

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](#).

5 December 2016

SDN105695.E

Sudan: Sudan Change Now (SCN), including structure, leaders, objectives, activities, and membership procedures; treatment of members and supporters by the authorities (2015-November 2016)
Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa

1. Overview

A 2013 article about Sudanese opposition protests by IHS Markit, a company that provides information and analysis to industries in financial, energy and transportation domains, among others (IHS Markit n.d.), describes Sudan Change Now (SCN) as a "coalition of professional unions, civil society, and opposition groups" (ibid. 1 Oct. 2013). An article in the UN's Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN) indicates that SCN is an urban protest movement composed of young activists that use social media to advance their objectives (UN 26 July 2012). In an article published in the journal *Middle East Report* [1], Khalid Mustafa Medani, Associate Professor of political science at McGill University, similarly characterizes the SCN as a "grassroots protest organization ... composed heavily of middle-class young people" who use social media and other "high-tech communication tools to voice their grievances against the regime, as well as their criticisms of the older generation of politicians and increasingly marked ethnic and racial divisions in society" (Medani 2013).

Sources indicate that SCN was founded in 2010 (UN 12 July 2012; SCN 20 Nov. 2012). However, an internet blog administered by SCN states that their activities began "within already established opposition political parties from as early as 2008" (ibid.).

2. Objectives

According to the official Facebook page of SCN, the movement's objective is the "[t]oppling [of] the [Sudanese] regime and establishing a plural, civil and democratic alternative" (SCN n.d.). Sources similarly indicate that the SCN "seeks a popular uprising against [President] Bashir's rule" (Dow Jones Newswires 15 Oct. 2015) or the "downfall of the ruling of the National Congress Party (NCP)" (Sudan Tribune 26 Sept. 2012). SCN's blog notes that the movement has "13 specific goals concerned with what follows the change of regime and ways of ensuring a peaceful transition with relevant mechanisms that support guarantees in establishing the required institutional framework for a democratic society" (SCN 20 Nov. 2012). A copy of the SCN's goals and charter, as it appears on the group's Internet blog, is attached to this Response.

SCN's blog further indicates that its "political line" is the pursuit of "[n]on-violent and peaceful democratic transformation of Sudan" (ibid.). In an article published in Sharnoff's Global Views, "an independent website" that describes itself as "a global op-ed forum featuring original content by internationalists" on politics, economics and "other relevant issues" (Sharnoff's Global Views n.d.), and written by Dr. Amgad Fareid El Tayeb [also spelled Amjed Farid Eltayeb], SCN spokesperson, he states that SCN

"firmly" rejects violent or military tactics to bring about political change in Sudan, and rather "adopt[s] the methods of peaceful civil resistance as [its] blueprint ... [as] this is the only way for the Sudan which we want and dream of" (ibid. 10 May 2013).

In the same source, Dr. Amgad Fareid El Tayeb also indicated that SCN has "participated, coordinated and organized several public protests and strikes" since its creation (ibid.). In an open letter concerning SCN's "'Not in Our Name'" campaign to support victims of war in Sudan, which was posted on their website, the movement indicates that they have "worked hard with other activists who have been advocating and repeatedly protesting against conflicts and atrocities in Darfur, South Kordofan and the Blue Nile" (SCN 18 Mar. 2012). Additional information on the activities of the SCN could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

3. Leaders and Structure

Information on the leaders and structure of SCN was scarce among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

Sources from 2013 describe Khaled Omer Yousif as an SCN spokesperson (FIDH 29 Mar. 2013; Sudan Tribune 28 Mar. 2013). On 14 January 2014, Sudan Tribune, a Paris-based news website on Sudan, published an op-ed article by Amjed Farid Eltayeb, who identified himself as SCN spokesperson (ibid. 14 Jan. 2014). Sources from 2015 also identify an Amjad Farid as SCN spokesperson (*The Guardian* 13 Apr. 2015; BBC 13 Apr. 2015). An article by CNN from 2012 indicates that the SCN spokesperson "goes by the name Ahmed Samir for security reasons" (29 June 2012). A statement from the group posted on SCN's Twitter account names Khalid Omer Yousif as "a leader" of the SCN movement and as Deputy Chairperson for External Affairs at the Sudanese Congress Party (SCP) (SCN 5 Aug. 2015). Other sources similarly note that he is also a leader within the SCP (AI 17 Aug. 2015; Human Rights Watch 28 Aug. 2015), which Human Rights Watch states "has an active student and youth wing and conducts public rallies and events" (ibid.).

In a telephone interview with the Research Directorate, an associate professor at McGill University who specializes in African and Sudanese politics indicated that the SCN is "[v]ery big ... [and] is the largest opposition movement in Sudan" (Associate Professor 21 Nov. 2016). The same source stated that SCN has "a lot" of members in Sudan and Egypt, and it has a Sudanese diaspora branch in Washington, DC (ibid.). Corroborating information could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

4. Membership Procedures

Without providing further details, SCN's blog indicates that people wishing to support or join the movement can do so by "directly contacting SCN" (SCN 20 Nov. 2012). The same source states that SCN membership "targets Sudanese citizens from all regions, ethnicities, religious backgrounds who suffer from the current regime," and that "current membership comprises Sudanese [members] in Khartoum and other [s]tates, as well as [from] abroad" (ibid.). According to Medani, both SCN and Girifna [2] "maintain strong links with the University of Khartoum, though the movement[s] leaders are careful to operate clandestinely on campus, to avoid bringing more security pressure on students" (Medani 2013). Further and corroborating information on membership could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

5. Treatment by Authorities

Medani cites information provided by a member of Girifna, whom he interviewed in the US during a research trip, as stating that SCN and Girifna members are of the generation that grew up "almost entirely under the Islamists ... [and] have experienced not only shrinking employment but also increasing repression by the state, including tightened surveillance, extrajudicial detention, sexual assault of male and female leaders, and torture" (2013). Freedom House's *Freedom in the World 2015* report for Sudan indicates that

[t]he 2010 National Security Act gives the [Sudanese National Intelligence and Security Services, NISS] sweeping authority to seize property, conduct surveillance, search premises, and detain suspects for up to four and a half months without judicial review. The police and security forces routinely exceed these broad powers, carrying out arbitrary arrests and holding people at secret locations without access to lawyers or their relatives. Human rights groups accuse the NISS of systematically detaining and torturing government opponents, including Darfuri activists, journalists, and members of youth movements such as Girifna and Sudan Change Now. (Freedom House 2015)

According to the Associate Professor, the SCN

is the most targeted organization in Sudan. The organization's members are tortured and detained, the organization is vandalized, there are two cases of sexual assaults of female members in an attempt to have their families force them to stop their activities with the SNC. There are also 6 cases of main leaders being tortured, and at least 100 people facing detention where they have to report to the security forces every day. There are also a lot of cases of expulsion from government jobs and employment, and state surveillance. This started when SNC started operating, and is continuing until the present day. (21 Nov. 2016)

Sources indicate that Khalid Omer Yousif was arrested in Khartoum by the NISS on 5 August 2015 (SCN 5 Aug. 2015) or 6 August 2015 (AI 17 Aug. 2015; Human Rights Watch 28 Aug. 2015). Human Rights Watch reports that authorities detained Yousif to question him about a speech he gave during an event (ibid.). Amnesty International (AI) indicates that Yousif was released later that day "without any formal investigation or charge" (AI 17 Aug. 2016). According to sources, Yousif was instructed by the NISS to report to them daily (ibid.; Human Rights Watch 28 Aug. 2015) where he and other detained activists were questioned on the activities of the SCP, "and sometimes they [are] asked to identify people in videos and photographs" (AI 17 Aug. 2016). SCN's statement posted on their Twitter account indicates that Yousif was "detained repeatedly during in the past and was subjected to ill-treatment and torture" (5 Aug. 2015). Additional information on the treatment of SCN members and supporters by authorities 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.

Notes

[1] *Middle East Report* is a periodical on the Middle East produced by the Middle East Research and Information Project (MERIP), a non-profit and non-governmental organization based in Washington, DC, whose board of directors, editorial committee, and contributing editors are comprised of academics, scholars, and journalists (MERIP n.d.).

[2] Girifna is a pro-democracy movement rooted in student activism that was founded in October 2009 by students from the University of Khartoum (Medani 2013). For information on the Girifna Movement, see Response to Information Request SDN105025 of December 2014.

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Additional Sources Consulted

Oral sources: Sudan Change Now.

Internet sites, including: *Africa Confidential*; AllAfrica; Chr. Michelsen Institute; ecoi.net; Institute for War and Peace Reporting; International Crisis Group; *Political Handbook of the World*; Radio France international; Sudan News Agency; *Sudan Vision*; UN – Refworld, ReliefWeb; US – Central Intelligence Agency, Department of State.

Attachment

Sudan Change Now (SCN). 17 November 2012. "[Let Us Strive for Change Now \(SCN Charter\)](#)." [Accessed 23 Nov. 2016]

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