

# Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada

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## Responses to Information Requests

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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](#).

22 November 2016

### SDN105686.E

Sudan: The Nubian Congress, Ourbi Movement, and Dungala Movement including structure, leaders, objectives, activities, and branches; treatment of members by authorities and other groups (2014-November 2016)

Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa

#### 1. The Nubian Congress

In correspondence with the Research Directorate, a professor of anthropology at Erasmus University in Rotterdam, whose research includes Nubia [1] and who collected information from contacts in Sudan for this Response, indicated that there is more than one Nubian organization in Sudan with the name Nubian Congress [Nubian Congress Movement] (Professor at Erasmus University 17 Nov. 2016). The same source indicated that one was founded in 1996 in Khartoum, and that its name in the Nubian language is *Nobiin Karayoos*, and in Arabic is *al mu'tamr al Nuubii* (ibid.). The Professor at Erasmus University described the organization as a "non-violent political party" and indicated that it was part of the Congress of United Sudan Homeland (CUSH), a coalition seeking to represent marginalized ethnic groups (ibid.).

In a telephone interview with the Research Directorate, a professor of archaeology and anthropology at Rhode Island College, whose research areas include the Nubia in Sudan and who has done field work there, indicated that "the Nubian people see themselves as marginalized, including linguistically and culturally, and feel that their archeological and cultural history is in jeopardy because of the Arab and Islamist [government's]" policies (Professor at Rhode Island College 9 Nov. 2016). The same source further explained that Nubians, both within Sudan as well as from the diaspora, protest against this marginalization, as well as against plans by the Khartoum government to build dams in the Nile (ibid.).

In correspondence with the Research Directorate, an associate professor of political science at McGill University, who specializes in African and Sudanese politics, stated that the Nubian Congress is a "relatively recent organization" of about three years old, which began in protest against the Khartoum government's decision to build a dam at the third cataract in the Nile (Associate Professor 14 Nov. 2016). The same source indicated that the Youth Movement of the Nubians emerged to protest the government's decision to build dams without providing compensation to or resettlement of Nubian residents in the area (ibid. 14 Nov. 2016). The Professor at Erasmus University indicated that among the Nubians, both CUSH and the Nubian Congress are "crucially influential" in "elaborating the public stand of Nubians in matters pertaining to the flooding of their remaining regions by the building of planned dams" (Professor at Erasmus University 17 Nov. 2016).

The Professor at Erasmus University stated that the Nubian Congress is, at its core, a "very small but strong group of highly educated Sudanese Nubians who are anti Islamist and secular and who seem to work individually while their moves are highly coordinated" and that their tactics are to work "behind curtains" (ibid.). The same source explained that surrounding the core there are "many circles... who adhere to the Nubian Congress," including many youth who are involved in their activities, but who cannot admit or

prove their involvement with the Nubian Congress (ibid.). Without providing details, she indicated that "some actions of the Nubian Congress are very risky under the Islamic regime of Khartoum" (ibid.).

The Associate Professor stated that the Nubian Congress Assembly is the organizational leadership committee within the Nubian Congress (21 Nov. 2016).

## **2. The Ourbi and Dungala Movements**

The Professor at Rhode Island College described the Ourbi Movement as a "small and local" group that involves "a few family members from the village of Ourbi, as well as some others in exile" (Professor at Rhode Island College 9 Nov. 2016). Further and corroborating information could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

The Associate Professor stated that members of the Ourbi Movement and the Nubian Congress are ethnically related, and that the former is located in the northern part of Sudan, while the latter is located in the central part of northern Sudan (ibid.). The same source further explained that they share the same grievances over dam construction and forced displacement, and that they have formed an alliance (ibid.).

The Associate Professor indicated that although members of the Dungala Movement and the Ourbi Movement are from the same ethnic group and the same region, they are different organizations (ibid. 21 Nov. 2016). According to the same source, the Dungala Youth Movement is not part of the Dungala Movement, but is a separate youth group that is part of an umbrella organization of youth movements in Sudan (ibid.) The Associate Professor noted that the Dungala Youth Movement was started by secondary school and university students who wanted their own movement, and, although their members are from the same ethnic group and are supportive of the Ourbi and Dungala Movement's objectives, they are not part of them (ibid.).

## **3. Branches**

The Associate Professor indicated that that both the Nubian Congress and the Ourbi Movement have branches in Khartoum, Washington, DC, and London (ibid. 14 Nov. 2016). He also stated that since Nubians are a "diasporic community," the organizations may have branches in Egypt and "elsewhere" (ibid.). The Professor at Rhode Island College similarly indicated that the Nubians have diaspora groups in other countries such as the United States (Professor at Rhode Island College 9 Nov. 2016).

Further and corroborating information on the structure, objectives, branches and activities of the Nubian Congress, the Ourbi Movement, or Dungala Movement could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response. Information about leadership and membership of the Nubian Congress, the Ourbi Movement or the Dungala Movement could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

## **4. Treatment by Authorities**

Information on the treatment of members of the Nubian Congress and the Ourbi Movement was scarce among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

Without providing details, the Professor at Erasmus University stated that security forces in Sudan are doing "all they can so as to crack down [on the] Nubian Congress by infiltrating and disintegrating it" (Professor at Erasmus University 17 Nov. 2016). According to the Associate Professor, members of the Nubian Congress and the Ourbi Movement have been subjected to arrest and "expulsion" from their land (Associate Professor 14 Nov. 2016). The Associate Professor also indicated that members face barriers in getting their passports renewed to prevent them from leaving Sudan and "continuing their opposition [from] abroad" (14 Nov. 2016). Corroborating information could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response. Further information about the treatment of members of the Nubian Congress or the Ourbi Movement could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response. However, the following information about the treatment of people protesting dams in Sudan may be of interest.

Sources indicate that in 2007, during a protest against a dam at Kajbar, at the third cataract in the Nile, security forces shot at protesters, killing about 6 people and wounding 16 more (Professor at Rhode Island College 9 Nov. 2016) or killing 4 and injuring "at least" 20 people (*The Guardian* 12 Dec. 2014). According to a February 2016 article by Radio Dabanga, a Sudanese radio station that broadcasts news and information on Darfur (Radio Dabanga n.d.), "[t]he opposition against the proposed dams intensified following the signing of funding agreements for the[ir] construction between Sudan and Saudi Arabia in November [2015]" (Radio Dabanga 18 Feb. 2016). Sources report the following 2016 incidents regarding protests against dams in the Nile:

- Radio Dabanga reports that, on 21 January 2016, Khartoum security forces "shut down" an anti-dam meeting in the El Mahas Club in Khartoum (22 Jan. 2016).
- The Sudan Tribune, a France-based online news website focusing on Sudan (Sudan Tribune n.d.), reports that, on 17 February 2016, Sudanese police dispersed a protest against the building of the Kajbar and Dal dams and arrested "dozens" of people (ibid. 17 Feb. 2016). Several sources indicate that the police used excessive force to disperse the protesters (ibid.; Freedom House 17 Feb. 2016; Radio Dabanga 19 Feb. 2016). Radio Dabanga reports that "at least nine" people were wounded (Radio Dabanga 19 Feb. 2016) and that 30 people were detained and later released (ibid. 18 Feb. 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.

### Note

[1] The Joshua Project, a Christian research initiative on ethnic groups throughout the world (Joshua Project n.d.a), states that the Nubians "consist of seven non-Arab Muslim tribes which originated in the Nubia region, between Aswan in southern Egypt and Dongala in Northern Sudan" and that there are 73,000 Nubians in Sudan (Joshua Project n.d.b). According to the United Kingdom's Home Office *Sudan Country Report* for 2004, the "black ethnic groups" called the Anag, Barabra, Birked, Danagla, Dilling, Mahas and Midobi, located in central and part of northern Sudan, are collectively known as the Nubians (UK April 2004).

## References

Associate Professor of political science, McGill University. 21 November 2016. Telephone interview with the Research Directorate.

Associate Professor of political science, McGill University. 14 November 2016. Correspondence with the Research Directorate.

Freedom House. 17 February 2016. "[Sudan: Police Forcibly End Protest Against Dam Project](#)." [Accessed 15 Nov. 2016]

*The Guardian*. 12 December 2014. Yosra Akasha. "[Sudan's Anti-dam Movement Fights the Flooding of Nubian Culture](#)." [Accessed 10 Nov. 2016]

Joshua Project. N.d.a. "[Joshua Project](#)." [Accessed 15 Nov. 2016]

Joshua Project. N.d.b. "[Nubian, Dongola in Sudan](#)." [Accessed 20 Oct. 2016]

Professor of anthropology, Erasmus University, Rotterdam. 17 November 2016. Correspondence with the Research Directorate.

Professor of archeology and anthropology, Rhode Island College. 9 November 2016. Telephone interview.

Radio Dabanga. 19 February 2016. "[Wounded Dam Protester: 'Khartoum Security Was Extremely Violent'](#)." [Accessed 15 Nov. 2016]

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Radio Dabanga. 22 January 2016. "[Khartoum Security Shut Down Anti-dam Meeting in Club](#)." [Accessed 15 Nov. 2016]

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Sudan Tribune. 17 February 2016. "[Sudanese Police Disperse Anti-dams Demonstration, Arrests Several Protesters](#)." [Accessed 15 Nov. 2016]

Sudan Tribune. N.d. "[About Sudan Tribune](#)." [Accessed 15 Nov. 2016]

United Kingdom (UK). April 2004. Home Office. [Sudan Country Report](#). [Accessed 4 Nov. 2016]

## Additional Sources Consulted

**Oral sources:** African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies; Arab NGO Network for Development; Assistant Professor, Georgetown University Qatar; Sudanese Human Rights Defenders Network.

**Internet sites, including:** *Africa Confidential*; AllAfrica; Amnesty International; BBC; Chr. Michelsen Institute; ecoi.net; Factiva; Fédération internationale des ligues des droits de l'homme; Friedrich Ebert Stiftung; Human Rights Watch; Institute for War and Peace Reporting; International Crisis Group; IRIN; Minority Rights Group International; Norway – Landinfo; *Political Handbook of the World*; Radio France internationale; Stanford University – Mapping Militant Organizations; Sudan News Agency; *Sudan Vision*; UN – Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Refworld, ReliefWeb; Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization; US – Central Intelligence Agency, Department of State.

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