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Responses to Information Requests

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19 February 2015

NER105059.FE

Niger: The Niger Democratic Movement for an African Federation (Mouvement démocratique nigérien pour une fédération africaine, MODEN/FA Lumana AFRICA), including its structure, leaders and activities; the party's membership cards, including a description of the card and its issuance process; the treatment of party members by the authorities (2013-January 2015)

Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa

1. Overview of the Party

Correspondence sent to the Research Directorate by the President of the coordination in France of the Niger Democratic Movement for an African Federation indicates that the party acronym is MODEN/FA Lumana AFRICA (MODEN/FA Lumana 19 Jan. 2015a). The party's website, which describes the organization's objectives, posts other variations of this acronym, such as Moden/FA Lumana Africa and MODEN-FA LUMANA AFRICA (ibid. 23 Dec. 2013). On 11 February 2015, the most recent news posted on the [translation] "News" page of that same website was dated 6 February 2015 (ibid. n.d.a). A page on another website of the party that lists the party's [translation] "governing bodies" gives the acronym MODEN/FA-LUMANA-AFRICA (ibid. n.d.e), while the page on the same site that posts the party's organs writes it as: MODEN FA LUMANA – AFRICA (ibid. n.d.f). On 11 February 2015, the most recent news posted on the [translation] "Home" page of this site was dated 12 November 2014 (ibid. n.d.b). Information explaining the existence of two websites belonging to the MODEN/FA Lumana party could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

1.1 Party's Origin

According to the *Political Handbook of the World 2014 (PHW)*, MODEN/FA Lumana was founded in 2010 by Hama Amadou (*PHW* 2014, 1060). He had previously served as Prime Minister of Niger in 1995 (ibid.; MODEN/FA Lumana n.d.d) and in 2000 (ibid.). In an interview that he granted to the magazine *Afrique nouvelle*, posted by the Niger online news site Tamtaminfo, Hama Amadou stated the following:

[translation]

The party obtained its decree of recognition on 12 May 2009, but did not hold its constituent congress until 10 July 2010, more than one year later (*Afrique nouvelle* 15 May 2013).

In addition, two Niger media sources reported on the party's anniversary celebrations: the Niamey daily *Le Sahel* published an article on the party's fourth anniversary, in May 2013 (*Le Sahel* [2013]), and Tamtaminfo reported on the fifth anniversary, in May 2014 (Tamtaminfo 13 May 2014).

The *PHW* identified the following individuals as leaders of MODEN/FA Lumana: Hama Amadou (president), Salissou Mamadou Habi (vice-president), Noma Oumarou (second vice-president), Almoustapha

Cissé (treasurer), Ali Gazagaza (deputy secretary general) and Omar Hamidou Tchiana [Ladan Tchiana] (secretary general) (*PHW* 2014, 1060). Other sources mention some of these leaders:

- Hama Amadou (president) (*Afrique nouvelle* 15 May 2013);
- Salissou Mamadou Habi (vice-president) (*ActuNiger* 11 Nov. 2014);
- Ali Gazagaza (secretary general) (*RFI* 26 May 2014);
- Omar Hamidou Tchiana (secretary general) (*ibid.* 24 Aug. 2013).

1.2 Party Objectives

According to extracts of MODEN/FA Lumana's statutes, which are posted on one of the party's websites, Article 13 states: [translation] "The objective of the party is to govern and exercise state power through democratic means" (MODEN/FA Lumana 23 Dec. 2013). In addition, Article 14-b of the statutes indicates that one of the party's specific objectives is to [translation] "[p]articipate in building a free and democratic Africa in an African federation" (*ibid.*). Similarly, during the interview he granted to the *Afrique nouvelle* magazine, Hama Amadou stated that the party aspired to [translation] "create a federation, one single federal state," for Africa (*Afrique nouvelle* 15 May 2013).

1.3 Party Structure

A list of MODEN/FA Lumana's "governing bodies" (attachment 1) and a list of its organs (attachment 2) are attached to this Response.

1.4 Party Members

During a telephone interview with the Research Directorate, the president of the coordination in France of MODEN/FA Lumana stated that, despite the existence of a system of member cards, the party does not have [translation] "a reliable and up-to-date registry" of its members (MODEN/FA Lumana 19 Jan. 2015b). He added that MODEN/FA Lumana estimates the number of party members by the number of people who attend the rallies and events that it organizes (*ibid.*). However, an article published by the Ivorian News Agency (Agence ivoirienne de presse, AIP) on 12 January 2015, refers to the census, by the MODEN/FA Lumana coordination, of all the party activists in Côte d'Ivoire (AIP 12 Jan. 2015).

1.5 Conditions for Issuing the Membership Card

The [translation] "membership" section of one of the party's websites states that an email containing the individual's surname, first name, date and place of birth, and address and telephone number must be sent to the email address indicated on the same page (MODEN/FA Lumana n.d.c). According to the president of the coordination in France of MODEN/FA Lumana, party membership is open to everyone (*ibid.* 19 Jan. 2015b). Further information on the party's membership procedure could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

The information in the following paragraph was provided by the president of the coordination in France of MODEN/FA Lumana during a telephone interview with the Research Directorate (*ibid.*).

The organ responsible for issuing party membership cards in Niger is the National Political Office. An example of a card issued in 2009 is attached to this Response (attachment 3). It costs 1,000 francs CFA [about C\$2] to obtain a member card in Niger. The coordination in France makes and distributes its own membership cards. An example of such a card, issued in November 2014, is also attached to this Response (attachment 4). It costs 5 euros [about C\$7] to buy it.

2. Party's Political Activities

Sources state that, during the legislative elections of 2011 [which were held in January (African Elections Database n.d.a; Freedom House 2014)], the MODEN/FA Lumana party won 23 seats (African Elections Database n.d.a; *PHW* 2014, 1060). The National Assembly of Niger has 113 seats (*ibid.*; *Jeune Afrique* and AFP 23 Aug. 2013; RFI 23 Aug. 2013). Sources state that the MODEN/FA Lumana party came third in the 2011 elections (*PHW* 2014, 1060; Xinhua Press Agency 19 Aug. 2013). The African Elections Database, which lists the electoral results of 49 sub-Saharan countries (African Elections Database n.d.b), states that the votes from the Agadez region were cancelled and that other elections were held on 15 May 2011 in that region, which brought the number of seats won by MODEN/FA Lumana to 25 (*ibid.* n.d.a). Freedom House also states that MODEN/FA Lumana won 25 seats (Freedom House 2014). Information on the number of elected locals who are members of MODEN/FA Lumana could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

In April 2011, after the legislative elections, the president of MODEN/FA Lumana, Hama Amadou, was appointed president of the National Assembly (*PHW* 2014, 1060). Other sources also identify Hama Amadou as the president of the National Assembly (RFI 23 Aug. 2013; Xinhua Press Agency 19 Aug. 2013). In addition, the Niger News Agency (Agence nigérienne de presse, ANP) states that some MODEN/FA Lumana members were appointed ministers (ANP 27 Aug. 2013). Freedom House explains that the president of Niger, whose party won 37 seats, appointed some opposition members to key positions to "foster inclusivity" (Freedom House 2014).

In August 2013, the president of Niger, Mahamadou Issoufou, formed a new government of national unity [by decree (*Jeune Afrique* and AFP 14 Aug. 2013)], and he appointed some members of Niger's opposition parties to ministerial positions (*Jeune Afrique* and AFP 14 Aug. 2013; Freedom House 2014; Xinhua Press Agency 19 Aug. 2013). According to sources, six or eight ministers of MODEN/FA Lumana were appointed to this cabinet (RFI 23 Aug. 2013; Xinhua Press Agency 19 Aug. 2013). An article published by *Jeune Afrique* and the Agence France-Presse (AFP) states that the president [translation] "justified a 'government of unity' by the 'need' to reinforce internal 'political stability' and especially 'the security situation in Sahel'" (*Jeune Afrique* and AFP 14 Aug. 2013). According to Freedom House, the president of Niger stated that he took this step in response to the double terrorist attack in the northern part of the country on 23 May 2013 (Freedom House 2014). This attack targeted a military base in Agadez and a uranium mine [in Arlit (ibid.)] and about 20 individuals were killed (ibid.; *Jeune Afrique* et AFP 14 Aug. 2013).

Sources state that MODEN/FA Lumana's National Political Office refused to participate in the new government (RFI 23 Aug. 2013; Xinhua Press Agency 19 Aug. 2013; *Jeune Afrique* and AFP 23 Aug. 2013). According to the article published by *Jeune Afrique* and AFP, it withdrew its ministers on 17 Aug. 2013 [translation] "to protest against [the party's] underrepresentation," arguing that MODEN/FA Lumana had not been consulted and that it had only received "phantom departments" (ibid.). An article from the Xinhua Press Agency also notes the lack of consultation as a ground advanced by the National Political Office (19 Aug. 2013). Media state that MODEN/FA Lumana decided in August 2013 to withdraw from the coalition in power (RFI 23 Aug. 2013; *Jeune Afrique* and AFP 29 Aug. 2014). According to ANP, the ministerial members of MODEN/FA Lumana who refused to participate in government were replaced by presidential decree (ANP 27 Aug. 2013). Corroborating information could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

According to Radio France internationale (RFI), four of the members of MODEN/FA Lumana who had just been appointed ministers refused to obey their party's directive to leave their position (RFI 23 Aug. 2013). The Niger weekly *La Griffie* states that they were then excluded from the MODEN/FA Lumana party (*La Griffie* [12] Jan. 2015). According to sources, some ministers continued to subscribe to the party (MODEN/FA Lumana 19 Jan. 2015b; *La Griffie* [12] Jan. 2015; ActuNiger 11 Nov. 2014); one minister created his own political party (ibid.; *La Griffie* [12] Jan. 2015) and another minister joined the president of Niger's party (ibid.). The weekly *La Griffie* states that some members who were excluded from MODEN/FA Lumana submitted appeals to the Niger justice system to be able to continue to subscribe to the party (*La Griffie* [12] Jan. 2015). Corroborating information could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

3. Treatment of Party Members by the Authorities

3.1 Situation of the Party President

According to media, a [translation] "baby trafficking" or "stolen babies" scandal involving Hama Amadou [then leader of MODEN/FA Lumana (*Jeune Afrique* 15 Sept. 2014; *Le Temps* 27 Aug. 2014)], broke out in 2014 (*Le Temps* 27 Aug. 2014; *Jeune Afrique* 2 Jan. 2015; RFI 24 Dec. 2014). It involved the international trafficking of babies born in Nigeria and sent to Benin and Niger (ibid. 10 Sept. 2014; *Jeune Afrique* and AFP 29 Aug. 2014). Some people were charged with "supposition of a child" in this matter (*Le Temps* 27 Aug. 2014; *Jeune Afrique* and AFP 29 Aug. 2014), in June 2014 (ibid.). Supposition of a child involves passing a child off as one's own (Mondafrique.com 9 Oct. 2014; RFI 24 Dec. 2014). Included among those charged and detained was one of Hama Amadou's wives (ibid.; *Le Temps* 27 Aug. 2014; *Jeune Afrique* and AFP 29 Aug. 2014). According to *Jeune Afrique*, she was [translation] "suspected of 'buying' her twins in Nigeria" (*Jeune Afrique* 15 Sept. 2014). Hama Amadou was charged with conspiring in the matter (ibid.; RFI 10 Sept. 2014; Mondafrique.com 9 Oct. 2014).

On 26 Aug. 2014, the government asked the National Assembly to allow the justice system to hear Hama Amadou (*Jeune Afrique* 15 Sept. 2014; *Le Temps* 27 Aug. 2014; UN 24 Dec. 2014) by removing his parliamentary immunity and issuing a warrant of arrest against him (ibid.). During an interview with *Jeune Afrique*, Hama Amadou claimed that he did not participate in trafficking children and stated that [translation] "everyone ... [had] seen [his wife] pregnant;" he added that this matter had served as a pretext to arrest him, that it was "a political file" and that the procedure to lift his immunity as a member of parliament had not been respected (*Jeune Afrique* 15 Sept. 2014). Some sources state that Hama Amadou went to Burkina Faso on 27

August 2014 (*Jeune Afrique* 15 Sept. 2014; *Le Temps* 27 Aug. 2014). Subsequently, [three days later (*Jeune Afrique* 15 Sept. 2014)], he went to France (*Jeune Afrique* 2 Jan. 2015; RFI 24 Dec. 2014; AIP 12 Jan. 2015). The president of the coordination in France of MODEN/FA Lumana stated that Hama Amadou was still in exile in France (MODEN/FA Lumana 19 Jan. 2015b).

3.2 Protests Organized by the Opposition Parties, Including MODEN/FA Lumana

A news report from the Pan African News Agency (PANAPRESS) dated 6 December 2013, states that the government of Niger prohibited, through a radio message from the Minister of the Interior, opposition rallies and marches across the country (PANAPRESS 6 Dec. 2013). However, it states that [translation] "the opposition parties can meet at their head offices or in public rooms" (ibid.). The report refers to the statements of the minister, who took this measure "for reasons of public order" (ibid.). PANAPRESS adds that this prohibition appeared [translation] "a few days" prior to a country tour that the three opposition "political forces," including the MODEN/FA Lumana party, were planning to start (ibid.).

Corroborating information could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

Sources state that an opposition march scheduled for 25 May 2014 was prohibited (RFI 26 May 2014; APA 25 May 2014). According to the Agence de presse africaine (APA), the Minister of the Interior announced this measure during a press briefing on 24 May 2014 (ibid.). He stated that [translation] "the actions of the opposition are simply a campaign to destabilize the regime" (ibid.). RFI states instead that the [translation] "peaceful opposition march" was prohibited by the municipality of Niamey for "failing to respect the request submission deadline" (RFI 26 May 2014). According to the APA, the opposition had decided to organize [translation] "a peaceful protest march to require ... strict respect of the constitution" (APA 25 May 2014). The APA adds that the organization of the march followed [translation] "the wave of questioning" by the police of activists of MODEN/FA Lumana (ibid.). Similarly, RFI states that the opposition [translation] "wanted to respond to the ruling party, which, for a few days already had been multiplying the number of arrests of the opposition" (RFI 26 May 2014). That same source adds [translation] "that some 40 opposition activists, all from [MODEN/FA] Lumana, are in the hands of the police" (ibid.).

In another news report, the APA states that the police used [translation] "force" to disperse a march of opposition activists that took place on 23 May 2014 in the city of Zinder (APA 27 June 2014). That same source points out that, that same day, a rally presided over by [translation] "the three big political opposition leaders," including Hama Amadou, for MODEN/FA Lumana, and in which some "thousands" of people participated, was held in an arena in the city (ibid.). This rally, contrary to the march before it, received approval from the authorities (ibid.).

Corroborating information could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

Sources state that, on 17 January 2015, as a result of the [translation] "violent" "anti-Charlie Hebdo" protests that occurred that day in Niamey, the authorities prohibited an opposition coalition march scheduled "a long ago" for the next day in the streets of the capital (AFP 18 Jan. 2015; RFI 19 Jan. 2015). The AFP points out that MODEN/FA Lumana was part of this opposition coalition (AFP 18 Jan. 2015). On 18 January 2015, despite the prohibition, protesters [300, according to AFP (ibid.)] gathered in the streets of the capital and were then dispersed by the police (ibid.; RFI 19 Jan. 2015). The AFP states that seven of them, according to a police source, were questioned (AFP 18 Jan. 2015). Some sources state that 90 of them were arrested (RFI 19 Jan. 2015; MODEN/FA Lumana 19 Jan. 2015b).

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: Attempts to contact the following persons and organizations were unsuccessful within the time constraints of this Response: Association des femmes juristes du Niger; Canada – Embassy of Canada in Bamako, Embassy of Canada in Dakar; Démocratie vivante; International Association for Democracy in Africa; Maillon africain pour la paix et le développement; Mouvement démocratique nigérien pour une fédération africaine – Webmaster; Mouvement nigérien pour la promotion et la défense des droits de l'homme et des peuples; Réseau des journalistes pour les droits de l'homme.

Internet sites, including: aNiamey.com; ecoi.net; Fédération internationale des ligues des droits de l'homme; *Hérodote* (geography and geopolitical journal); Mouvement nigérien pour la promotion et la défense des droits de l'homme et des peuples.

Attachments

1. Mouvement démocratique nigérien pour une fédération africaine (MODEN/FA Lumana). N.d. "Les instances du parti." <<http://lumanafrica.org/?q=node/21>> [Accessed 17 Feb. 2015]
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Date modified: 2016-01-05