

Document #1436035

IRB – Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada

Djibouti: Airport security screening procedures for passengers departing on international flights, including whether a person wanted by the authorities can leave the country (2016-March 2018) [DJI106077.E]

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1. Ambouli International Airport

The Djiboutian daily newspaper *La Nation* cites Djiboutian Minister of Economy and Finance, responsible for Industry, as stating that Djibouti has [translation] "one international airport" (*La Nation* 15 Feb. 2018). Sources referred to the Ambouli International Airport as an "international airport" in Djibouti (LCA 13 Dec. 2013; BBC 20 June 2015; IATA n.d.). According to sources, it is both a civilian and a military airport (LCA 25 Apr. 2016; RFI 2 Oct. 2013).

2. Airport Security

Information on airport security was scarce among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

According to the US Department of State's *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2016*, the National Gendarmerie (Gendarmerie nationale) is responsible for protecting the international airport in Djibouti (US 3 Mar. 2017, 5). The website of the Gendarmerie states the following regarding the Gendarmerie of Air Transport (Gendarmerie des transports aériens, GTA):

[translation]

Created under the Order n°88/0626/PR/INT [Arrêté n°88/0626/PR/INT] of 11 June 1988, the Gendarmerie of Air Transport is an integral part of the National Gendarmerie. It is located at the Ambouli International Airport.

The GTA has sole jurisdiction over the entire area of the airport under the supervision of the Ministry of Equipment and Transport.

It has general competence in the matters of judicial police, administrative police and military police on all the airport area.

The GTA is commanded by a Senior Officer and has about 70 gendarmes[;] the unit is organized as follows:

- A [c]ommand [g]roup
- A [j]udicial [b]rigade
- Three [c]ontrol and monitoring [g]roups[.]

Missions:

The GTA carries out safety missions as a priority:

Control of access to the reserved area

Surveillance of goods and persons

Safeguarding airport facilities

Aircraft protection

Control of the licenses of crew members

Conduct of investigations into accidents and incidents involving aircraft. (Djibouti n.d.)

Information on security screening procedures for passengers departing on international flights was scarce among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

The US Department of State's *Country Reports on Terrorism 2016* for Djibouti indicates that "Djibouti continued to process travelers on entry and departure with the U.S.-provided Personal Identification Secure Comparison and Evaluation System (PISCES)" (US 19 July 2017). A UN Security Council letter "containing the global survey of the implementation by Member States of Security Council resolution 1373 (2001)" concerning counter-terrorism describes the PISCES as "a border-control database system established with the assistance of the United States to improve States' capacity to detect terrorists and facilitate immigration processing" (UN 20 Jan. 2016, 1, 40). The UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) website states that PISCES is a database system that "is largely based on biometrics supported by the U.S. Department of State Terrorist Interdiction Program" (UN n.d.). According to the US Department of State website, "the Terrorist Interdiction Program (TIP)/[PISCES] provides partner countries border security assistance to limit terrorist mobility" (US n.d.). The

website of the US Embassy in Trinidad and Tobago, in a 2017 announcement of an agreement between the US and Trinidad and Tobago for the establishment of a border control system, mentions the following about PISCES:

Using the latest technology, PISCES will give the government the capacity to verify a traveler's identity against both domestic and international databases. The system will also allow officials to identify individuals who might pose a threat to public security. (US 21 Apr. 2017)

3. Persons Wanted by the Authorities

Information indicating whether a person wanted by the authorities can leave the country was scarce among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

The *US Country Reports 2016* states that "[o]pposition members reported immigration officials prevented them from boarding international flights" (US 3 Mar. 2017, 12). According to the same source, the following event took place at the Ambouli International Airport on 9 August 2016:

[G]endarmes stopped Union for National Salvation (USN) Secretary General Abdourahman Mohamed Guelleh at the entrance of the Ambouli airport, preventing him from boarding his international flight. Government officials stated Guelleh could not leave the country until his case concerning alleged involvement in the December 2015 incident was closed. He remained released on probation. On July 12, the Supreme Court dismissed Guelleh's case, but the state prosecutor overturned the decision. Guelleh's case remained pending. (US 3 Mar. 2017, 12-13)

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

Sources report that the authorities arrested a journalist, Kadar Abdi Ibrahim, at the Ambouli airport on 9 August 2016, for allegedly attempting to document efforts to keep an opposition figure from leaving Djibouti (US 3 Mar. 2017, 6; Alwihda 25 Aug. 2016). The *US Country Reports 2016* states that the journalist allegedly attempted "to record airport officials preventing opposition figure Hamoud Abdi Soultan from leaving Djibouti" (US 3 Mar. 2017, 6). According to the Chadian news website Alwihda, [translation] "Mr. Kadar went to Djibouti International Airport to document the travel ban issued by the authorities against the former Minister of Muslim Affairs and Waqfs Goods, Hamoud Abdi Soulman" (Alwihda 25 Aug. 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.

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Additional Sources Consulted

Oral sources: Aéroport international Ambouli; Djibouti – embassies in Paris, Switzerland and Washington, DC; directeur de la Caisse militaire des retraites; Direction de l'aviation civile et de la météorologie; International Organization for Migration – Kenya Mission with Coordinating Functions for the Horn of Africa; *La Nation*.

Internet sites, including: Air Djibouti; Amnesty International; Armed Conflict Location & Event Data; Djibouti – présidence de la République; ecoi.net; Human Rights Watch; International Crisis Group; International Civil Aviation Organisation; International Organization for Migration; Radiodiffusion télévision de Djibouti; UN – Refworld; World Aero Data.

ecoi.net summary:

Query response on airport security screening procedures for passengers departing on international flights



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