dual citizen of Sudan and the UK and member of the CPS, was arrested "shortly after he returned from the UK" and his location was not disclosed to his family (AI 2 Oct. 2013). The Birmingham Mail, a daily newspaper for Birmingham, UK, reported that Dr. Kaballo was released "after a 15-day detention by security forces in Sudan" and that he must "negotiate his exit from Sudan with the security forces so he can return to the UK" (17 Oct. 2013). According to the March 2015 report by the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office, "[m]embers of opposition parties faced restrictions on their international travel" (UK 12 Mar. 2015). Further and corroborating information 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.
Note

[1] According to the Encyclopedia Britannica, "Bashir led the Revolutionary Command Council for National Salvation (RCC) in administering the country. The RCC, however, was a vehicle for the National Islamic Front (NIF), an Islamist political party with a fundamentalist agenda" (Encyclopedia Britannica n.d.).

References


Associate Professor, Department of Sociology, University of Calgary. 11 May 2015. Correspondence with the Research Directorate.


Additional Sources Consulted

Oral sources: The following were unable to provide information within the time constraints of this Response:
African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies.
Attempts to contact the following were unsuccessful within the time constraints of this Response: Professor,
Department of Political Science, University of Calgary; Rift Valley Institute.

Internet sites, including: AllAfrica; BBC; ecoi.net; Factiva; Human Rights Organization – Sudan;
International Organization for Migration; Rift Valley Institute; Small Arms Survey.

Tips on how to use this search engine.