

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](#).

18 July 2016

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Sudan: Procedures and requirements to obtain exit permits for Sudanese nationals to leave the country; information on entry and exit screening at Khartoum International Airport; reports of persons wanted or being sought by the authorities being stopped at the airport by security services (2014-July 2016)
Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa

1. Procedures and Requirements for Nationals to Exit Sudan

In correspondence with the Research Directorate, a lawyer based in Khartoum provided excerpts of *The Passport and Immigration Act 1994*, which state the following information on exit procedures:

12. (1) Every person, who departs from the Sudan, shall have a valid exit visa.

...

(3) Exit visa shall not be granted to:

- a. an alien, who holds special, or temporary residence permit, and is accused of an offence, or indebted, to any person, with an amount of money;
- b. a Sudanese accused of an offence;
- c. a Sudanese, who is convicted, more than once, of the offence of smuggling;
- d. a Sudanese, against whom there is reasonable suspicion that he practices an activity hostile to the Sudan, or defamatory thereof, by any of by any of the acts;
- e. a Sudanese, who cannot pay the costs of his journey, to the place he intends to go to, and the cost of his stay therein, and return to the Sudan;
- f. a child who does not attain 18 years of age, save upon the approval of his guardian. (Sudan 1994).

The same source provided excerpts of an official English copy of *The Passport and Immigration Act 1994*, including information on documents and procedures of entry, exit, residence, and deportation, which are attached to this Response.

Sources cite an official from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, whose daughter left the country without an exit stamp, which that official stated is required for Sudanese citizens to leave the country (APA 30 June 2015; Radio Dabanga 31 Aug. 2015).

The US Department of State's *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2015* states that

[t]he government requires citizens to obtain an exit visa if they wish to depart the country. Issuance was usually pro forma, but the government continued to use the visa requirement to restrict some citizens' travel, especially persons of political or security interest. To obtain an exit visa, children must receive the permission of both parents. (US 13 April 2016, 49)

In a joint report titled *The Long Arm of the Sudanese Regime: How the Sudanese National Intelligence and Security Service Monitors and Threatens Sudanese Nationals who Leave Sudan*, Article 1, a UK-based NGO that supports Sudanese asylum seekers in the UK (Article 1 n.d.), and Waging Peace, a UK-based NGO that "campaigns against genocide and systematic human rights abuses" with a focus on Sudan (Waging Peace n.d.), state the following regarding travellers exiting Sudan:

Sudanese visa procedures impose restrictive rules and surveillance on national and international travellers who wish to enter or exit the country. ... Sudan is one of the few countries where you need an exit visa in order to leave. ... Travellers may be prevented from leaving the country and questioned about their future movements and activities. ... Government officials working in the immigration department are known to work for [National Intelligence and Security Services, NISS]. (Article 1 and Waging Peace Sept. 2014, 5)

1.1 Procedures and Requirements to Obtain an Exit Visa

Without providing further information, the lawyer explained that, as per the government of Sudan's website about passports (www.passport.gov.sd), which is available only in Arabic, the required documents for an exit visa are:

- A valid passport;
- Travel Card/performing national service Card for individuals that have not completed their national service;
- Entry visa for their final destination;
- The consent of Guardian as to an infant who has not attained the age of 18 when he/she travel with his/her mother, save in case of residence with the husband;
- Vacation Certificate for employees whether in public or private sector;
- In case of travel for an official mission, the approval of Cabinet is required. In [the] case [of] traveling to Syria, the approval of International Police is required. Regarding traveling to Libya there should be Good conduct Certificate [and] Traveling ticket.
- A copy of passport (page 1 and 2 [and] entering visa).
- A copy of all documents above shall be enclosed with the valid Passport. (Lawyer 12 July 2016)

The lawyer described the following procedures and requirements in order to obtain an exit visa:

The Passport and Immigration Act, 1994 does not state the procedures that should be followed in order to exit Sudan, and this has been left to the directions and regulations which [are] issued from time to time by competent authority. (ibid.)

The Article 1 and Waging Peace joint report on the monitoring of nationals exiting Sudan indicates that "[t]ravellers can obtain an exit visa from the Ministry of Interior's main office in Khartoum or the transit office at Khartoum International airport" (Article 1 and Waging Peace Sept. 2014, 5).

Further and corroborating information on the exit visas or permits, exit stamps, and the procedures and requirements to obtain them, could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

2. Entry and Exit Screening at Khartoum International Airport

2.1 Entry Screening

The Article 1 and Waging Peace joint report cites the following testimony from a Sudanese refugee in the UK who travelled to Sudan:

...in September 2013, when I arrived at Khartoum Airport and passed through the passport control, I saw that there was an additional security control behind the passport control. After I had scanned my hand luggage, they looked at my passport, entered my name in their computer and the person said to me, "You are wanted." (ibid., 16)

Further and corroborating information about entry screening at Khartoum International Airport could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

2.2 Exit Screening, Including Travel Ban Lists

Without providing further information, Sudan Tribune, a Paris-based news website that aims to "promote plural information, democratic and free debate on Sudan" (Sudan Tribune n.d.), reports that in 2016, while departing through the Khartoum airport a journalist was stopped and told by security agents that his name was placed on "the travel ban list" (ibid. 25 Mar. 2016). Radio Dabanga, a Netherlands-based news radio station focused on Darfur (Radio Dabanga n.d.), notes that there are "records of people departing via Khartoum Airport" (ibid. 10 Sept. 2015). Corroborating information could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

Media sources cite statements from a spokesperson of the Sudanese foreign ministry who claimed that his daughter was among a group of students that left Sudan via Khartoum International Airport without the required exit stamp, in order to join ISIS (APA News 30 June 2015; Radio Dabanga 10 Sept. 2015). Without providing further information, the Sudan Tribune reports that the foreign ministry spokesperson stated that he could not locate the "registration of the departure" of his daughter from Khartoum, and that the students "were not screened per the routine procedures for each person departing the country" (ibid. 29 June 2015).

Further information on exit screening procedures at Khartoum International Airport for Sudanese nationals leaving Sudan, including whether immigration officials check travellers against information on wanted or sought people, could not be found amongst sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

3. Incidents of Persons Being Stopped at Khartoum International Airport upon Entry and upon Exit

In a 2015 briefing, the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees of Germany reports the following incidents:

Returning from a meeting of Sudanese opposition members in Paris, the head of the Sudanese National Alliance Party (SNAP), who is at the same time a leading figure of the opposition alliance National Consensus Forces (NCF), was arrested by agents of the Sudanese National Security Services (NISS) at Khartoum airport. Already before, the Sudanese security service had seized the passports of five leading opposition members, namely three members of the Sudanese Communist Party (SCP), the head of the Sudanese Congress Party (SCP) and the leader of the Unified National Unionist Party (UNUP). Apart from those groups, also delegates from the National Umma Party (NUP), the Sudanese Revolutionary Front (SRF) and the Civil Society Initiative (CSI) had participated in the four-days meeting in Paris organized by Sudan Call, an umbrella organisation of opposition parties established in December 2014. A NCF spokesman expressed concern that more opposition members would be arrested in the future. (Germany 16 Nov. 2015)

Country Reports 2015 similarly reports that in November 2015, "authorities temporarily detained and confiscated the passports of Sudanese National Alliance Party Chair, Kamal Ismail, and Deputy Chair of the National Umma Party, Mariam al-Sadiq al-Mahadi, upon their return from talks in Paris" (US 13 Apr. 2016, 49-50).

Sources report the following examples of people being stopped at Khartoum International Airport while attempting to exit the country:

- In August 2014, the NISS prevented a member of the National Umma Party from travelling to Paris to attend a meeting with opposition parties (US 25 June 2015, 39);
- In September 2014, a leader of the NCF opposition coalition was prevented from travelling to Addis Ababa (Radio Dabanga 4 Sept. 2014; US 25 June 2015, 39) and at Khartoum airport was told that "his name appeared on the list of Sudanese prohibited to exit the country" (Radio Dabanga 4 Sept. 2014).
- In September 2014, the authorities prevented a member of the National Umma Party from travelling to Nairobi (US 25 June 2015, 39);
- In October 2015, a member of the Sudanese Congress Party (SCP) was prevented from boarding a flight to Cairo (UNIBAG 5 Oct. 2015; Radio Dabanga 5 Oct. 2015);
- In October 2015, in a separate incident, a member of the Communist Party of Sudan was prevented from traveling abroad (ibid.);
- In November 2015, two members of Sudanese Communist Party along with a leader of the Unified Federal Party were "barred" by the security authorities from leaving the country (Sudan Tribune 9 Nov. 2015; Radio Dabanga 10 Nov. 2015). The security authorities also confiscated their passports (ibid.).
- In November 2015, *Country Reports 2015* states that authorities temporarily detained and confiscated the passports of a leader of the Sudanese National Alliance Party and another member from the National Umma Party upon their return from Paris (US 13 Apr. 2016, 49-50);
- In March 2016, as referred to in section 2.2, a journalist travelling abroad from Khartoum airport was stopped by security authorities and was told that his "name was placed on a travel

ban list" and to report to the NISS headquarters after the authorities seized his passport (Sudan Tribune 25 March 2016).

- In March 2016, in a separate incident, two human rights activists were prevented from travelling to Geneva; security agents told one of them that she was banned from travel, and that she had to report to the NISS headquarters in Khartoum after they confiscated her passport (ibid. 28 March 2016).

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: The Border Institute; Canada – Embassy of Canada in Khartoum; four lawyers in Khartoum; professor of humanities and language, University of New South Wales.

Internet sites, including: Amnesty International; Asylum Research Consultancy; BBC; Deutsche Welle; ecoi.net; Factiva; *The Guardian*; Human Rights Watch; International Organization for Migration; Khartoum International Airport; Sudan – Central Bank of Sudan, Central Bureau of Statistics, Embassies in London and Washington D.C., Government of the Republic of Sudan, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Interior, Government of the Republic of Sudan; Reuters; UN – Refworld; US – Agency for International Development, Central Intelligence Agency, Embassy in Khartoum.

Attachment

Sudan. 1994. *The Passports and Immigration Act*. Sent to the Research Directorate by a lawyer based in Khartoum, 12 July 2016.

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