**Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada**

**Responses to Information Requests**

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**SDN105593.E**

Sudan: Differences between the Burhaniyya and Burhamiya Sufi orders; information on the Burhaniyya Sufi order; treatment of followers of the Burhaniyya Sufi order by society and authorities (2014-July 2016)

Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa

1. Overview

Sources indicate that the Burhaniyya [also spelled Burhani, Burhaniya, Burhâniya, or Burhâniyya] order (tariqa) is a Sufi organization that was founded in the 13th century in Egypt by Burhan al-Din al-Disuqi [also called Ibrâhim al-Dasüqi (Hallenberg 1993, 116) and Sayyidi Ibrahim Qurashi Disuqui (Tariqa Burhaniya n.d.a)] (Tariqa Burhaniya n.d.a; Hallenberg 1993, 115-116; Abu Hanieh Dec. 2011, 100). In correspondence with the Research Directorate, an associate professor of sociology at the University of Calgary whose research focus includes immigration and ethnic relations, and has written on Sudanese identity and diaspora, explained that the Burhaniyya order was introduced to Sudan from Egypt in the 1960s by Shaik Mohammed Osman Abdel Burhani who first settled and established it in Halfa then moved to Atbara before he relocated to Khartoum where he established it there in the end of the 1970s and early 1980s. The first Burhaniyya Zawia (center) was established in Khartoum 2. It was then moved to Al Soq Alshabi (the public market) in an area that has become their largest headquarters in Sudan ... It is spread throughout Sudan (the Republic of Sudan that is) and has centers in all cities and most towns in Sudan. (26 July 2016)

Tariqa Burhaniya, a website that "provides general information and news to all Burhani brothers and sisters" as well as the general public (Tariqa Burhaniya n.d.b), provides the following "extended version" of the Burhaniyya chain of Sheikhs:

- Sayyidi Sheikh Mohamed Sheikh Ibrahim Mohamed Osman
- Sayyidi Sheikh Ibrahim Mohamed Osman Abdah al Burhani
- Sayyidi Sheikh Mohamed Osman Abdah al Burhani
- Sayyidi Ahmad Arabi ash-Sharnubi
- Sayyidi Musa abu-l Umran
- Sayyidi Ibrahim al Qurashi ad-Disuqi
- Sayyidatuna Fatima ash-Shadhiliya
- Sayyidi Abdu-l Aziz al Mukannabi abi-l Majd
- Sayyidi Abu-l Hasan ash-Shadhului
- Sayyidi Abdu-s-Salam ibn Bashish
- Sayyidi Ahmad al Badawwi
- Sayyidi Abdu-l Qadir al Jilani
- Sayyidi Ahmad ar-Rifa'i
- Sayyidi Ali Zayinu-l Abidin
• Sayyidatuna as-Sayyida Zainab
• Sayyiduna wa Mawlana al Imam al Husain
• Sayyidatuna as-Sayyida Fatimatu-z-Zahra
• Sayyiduna wa Mawlana-I Imam Ali
• Sayyiduna wa Mawlana-I Imam Uthman ibn Affan
• Sayyiduna wa Mawlana-I Imam Umar ibnu-I Khattab
• Sayyiduna wa Mawlana-I Imam Abu Bakr as-Sidiq
• Ziyadatan fi sharafi-l Mustafa ([the] Prophet Muhammad) Salla-llahu ‘alaihi wa sallam. (Tariqa Burhaniya n.d.c)

Sources indicate that the current spiritual leader is Sheikh Mohamed [or Sheikh Mohamed Sheikh Ibrahim Sheikh Mohamed Osman (Tariqa Burhaniya n.d.a)] (Tariqa Burhaniya n.d.a; Associate Professor 26 July 2016). According to the Associate Professor, he resides in the Al Soq Alshabi area of Khartoum (ibid.).

The Associate Professor indicated that the Burhaniyya order has "a little over 2000 followers in Sudan, [a] relatively large number for a tariqa [in Sudan]" (ibid.). The same source also indicated that Al-Burhaniyya is very active and popular in Sudan. Their annual convention –takes place in April of every year- is an international event that attracts followers and supporters from all over Sudan and many countries in the world. It is a week-long event that consists of numerous religious and educational workshops and activities that usually attract many followers and the general public. (ibid.)

Further and corroborating information on the number of followers and level of popular support could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

2. Difference between al-Burhaniyya and al-Burhamiyya

In a paper presented at the Second Nordic Conference on Middle Eastern Studies held in Copenhagen in 1992, Helena Hallenberg from the University of Helsinki indicated that Ibrāhim al-Dastūqī's order “is known by the name referring to his own, al-Burhamiyya, or to his native town Dasṭūq, al-Dasṭūqiyya, or following his laqab [epithet] Burhān al-Din, al-Burhāniyya” (1992, 116). In contrast, the Associate Professor indicated that the opinion on this issue diverges and is also dichotomous. Some … state that the two are interrelated, and some even believe that the only reason it is called Burhaniyya in Sudan is that when Burhaniyya -perceived by them as very much connected to Burhamiyya- was introduced to Sudan, some Egyptian Burhamiyya didn’t want Sudan to take credit for their tariqa, (there is a long story about … relations between Sudan and Egypt...). As such[,] those Egyptians insisted on the change of the name of the tariqa in Sudan. This means [that] the origin is the same but the politics divided the groups in the two countries. A competing perspective (of most of the Burhaniyya in Sudan) showcases this tariqa as being distinct from Burhamiyya in Egypt and elsewhere. On the contrary, they believe it is a continuity of the Burhaniyya in Egypt. (26 July 2016)

3. Treatment of al-Burhaniyya Order by Authorities and Society

3.1 Treatment by Salafis

Information about the treatment of followers of al-Burhaniyya Order by authorities and society in Sudan was scarce among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

According to the Associate Professor, [the] significant presence of Al-Burhaniyya and the appreciation and respect it is getting from the public is making it a target. Given the historical discontent (and on many occasion[,] animosity) from Al-Salifs (the extremist Wahabis Ansar Al-Suna and Islamists led by Al-Bashir and others until recently led by Al-Turabi) towards the Sofis [Sufis] in Sudan in general, ... the followers of Al-Burhaniyya were and are targeted. By targeted I mean surveilled, interrupted and intimidated during their worship - for example during their Dars (religious lessons) and Zikir [or dhikr, the recitation of the name of Allah (Maruyama March 2015, 46)]. They have also been publicly intimidated during the celebrations of Al-Molid (birth of Prophet Mohammed) including recently in May 2016. These forms of intimidation also include yelling at worshippers on microphones and preventing them from worshipping. A recent incident led to the involvement of the police to protect the Burhaniyya followers. (26 July 2016)

Additional and corroborating information on this incident could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.
In a paper published in the *Kyoto Bulletin of Islamic Area Studies*, Daisuke Maruyama, a post-doctoral research fellow at the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science, indicates that Salafis, particularly the Jamāʿa Anṣār al-Sunna al-Muhammadīya, known as Anṣār al-Sunna, are a threat to Sufis and the distinctive Sufi way [emphasis in the original], as demonstrated in how Salafis - it is claimed - were responsible for the destruction in 2011 of Sufi sheikhs' tombs and for the violent clashes in the following year that occurred during *mawlid al-nabi* (the birthday of the prophet Muhammad). (March 2015, 48)

In a 2012 article, Al-Akhbar, a Beirut-based news website, reports that there is "simmering conflict" between Salafis and Sufis in Sudan (Al-Akhbar 14 Mar. 2012). The same source indicates that the "eternal dispute" between the two originates in the "Salafi movement's belief that the ideas and actions of Sufism are baseless 'heresies and perversions' that ought to be extinguished" (ibid.). In another paper, Maruyama also indicates that "Sufis regularly refer to Salafis as 'Wahhabis' (*al-wahhabīya*), which is intended as an insult given this term's highly negative connotations. Sufis imply that Wahhabis are ignorant, ridiculous and extreme" (Maruyama 27 Dec. 2013, 113).

### 3.2 Treatment by Authorities

On 1 August 2015, the news portal Sudan Tribune quoted Sudan's first presidential assistant and son of the leader of the Khatmiyya Sufi order as stating that "Sufi orders are the powerful antidote to violent religious extremism and Jihadist movements" (Sudan Tribune 1 Aug. 2015). The same source also reports that the presidential assistant "praised" the role of Sufis in spreading Islam "by gentle persuasion and beautiful preaching without hyperbole" (ibid.). The article further states that "Sufi orders have largely suffered during the government of president Omer al-Bashir who came to power in 1989" (ibid.). In a 2013 paper, Maruyama indicates that, according to Sufis that he interviewed in Sudan from 2008 to 2013, Sufis were "concerned about the possibility" of the government cooperating with Salafis and not Sufis, which explain why they "have been trying hard to underscore their greater influence on Sudanese politics, which is rooted in their unified and successful stance against Salafis" (27 Dec. 2013, 114).

According to the Associate Professor, "[m]ost of the intimidation, which in some cases [includes] suppression because of one's religion, is often exerted by Ansar Al Suna. The latter act as they please in Sudan because the government avoids 'upsetting' them mainly for political purposes" (Associate Professor 26 July 2016). The same source gave the opinion that Ansar Al Suna are supported by Saudi Arabia, and the Sudanese government does not want to "upset" the Saudi government in order to maintain diplomatic relations (ibid.). The Associate Professor was of the view that, as such, "intimidation and suppression enacted directly by Ansar Al Suna means intimidation and suppression enacted indirectly by the government [which means that a member of the Burhaniyya faith] can be targeted at any time" (ibid.). 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.

### References


Associate Professor, Department of Sociology, University of Calgary. 26 July 2016. Correspondence with the Research Directorate.


Sudan Tribune. 1 August 2015. "Sudan’s Presidential Aide Calls for Promoting Sufism to Combat Religious Extremism." (Factiva).


**Tariqa Burhaniya. N.d.b. "Welcome."** [Accessed 26 July 2016]


### Additional Sources Consulted

**Oral sources:** International Refugee Rights Initiative; a professor in the Department of Global Studies at Sophia University, Tokyo; Tariqa Burhaniya in Montreal and New York.

**Internet sites, including:** *Africa Research Bulletin; African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies; Aljazeera; AllAfrica; Amnesty International; ecos.net; Factiva; Fédération internationale des ligues des droits de l’homme; Institute for War and Peace Reporting; International Crisis Group; IRIN; Jane's Intelligence Review; United Nations – Refworld; United States – Central Intelligence Agency, Department of State.*

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