

Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada

[Home](#)

> [Research Program](#)

> Responses to Information Requests

Responses to Information Requests

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28 October 2015

TCD105337.E

Chad: Union of Forces for Democracy and Development (Union des forces pour la démocratie et le développement, UFDD), including origins, structure, ideology and activities; treatment of UFDD members and their families by authorities; whether state agents harass or abduct UFDD members in Saudi Arabia or members of their families (2006-October 2015)

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1. Overview

Sources describe the UFDD as a rebel group (ACLED Feb. 2009, 11; Human Rights Watch 2007, 5; *PHW* 2015, 270) whose recruits are primarily from the Gorane ethnic group (*ibid.*; Human Rights Watch 2007, 6). Sources state that the group was established in 2006 (*ibid.*; ACLED Feb. 2009, 11). According to Human Rights Watch, the Gorane are a mostly nomadic tribe from northern Chad (2007, 5). For information on the Gorane ethnic group, see Response to Information Request TCD104695.

The *Political Handbook of the World (PHW)* states that the UFDD is "perceived to be supported by Sudan" (*PHW* 2015, 270). The Small Arms Survey, a Geneva-based organisation that provides "in-depth research on small arms and armed violence" (The Small Arms Survey n.d.a), similarly indicates that "[o]riginally, the UFDD was a major Sudanese-supported coalition" (*ibid.* July 2010, 1). The same source further states that "Khartoum intended for the UFDD to replace the failed FUC [United Front for Democratic Change (Front uni pour le changement) (AI 2011, 3)]" and unify "all the major Chadian rebels" against President Déby (*ibid.* n.d.b). Human Rights Watch states that the FUC "joined the UFDD umbrella in 2006, but [the FUC] officially ceased to exist" after signing a peace agreement with the Chadian government on 24 December 2006 (Human Rights Watch 2009, 68).

Without providing further detail, the Small Arms Survey states that the UFDD was most active in south-eastern Chad, Adré, Abéché and west of Ennedi (The Small Arms Survey n.d.b). The Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED), a site operated by professors from the University of Sussex, providing "conflict analysis and crisis mapping" (ACLED n.d.), states that the UFDD had been involved in "virtually every armed conflict in Chad" since the group was created and "their primary goal is to remove President Idriss Déby from power" (ACLED Feb. 2009, 11). Without providing further details, the Thompson Reuters Foundation, a charitable foundation that promotes "socio-economic progress and the rule of law worldwide" (Thompson Reuters Foundation n.d.), states that coalition rebels indicated that their goal was to "oust Déby," however, local analysis claims that some groups wanted "concessions from the government regarding Chad's oil wealth" (*ibid.* 1 Jan. 2011).

Sources state that the leader of the UFDD is Mahamat Nouri (*PHW* 2015, 270; FIDH Oct. 2007, 23; ACLED Feb. 2009, 11). According to the ACLED report, the UFDD evolved from the Democratic Revolutionary Council (Conseil démocratique révolutionnaire, CDR) and combined with a "splinter faction" of the United Front for Democratic Change (UFDC) (*ibid.*). Sources state in 2009 that the UFDD later absorbed the following

groups: CDR, "a dissident faction of the FUC," Union of Forces for Progress and Democracy (Union des forces démocratiques pour le progrès, UFD), Armed Resistance against Anti-Democratic Forces (Résistance armée contre les forces anti-démocratiques, RAFAD), National Rally for Democracy (Rassemblement national pour la démocratie au Tchad, RND) and Popular Rally for Justice (Rassemblement populaire pour la justice, RPJ) (ibid.; Human Rights Watch 2009, 69).

According to the Small Arms Survey, the UFDD had approximately 2,000 - 3,000 men (The Small Arms Survey n.d.b.). According to the UNICEF, the UFDD is among the groups listed as having "released" children from its ranks, following a 2007 agreement between UNICEF and the Chadian Government to prevent the use of child soldiers (UN n.d., 2). Further and corroborating information could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

2. Activities of UFDD 2006-2010

According to sources, the UFDD was involved in the following activities:

- In 2006, the UFDD invaded Chad from Sudan in a coalition with other rebel groups (*PHW* 2015, 270; FIDH Oct. 2007, 14) to attack the capital of the Ouaddai region, Abéché (ibid.).
- In October 2007, the UFDD, RFC [Rally of the Forces for Change (Rassemblement des forces pour le changement) (AI 2011, 4)], CNT [Chad National Concord (Concorde nationale tchadienne) (AI 2011, 4)] and UFDD-Fundamental[1] signed a Libyan-backed ceasefire with the Chadian government (Thompson Reuters Foundation 1 Jan. 2011; *PHW* 2015, 270;), after which "rebels would be integrated into the national army" (ibid.). The ceasefire collapsed and fighting escalated within a month (Thompson Reuters Foundation 1 Jan. 2011).
- In late 2007 fighting continued between government forces and rebels (ibid.; *PHW* 2015, 270; US 11 Mar. 2008), including UFDD, RFC and UFDD-Fundamental (ibid.). According to the US Department of State's *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2007*, the 2007 peace accord "was not implemented due in part to a resurgence of fighting in eastern Chad" (ibid.).
- In 2008, UFDD, UFDD-Fundamental, and RFC launched an attack against the Chadian capital (AI Feb. 2011, 10; Thompson Reuters Foundation 1 Jan. 2011; *PHW* 2015, 270) and the coalition nearly overthrew President Déby (ibid.). According to sources, hundreds of civilians were killed and injured during the fighting and tens of thousands fled to Cameroon (AI Feb. 2011, 10; US 25 Feb. 2009). For further information on the coup, see Response to Information Request TCD102896.
- In 2008, rebel groups formed an alliance under the name Alliance Nationale (AN), which includes: UFDD, UFDD Fundamental, RFC (ACLEDD Feb. 2009, 2; *PHW* 2015, 270) and other smaller groups (ibid.). Sources state that Nouri led the AN (ibid.; Freedom House 2009).
- The United Resistance Forces (Union des forces de la résistance, UFR) was formed, comprised of eight rebel groups (ACLEDD Feb. 2009, 11; BTI 2014, 4), in 2009 (ibid.). The groups under the alliance included UFDD, UFDD Fundamental, and RFC, among others (ACLEDD Feb. 2009, 11). Timan Erdimi was elected as its leader (ibid.; BTI 2014, 4).
- In 2010, according to the Bertelsmann Stiftung Transformation Index (BTI)[2], Mahamat Nouri left the UFR and created the ANCD [National Alliance for Democratic Change (Alliance nationale pour le changement démocratique) (*PHW* 2015, 270)] (BTI 2014, 4). The ANCD includes the UFDD, CDR, the Front for the Salvation of the Republic (Front pour le salut de la république, FSR) and the Democratic Movement for Chadian Redevelopment (MDRT) (*PHW* 2015, 270).
- In 2010, Chad and Sudan signed an agreement to expel rebel groups from the regions surrounding their shared borders after which Sudan stopped supporting rebel groups (Thompson Reuters Foundation 1 Jan. 2011; BTI 2014, 5). Sources further state that Nouri was exiled and moved to Qatar (Thompson Reuters Foundation 1 Jan. 2011; *PHW* 2015, 270). According to *PHW*, as of 2015, Nouri is living in France and Chad has issued a warrant for his arrest (ibid.). Corroborating information on the location of Nouri could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

According to sources in 2013 and 2014, there were no significant rebel groups active in Chad (IHS 6 Sept. 2013; BTI 2014, 28). A report produced by Thompson Reuters Foundation in 2011 similarly states that "[m]ost rebel soldiers have defected or been expelled from Sudan, and key rebel leaders are in exile" (Thompson Reuters Foundation 1 Jan. 2011). According to a report by IHS, an intelligence analysis company (IHS n.d.), the "last significant group" was the UFR, which "grew out of the remnants of the UFDD," and has since "fallen into obscurity," and its leader, Timan Erdimi, is exiled in Qatar (IHS 6 Sept. 2013).

According to *PHW*, "some UFDD adherents reportedly remained armed" (*PHW* 2015, 270). The Thompson Reuters Foundation similarly reports that, while "most of [Nouri's] forces were captured in Sudan and flown to N'Djamena," some remain in the border area between Chad, the Central African Republic, and Sudan (Thompson Reuters Foundation 1 Jan. 2011). Further information on the status and activity level of the

UFDD or related groups in 2015 could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

3. Treatment of UFDD Members and Their Families by Authorities

Information on the treatment of UFDD members by authorities was scarce among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this response. According to *PHW* 2015, in 2011 four "prominent" members of the UFDD were given amnesty after they turned themselves over to the authorities (270). AI similarly states that in 2010, Chadian authorities arrested and detained, in "unknown locations," the following individuals:

General Taher Guinassou (former UFDD leader and adviser to President Déby), General Tahir Ahmad Kosso Wodji (former UFDD and UFR member), Djougourou Hemichi (former UFDD commissioner) and Moïta Tourki Ahmat (former UFDD member). (AI Feb. 2011, 32)

According to AI, these individuals were pardoned in 2011 and President Déby also "signed an ordinance extending the amnesty to crimes committed by members of Chadian armed opposition groups who had been imprisoned" (*ibid.*). According to the Thompson Reuters Foundation, in January 2011 President Déby granted "amnesty for crimes committed by rebel groups" (1 Jan. 2011). According to BTI, the government also released approximately 370 detainees that had been arrested during the 2008 attacks on N'Djamena and Am Dam (BTI 2014, 30). BTI further states that rebel leaders Mahamat Nouri and Timan Erdimi were not included in this pardon (*ibid.*, 28). According to AI in 2011, "most" Chadian rebel group members remained active and "outside of any peace agreements" (AI Feb. 2011, 32).

PHW states that in 2012, ANCD claimed that their military commander Djibrine Azene, who had been released from prison in 2011, "died as the result of the effects of having been tortured while in jail" (*PHW* 2015, 270). Corroborating information could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

According to Freedom House, human rights groups have accused the Chadian government of "extrajudicial detention and killing" of suspected rebels, their supporters, and members of the Gorane ethnic group, "some of which were involved in the 2008 coup attempt" (Freedom House 2009). AI similarly states that after the rebel coalition attacked the capital in 2008, Chadian authorities killed, detained, "tortured" and abducted "suspected political opponents" (AI Feb. 2011, 10). For further information on the coup, see Response to Information Request TCD102896.

According to sources, in 2013, several people, including Moussa Mahamat Tao, were arrested for an alleged coup plot (AI Oct. 2013, 21; IHS 6 Sept. 2013). IHS describes Moussa Mahamat Tao as "a figure of limited influence in the [UFDD]" (*ibid.*). AI describes him as a "former armed opposition leader" (AI Oct. 2013, 21). The AI report also states that as of the end of September 2013, he remained detained in an unknown location (*ibid.*, 22). Further information on the case could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

Treatment of the families of UFDD members could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

4. Harassment or Abduction of UFDD Members and/or Their Families in Saudi Arabia

Information on the harassment or abduction of UFDD members and/or their families in Saudi Arabia 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] Sources describe UFDD-Fundamental as an Arab-led group (*PHW* 2015, 270; International Crisis Group 18 June 2013, 55) that broke from UFDD in 2007 (*ibid.*). According to International Crisis Group, UFDD-Fundamental was led by Abdel-wahid Aboud Makaye and was based in Darfur between 2007 and 2010 (*ibid.*).

[2] The BTI Transformation Index provides information and analysis on the transition to democracy and market economies for developing and transition countries (BTI n.d.).

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Additional Sources Consulted

Oral sources: Independent Chadian Human Rights Journalist; La Ligue Tchadienne des Droits de l'Homme.

Internet sites, including: Al Arabiya; Al Jazeera; Arab News; ecoi.net; Factiva; *Jane's Intelligence Review*; Nonstate Armed Groups; *Saudi Gazette*; Sudan Tribune; Tchad Actuel; United Nations – Refworld; *World Politics Review*; United States – Central Intelligence Agency.

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[Top of Page](#)

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