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**Australian Government**  
**Refugee Review Tribunal**

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# Country Advice

## Sudan

Sudan – SDN39667 – Doctors – Health  
System – Medical Training – Current  
Government – Political Opponents –  
Sudanese Federal Democratic Party –  
Freedom of Religion – Sufism – Returnees

4 January 2012

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### Introductory Note

Sudan split into two countries in July 2011; the government of Sudan gave its blessing for the establishment of an independent South Sudan after decades of civil conflict.<sup>1</sup> Information in this response relates to northern Sudan unless stated otherwise.

**1. Is there any information to indicate that doctors or other medical practitioners in Sudan are being – or have been – targeted for harm by Sudanese authorities?**

Yes. Amnesty International reports that, in 2010, Sudan's National Intelligence and Security Services (NISS) reportedly arrested the following six doctors: Ahmed Alabwabi; Alhadi Bakhit; Abdelaziz Ali Jamee; Ahmed Abdallah Khalafallah; Ashraf Hammad; and Mahmoud Khairallah Mohammed. The six were arrested between 1 and 8 June in relation to a planned strike which would aim to seek better conditions for doctors in Sudan. The six detainees were members of the Doctors Strike Committee.<sup>2</sup>

According to Amnesty International, the six detainees were held at an unknown location and were not formally charged. Two were tortured. From 2 June 2010, doctors went on strike across Sudan in protest of the arrests. Doctors reportedly returned to work on 24 June when the NISS promised to release the detainees should striking doctors return to their duties. NISS operatives reportedly checked that doctors were working in hospitals in Khartoum prior to releasing the detainees.<sup>3</sup>

Freedom House reported that a student demonstration in support of the doctor's strike – organised by students at Khartoum University – was broken up by police, resulting in approximately twelve people being injured.<sup>4</sup> The US Department of State (USDOS) also reported that "[o]n June 2, police beat protesters outside of Khartoum University, injuring 12." According to the USDOS, police also prevented doctors from attending strike committee meetings, and instructed newspapers not to report on the doctor's strike.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> 'Sudan profile' 2011, *BBC News*, 29 November <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-14094995> – Accessed 20 December 2011

<sup>2</sup> Amnesty International 2010, 'Urgent Action – August 2010', Amnesty International website, 17 August <http://www.amnesty.org.au/nsw/comments/23541/> – Accessed 19 December 2011

<sup>3</sup> Amnesty International 2010, 'Urgent Action – August 2010', Amnesty International website, 17 August <http://www.amnesty.org.au/nsw/comments/23541/> – Accessed 19 December 2011

<sup>4</sup> Freedom House 2011, *Freedom in the World 2011 – Sudan*, 12 May <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/4dcbf51025.html> – Accessed 19 December 2011

<sup>5</sup> US Department of State 2011, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices – Sudan*, 8 April, Section 6; 2(a)

Additionally, Human Rights Watch reported that on 12 March 2010, pro-government hospital staff and security personnel broke up a demonstration of more than 1,000 people at a south Khartoum doctor's residence. The demonstration was reportedly held to protest doctor's low pay and conditions. Human Rights Watch states that, according to eyewitness accounts, government supporters threatened the doctors' lives in front of police and national security staff.<sup>6</sup>

**2. Please provide summary information on the Sudanese medical system, including the ability of those in need of medical treatment to obtain access to necessary services; the standard of medical treatment provided; and the standard of medical training and infrastructure in the country.**

According to a government policy document of 2010, Sudan has a three tiered health care system. Firstly, teaching, general and specialist hospitals provide secondary and tertiary care.<sup>7</sup>

Secondly, primary care is provided, by referral, by rural hospitals with indoor and diagnostic facilities. There is reportedly one such rural hospital in each locality (although 'locality' is not defined in the document), and equipped with 30-50 beds, two medical officers and paramedics and nursing staff. Many rural hospitals reportedly have labour rooms, capacity to receive emergencies on a 24-hour basis, the ability to deliver vaccinations, and facilities equipped with x-ray equipment, a laboratory for blood and urine examinations and blood banks.<sup>8</sup>

Thirdly, primary care is also provided via the following outlets: Primary Health Care (PHC) Units, staffed by one community health worker; dressing stations, staffed by either a nurse or community health worker; and dispensaries, staffed by one medical assistant and one nurse.<sup>9</sup>

Between 2003 and May 2011, over 60 health facilities were constructed across northern and southern Sudan, with the assistance of United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) funds. These included: blood banks, HIV/AIDS resource centres in universities, tuberculosis/HIV service provision points, prevention of mother to child transmission centres in hospitals, counselling and testing centres, warehouses, and store rooms.<sup>10</sup>

According to a 2009 joint report from the World Health Organisation and Sudan's Ministry of Health, there are two hospitals in Khartoum that provide for mental health care. The majority of Sudan's nine inpatient and 17 outpatient mental health facilities are also located in

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<sup>6</sup> Human Rights Watch 2010, 'Sudan: Government Repression Threatens Fair Elections', UNHCR Refworld website, 21 March <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/4ba884e218.html> – Accessed 19 December 2011

<sup>7</sup> Sudan Government of National Unity, Federal Ministry of Health (Undated), 'National Reproductive Health Policy, 2010', United Nations Population Fund website p. 8  
[http://www.unfpa.org/sowmy/resources/docs/library/R104\\_MOHSudan\\_2010\\_RHPolicy\\_30May2010.pdf](http://www.unfpa.org/sowmy/resources/docs/library/R104_MOHSudan_2010_RHPolicy_30May2010.pdf) – Accessed 19 December 2011

<sup>8</sup> Sudan Government of National Unity, Federal Ministry of Health (Undated), 'National Reproductive Health Policy, 2010', United Nations Population Fund website p. 9  
[http://www.unfpa.org/sowmy/resources/docs/library/R104\\_MOHSudan\\_2010\\_RHPolicy\\_30May2010.pdf](http://www.unfpa.org/sowmy/resources/docs/library/R104_MOHSudan_2010_RHPolicy_30May2010.pdf) – Accessed 19 December 2011

<sup>9</sup> Sudan Government of National Unity, Federal Ministry of Health (Undated), 'National Reproductive Health Policy, 2010', United Nations Population Fund website, p. 9  
[http://www.unfpa.org/sowmy/resources/docs/library/R104\\_MOHSudan\\_2010\\_RHPolicy\\_30May2010.pdf](http://www.unfpa.org/sowmy/resources/docs/library/R104_MOHSudan_2010_RHPolicy_30May2010.pdf) – Accessed 19 December 2011

<sup>10</sup> United Nations Development Programme 2011, 'UNDP Handover of GFATM HIV Program Construction Sites to FMOH at New Central Warehouse in Khartoum', United Nations Development Programme website  
<http://www.sd.undp.org/Presspdf/2011/Handover%20Press%20Release%2024-5-2011.pdf> – Accessed 20 December 2011

Khartoum. The outpatient facilities and mental health hospitals are not organisationally integrated.<sup>11</sup>

However, the same 2010 report stated that 29 per cent of PHC Units were non-functional, and only 45-65 per cent of the population had access to PHC services. On average, one PHC unit served 12,000 Sudanese. Health facilities were unevenly distributed, with only 14 beds per 100,000 people in southern Darfur, for example. Additionally, the systems for repairing and maintaining and repairing medical equipment were weak. Over 50 per cent of facilities had less equipment than the minimum required. On the whole, adequate referral care was provided by only a few facilities.<sup>12</sup> The most recent UK Home Office *Operational Guidance Note – Sudan* states that appellants for asylum will be able to succeed on the basis of medical needs in extreme and exceptional circumstances. No further information was included in the document to specify what extreme and exceptional circumstances might be.<sup>13</sup>

It is worth noting that prior to its independence, southern Sudan experienced a particular shortage of medical infrastructure<sup>14</sup> and staff; as of 2007, there were reportedly “less than 30 general practitioners across the ten states of Southern Sudan and only eight qualified midwives employed directly under the Ministry of Health”.<sup>15</sup>

Total health expenditure in Sudan is reportedly low, with approximately 60 per cent of total health spending paid for, by patients, out-of-pocket.<sup>16</sup> The cost of health care is therefore difficult to meet for many. Additionally, public health expenditure is geared towards hospital and curative care, leaving primary and referral care under-resourced.<sup>17</sup> In northern Sudan, approximately 57 per cent of births are attended by a medical professional. This figure drops to just 5 per cent for births in southern Sudan.<sup>18</sup>

A joint report by the United Nations and the Sudanese government stated in 2007 that the state of the Sudanese public health system was poor, and that the country’s epidemiological

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<sup>11</sup> World Health Organisation & Ministry of Health Sudan 2009, *WHO-AIMS Report on Mental Health System in Sudan*, Repository of Country Health Reports website, p. 10-11

[http://rochr.qrc.com/bitstream/123456789/2499/1/who\\_aims\\_report\\_sudan.pdf](http://rochr.qrc.com/bitstream/123456789/2499/1/who_aims_report_sudan.pdf) – Accessed 19 December

<sup>12</sup> Sudan Government of National Unity, Federal Ministry of Health (Undated), ‘National Reproductive Health Policy, 2010’, United Nations Population Fund website p. 11

[http://www.unfpa.org/sowmy/resources/docs/library/R104\\_MOHSudan\\_2010\\_RHPolicy\\_30May2010.pdf](http://www.unfpa.org/sowmy/resources/docs/library/R104_MOHSudan_2010_RHPolicy_30May2010.pdf) – Accessed 19 December 2011

<sup>13</sup> UK Home Office 2011, *Operational Guidance Note – Sudan*, UNHCR Refworld website, August, p. 3 <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/4e5614b02.html> – Accessed 15 December 2011

<sup>14</sup> Sudan Government of National Unity, Federal Ministry of Health (Undated), ‘National Reproductive Health Policy, 2010’, United Nations Population Fund website, p. 11

[http://www.unfpa.org/sowmy/resources/docs/library/R104\\_MOHSudan\\_2010\\_RHPolicy\\_30May2010.pdf](http://www.unfpa.org/sowmy/resources/docs/library/R104_MOHSudan_2010_RHPolicy_30May2010.pdf) – Accessed 19 December 2011

<sup>15</sup> United Nations, Government of National Unity & Government of South Sudan 2007, *Sudan Country Analysis*, Repository of Country Health Reports website, p. 72 <http://rochr.qrc.com/bitstream/123456789/2789/1/Sudan-Country-Analysis-2007.pdf> – Accessed 19 December 2011

<sup>16</sup> United Nations, Government of National Unity & Government of South Sudan 2007, *Sudan Country Analysis*, Repository of Country Health Reports website, p. 67 <http://rochr.qrc.com/bitstream/123456789/2789/1/Sudan-Country-Analysis-2007.pdf> – Accessed 19 December 2011

<sup>17</sup> Sudan Government of National Unity, Federal Ministry of Health (Undated), ‘National Reproductive Health Policy, 2010’, United Nations Population Fund website p. 11

[http://www.unfpa.org/sowmy/resources/docs/library/R104\\_MOHSudan\\_2010\\_RHPolicy\\_30May2010.pdf](http://www.unfpa.org/sowmy/resources/docs/library/R104_MOHSudan_2010_RHPolicy_30May2010.pdf) – Accessed 19 December 2011

<sup>18</sup> Sudan Government of National Unity, Federal Ministry of Health (Undated), ‘National Reproductive Health Policy, 2010’, United Nations Population Fund website, p. 12

[http://www.unfpa.org/sowmy/resources/docs/library/R104\\_MOHSudan\\_2010\\_RHPolicy\\_30May2010.pdf](http://www.unfpa.org/sowmy/resources/docs/library/R104_MOHSudan_2010_RHPolicy_30May2010.pdf) – Accessed 19 December 2011

profile is characterised by preventable and treatable diseases such as acute watery diarrhoea and malaria. Across northern and southern Sudan, there tends to be an outbreak of meningococcal meningitis and acute watery diarrhoea every two to five years.<sup>19</sup>

There is reportedly poor control over pricing medicines in Sudan, with some items costing approximately 18 times the global average. This presents difficulties in accessing medications for many of Sudan's poorer citizens.<sup>20</sup> Sudanese reportedly have access to psychotropic medicines in psychiatric emergencies at a subsidised rate of at least 80 per cent. More generally, antipsychotic medicines cost approximately 27 per cent, and antidepressant medication 18 per cent, of the minimum daily wage.<sup>21</sup>

According to *Medicines Sans Frontières* (MSF), there are still significant medical needs in Sudan, with administrative constraints and the security situation, including incidences of banditry and kidnappings, hampering the organisation's efforts to reach some vulnerable residents. According to MSF, reaching patients in the Darfur region in western Sudan is a particular challenge.<sup>22</sup> Resources have been diverted from health to resolving conflict. Furthermore, there is limited capacity to address humanitarian crises, emergency situations and disease outbreaks.<sup>23</sup> According to the UK Home Office, it is believed that Sudan is in the early stages of a generalised HIV/AIDS epidemic.<sup>24</sup>

According to an August 2011 UK Home Office report, there are significant gaps in health coverage in the western Darfur region following the departure of twelve non-government organisations (NGOs) from the area. The NGOs had been providing health and nutrition services to 1.1 million people. The Abyei area (bordering South Sudan) requires its health facilities to be reconstructed.<sup>25</sup>

### Medical Training

The Institute for International Medical education website lists 14 medical schools in Sudan,<sup>26</sup> however, a 2006 article in the *Sudanese Journal of Public Health* stated that there were 30 medical schools.<sup>27</sup> According to the Australian Education International website, a Sudanese

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<sup>19</sup> United Nations, Government of National Unity & Government of South Sudan 2007, Sudan Country Analysis, Repository of Country Health Reports website, p. 70 <http://rochr.qrc.com/bitstream/123456789/2789/1/Sudan-Country-Analysis-2007.pdf> – Accessed 19 December 2011

<sup>20</sup> Sudan Government of National Unity, Federal Ministry of Health (Undated), 'National Reproductive Health Policy, 2010', United Nations Population Fund website p. 11 [http://www.unfpa.org/sowmy/resources/docs/library/R104\\_MOHSudan\\_2010\\_RHPolicy\\_30May2010.pdf](http://www.unfpa.org/sowmy/resources/docs/library/R104_MOHSudan_2010_RHPolicy_30May2010.pdf) – Accessed 19 December 2011

<sup>21</sup> World Health Organisation & Ministry of Health Sudan 2009, *WHO-AIMS Report on Mental Health System in Sudan*, Repository of Country Health Reports website, p. 10-11

[http://rochr.qrc.com/bitstream/123456789/2499/1/who\\_aims\\_report\\_sudan.pdf](http://rochr.qrc.com/bitstream/123456789/2499/1/who_aims_report_sudan.pdf) – Accessed 19 December

<sup>22</sup> 'Sudan' (undated), Medicines Sans Frontières website [http://www.msf.org.au/nc/about-msf/where-we-work/country-details.html?tx\\_ttnews%5Bcountry%5D=57](http://www.msf.org.au/nc/about-msf/where-we-work/country-details.html?tx_ttnews%5Bcountry%5D=57) – Accessed 20 December 2011

<sup>23</sup> Sudan Government of National Unity, Federal Ministry of Health (Undated), 'National Reproductive Health Policy, 2010', United Nations Population Fund website, p. 10-11

[http://www.unfpa.org/sowmy/resources/docs/library/R104\\_MOHSudan\\_2010\\_RHPolicy\\_30May2010.pdf](http://www.unfpa.org/sowmy/resources/docs/library/R104_MOHSudan_2010_RHPolicy_30May2010.pdf) – Accessed 19 December 2011

<sup>24</sup> UK Home Office 2011, *Operational Guidance Note – Sudan*, UNHCR Refworld website, August, p. 18-19 <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/4e5614b02.html> – Accessed 15 December 2011

<sup>25</sup> UK Home Office 2011, *Operational Guidance Note – Sudan*, UNHCR Refworld website, August, p. 18 <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/4e5614b02.html> – Accessed 15 December 2011

<sup>26</sup> 'Sudan' (undated), Institute for International Medical Education website <http://www.iime.org/database/africa/sudan.htm> – Accessed 20 December 2011

<sup>27</sup> Ali, Z. 2006, 'How Many Doctors Do We Need in Sudan?', *Sudanese Journal of Public Health*, Vol. 1, No. 3, July, p. 184 <http://www.sjph.net.sd/files/v1i3p180-191.pdf> – Accessed 19 December 2011



Professional Bachelor degree, such as medicine, takes five or six years to complete.<sup>28</sup> A bachelor's degree from the University of Khartoum is assessed as being comparable to an Australian bachelor's degree.<sup>29</sup> The Sudan Medical Council (SMC) has the role of accrediting medical schools and registering doctors. The SMC has the authority to inspect medical schools to ensure they provide sufficient instruction.<sup>30</sup> However, a 2006 source states that the relationship between medical training institutions and the health service authorities has been "weak and fragmentary".<sup>31</sup> The SMC administers the Sudan Medical Licensing Examination (SDMLE), used for licensing newly graduated doctors who have completed their degree and an internship. The examination reportedly covers issues such as diagnostics, patient management, medicine, paediatrics, specialties, surgery, obstetrics, gynaecology, medical ethics and medical sciences. There are no set texts for the examination,<sup>32</sup> which has been computer-based since 2007.<sup>33</sup>

Ala Eldin Hassan Ahmed from the Department of Medicine, University of Khartoum, suggests that there is a need for further opportunities for Sudanese doctors to undertake postgraduate specialist training. In the past, postgraduate doctors attended training in the United Kingdom, however, the number of positions available has declined. Additionally, changes in immigration rules have reportedly made it more difficult for overseas graduates to access training positions. According to Ahmed, there are general concerns for the standard of training conducted within Sudan. Whilst the Sudan Medical Specialisation Board reportedly has a system in place whereby hospitals may be selected as training centres, hospitals are often not selected due to a lack of appropriate infrastructure such as radiology and laboratory services.<sup>34</sup>

Doctors have been trained at a higher rate than other health care staff, resulting in an uneven skills mix; in 2007, there were reportedly around 29 physicians and 56 nurses per 100,000 people.<sup>35</sup> At the same time, a lack of positions has resulted in unemployment of doctors,<sup>36</sup> and there has apparently been a 'brain drain', with Sudanese medical professionals having migrated.<sup>37</sup> Primary health care staff training on mental health issues is reportedly weak.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> 'Courses and qualifications, Higher education, Sudan' (undated), Australian Education International website <http://www.aei.gov.au/CEP/Africa/Sudan/Education-System/Pages/HigherEd-CoursesandQuals-Default.aspx> – Accessed 20 December 2011

<sup>29</sup> 'University of Khartoum Sudan' (undated), Australian Education International website <http://www.aei.gov.au/CEP/Africa/Sudan/Assessment-Guidelines/Pages/HigherEd-S1-Default.aspx> – Accessed 20 December 2011

<sup>30</sup> 'Sudan Medical Council' (undated), Sudan Medical Council website p. 2 [http://www.smc.gov.sd/smcen/pdf/Sudan\\_medical\\_council.pdf](http://www.smc.gov.sd/smcen/pdf/Sudan_medical_council.pdf) – Accessed 19 December 2011

<sup>31</sup> Ali, Z. 2006, 'How Many Doctors Do We Need in Sudan?', *Sudanese Journal of Public Health*, Vol. 1, No. 3, July, p. 183 <http://www.sjph.net.sd/files/v1i3p180-191.pdf> – Accessed 19 December 2011

<sup>32</sup> Sudan Medical Council (undated), 'Sudan Medical Licensing Exam', Sudan Medical Council website p. 4-5 <http://www.smc.gov.sd/smcen/pdf/sdmle-final.pdf> – Accessed 19 December 2011.

<sup>33</sup> Sudan Medical Council (undated), 'Sudan Medical Licensing Exam', Sudan Medical Council website p. 2 <http://www.smc.gov.sd/smcen/pdf/sdmle-final.pdf> – Accessed 19 December 2011.

<sup>34</sup> Ahmed, A. E. H. 2009, 'Postgraduate training in Internal Medicine in the Sudan – Current Situation and Future Challenges', *Khartoum Medical Journal*, Vol. 2, No. 1, p. University of Khartoum website, p. 181-182 <http://med.uofk.edu/vol2no1/postgraduate.pdf> – Accessed 20 December 2011

<sup>35</sup> United Nations, Government of National Unity & Government of South Sudan 2007, Sudan Country Analysis, Repository of Country Health Reports website, p. 72 <http://rochr.qrc.com/bitstream/123456789/2789/1/Sudan-Country-Analysis-2007.pdf> – Accessed 19 December 2011

<sup>36</sup> Ali, Z. 2006, 'How Many Doctors Do We Need in Sudan?', *Sudanese Journal of Public Health*, Vol. 1, No. 3, July, p. 184 <http://www.sjph.net.sd/files/v1i3p180-191.pdf> – Accessed 19 December 2011

<sup>37</sup> Sudan Government of National Unity, Federal Ministry of Health (Undated), 'National Reproductive Health Policy, 2010', United Nations Population Fund website, p. 19 [http://www.unfpa.org/sowmy/resources/docs/library/R104\\_MOHSudan\\_2010\\_RHPolicy\\_30May2010.pdf](http://www.unfpa.org/sowmy/resources/docs/library/R104_MOHSudan_2010_RHPolicy_30May2010.pdf) – Accessed 19 December 2011

**3. Please provide information on the current government in Sudan and its stance towards opposition parties and whether there is government sponsored harm towards opponents.**

Omar Bashir has been president of Sudan since he came to power in a military coup in 1989. Bashir dissolved parliament and banned political parties upon his ascension to power, only allowing opposition activity from 1996 when a new constitution was drafted. The opposition boycotted elections in 2000, accusing Bashir and his National Congress Party of vote-rigging. Sudan's first multi-party elections were not held until 2010; the elections were criticised as falling short of international standards, and many opposition parties boycotted.<sup>39</sup> The US Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) reported that during the elections, "[l]aws were implemented and logistical arrangements manipulated to ensure an NCP victory. Freedom of speech, association and assembly were frequently violated".<sup>40</sup>

According to a May 2011 report from the International Crisis Group, the Bashir regime rejected calls from opposition parties for an inclusive constitution-drafting process (for a new Sudanese constitution following the South Sudan's secession). The government apparently believes opposition parties to be weak, and "continue[s] to pursue divide and rule tactics to prevent the emergence of a unified counterweight to NCP dominance of the centre". Governors in each state administer their own patronage networks in an atmosphere of institutionalised corruption.<sup>41</sup>

The most recent UK Home Office *Operational Guidance Note - Sudan* reports that, in 2010, government forces beat and tortured detainees, including members of the political opposition. There were also reports that, following anti-government protests in 2010 and 2011, the government was cracking down on opponents, human rights activists, journalists and students. As of 2008, security forces had reportedly used arbitrary arrest against political dissidents in Khartoum.<sup>42</sup> Blasphemy laws have also reportedly been used to target people who express anti-government views, including members of the Communist Party and an opposition presidential candidate. The government's political opponents have also been targeted for false arrest under the guise of public order laws which ostensibly aim to stop prostitution. A political opponent may be arrested under these laws, for example, if they are unmarried and are in a public space with a member of the opposite sex.<sup>43</sup> Amnesty International reports that the National Intelligence and Security Service (NISS) security forces have continued to arrest and detain political activists; activists have been held incommunicado and tortured.<sup>44</sup> The US Department of State also reports that the government was responsible for politically motivated disappearances, and mistreated political prisoners during 2010:

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<sup>38</sup> World Health Organisation & Ministry of Health Sudan 2009, *WHO-AIMS Report on Mental Health System in Sudan*, Repository of Country Health Reports website, p. 6

[http://rochr.qrc.com/bitstream/123456789/2499/1/who\\_aims\\_report\\_sudan.pdf](http://rochr.qrc.com/bitstream/123456789/2499/1/who_aims_report_sudan.pdf) – Accessed 19 December

<sup>39</sup> 'Sudan profile' 2011, *BBC News*, 9 July

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-14095116> – Accessed 20 December 2011

<sup>40</sup> United States Commission on International Religious Freedom 2011, *Annual Report for 2011*, May, p. 160

<sup>41</sup> International Crisis Group 2011, *Divisions in Sudan's Ruling Party and the Threat to the Country's Stability*, Africa Report No. 174, 4 May. <http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/africa/horn-of-africa/sudan/174-divisions-in-sudans-ruling-party-and-the-threat-to-the-countrys-future-stability.aspx> – Accessed 19 December 2011

<sup>42</sup> UK Home Office 2011, *Operational Guidance Note - Sudan*, UNHCR Refworld website, August, p. 2; 16 <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/4e5614b02.html> – Accessed 15 December 2011

<sup>43</sup> United States Commission on International Religious Freedom 2011, *Annual Report for 2011*, May, p. 158-159

<sup>44</sup> Amnesty International 2011, *Amnesty International Annual Report - Sudan*, 13 May

The government held an undetermined number of political prisoners and detainees. Security forces detained without charge, tortured, and held incommunicado political opponents. Detentions of such persons often were prolonged.<sup>45</sup>

The NISS has also reportedly requested journalists provide it with personal information, including political affiliation.<sup>46</sup>

The International Criminal Court in The Hague has issued two arrest warrants against Bashir, for genocide and war crimes in western Darfur, where thousands of people have died as government and rebel forces have fought there.<sup>47</sup>

#### **4. Please provide information about the Sudanese Federal Democratic party.**

No exact matches were located for a 'Sudanese Federal Democratic Party'. However, some information was located regarding a Sudan Federal Democratic Alliance.

According to the *Political Handbook of the World*, the Sudan Federal Democratic Alliance (SDFA) was formed in London in 1994 and led by Ahmed Dreige, a former cabinet minister. The group's aim was to bring an end to the Bashir regime and introduce a decentralised federal political structure.<sup>48</sup> The SDFA was a member of the National Democratic Alliance (NDA), a coalition which "linked, somewhat awkwardly, a disparate group of opponents of the Bashir regime."<sup>49</sup>

The *Political Handbook of the World* states that the SDFA was absorbed by the National Redemption Front (NRF), a coalition of rebel groups in Darfur founded in June 2006. The groups comprising the NRF reportedly refused to sign a May 2006 peace agreement with the Sudanese government.<sup>50</sup>

#### **5. Please provide information about freedom of religion in Sudan.**

Religious freedom in Sudan is limited. Prior to the July 2011 split, Sudan could be characterised as having a predominantly Sunni Muslim north and a predominantly Christian south.<sup>51</sup> Northern Sudan's religious demography also reportedly included Sufi brotherhoods, and small communities of Muslim minorities, including Shia and Republican Brotherhoods, based predominantly in Khartoum.<sup>52</sup> Freedom House reported that although religious freedom was guaranteed by the interim constitution in place prior to South Sudan's independence, in practice religious freedom was limited in the northern states, which were subject to Sharia law. In 2010, the United States designated Sudan as a country of particular concern in respect of religious freedom.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> US Department of State 2011, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2011 – Sudan*, Section 2(b); 2(e)

<sup>46</sup> UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office 2011, 'Human Rights and Democracy: the 2010 Foreign & Commonwealth Office Report – Sudan', UNHCR Refworld website, 31 March

<http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/4d99aa7e2.html> – Accessed 20 December 2011

<sup>47</sup> 'Sudan profile' 2011, *BBC News*, 9 July

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-14095116> – Accessed 20 December 2011

<sup>48</sup> 'Sudan' (undated), *Political Handbook of the World World Online Edition* CQ Press Electronic Library

<sup>49</sup> Szajkowski, B. (ed.) 2005, *Political Parties of the World*, 6<sup>th</sup> edition, John Harper publishing, London, p. 565-567

<sup>50</sup> 'Sudan' (undated), *Political Handbook of the World World Online Edition* CQ Press Electronic Library

<sup>51</sup> Freedom House 2011, *Freedom in the World 2011 – Sudan*, 26 May

<sup>52</sup> US Department of State 2011, *International Religious Freedom Report (July-December) – Sudan*, 13 September, Section I

<sup>53</sup> Freedom House 2011, *Freedom in the World 2011 – Sudan*, 26 May



Even prior to South Sudan's independence, apostasy was punishable by imprisonment or death in northern Sudan.<sup>54</sup> Blasphemy was also legally prohibited, and blasphemy accusations have reportedly been used against the government's political opponents. Religious groups were required to register with the government, although this requirement was reportedly not enforced. Permits were required to construct houses of worship.<sup>55</sup>

According to the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF), the authorities have committed violations of religious freedom in the north:

Violations of religious freedom continue to occur in Sudan. These include: the efforts by the Arab Muslim-dominated government in Khartoum to impose its version of sharia law and enforce religiously-based morality laws through corporal punishment to limit the fundamental freedoms of Muslims and non-Muslims alike; the criminalization of conversion from Islam, a crime punishable by death, and the intense scrutiny, intimidation, and torture of suspected converts by government security personnel; the denial of the rights of non-Muslims to public religious expression and persuasion, while Muslims are allowed to proselytize; and the difficulty in obtaining permission to build churches, as compared to government funding of mosque construction.<sup>56</sup>

A post published on the Hudson Institute's website<sup>57</sup> in July 2011 supports the statements above, claiming that the Sudanese government routinely enforces morality codes, and that violators may be beaten. The post states that churches are rarely permitted to be built, and that suspected apostates may be tortured. One of the authors of the post, Nina Shea, is a commissioner on the USCIRF.<sup>58</sup>

According to Christian organisation Release International, President Bashir has publicly confirmed plans to adopt an entirely Islamic constitution.<sup>59</sup> In July 2011, the Institute for War and Peace Reporting stated that written laws were already frequently replaced with rulings based on Sharia.<sup>60</sup> On 29 July 2011, 129 people were reportedly charged with apostasy, in South Khartoum. All those charged were apparently ethnic Hausa Darfuris.<sup>61</sup>

Reports indicate that the Christian population in Sudan has continued to face particular discrimination. In September 2011, Christian news source *Compass Direct* reported that state

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<sup>54</sup> US Department of State 2011, International Religious Freedom Report (July-December) – Sudan, 13 September, Section I

<sup>55</sup> US Department of State 2011, International Religious Freedom Report (July-December) – Sudan, 13 September, Section I

<sup>56</sup> United States Commission on International Religious Freedom 2011, *Annual Report for 2011*, May, p. 12

<sup>57</sup> The Hudson Institute is an interdisciplinary, non-partisan policy research organisation. Global Affairs is one of the Hudson Institute's current research priorities.

<sup>58</sup> Shea, N. & Shaw, W. 2011, 'Sudan: The Choice for Freedom', Hudson Institute website, source: The Hill's Congress Blog, 6 July

[http://crf.hudson.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=publication\\_details&id=8150&pubType=CRF\\_Opeds](http://crf.hudson.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=publication_details&id=8150&pubType=CRF_Opeds) – Accessed 15 December 2011

<sup>59</sup> 'Sudan: Christians in north braced for stricter Sharia' 2011, Release International website, 18 October <http://www.releaseinternational.org/pages/posts/sudan-christians-in-north-braced-for-stricter-sharia-893.php> – Accessed 19 December 2011.

<sup>60</sup> Institute for War and Peace Reporting 2011, 'Rights Disregarded Under Sudan's Weak Constitution', Institute for War and Peace Reporting website [http://iwpr.net/report-news/rights-disregarded-under-sudan%E2%80%99s-weak-constitution?utm\\_source=feedburner&utm\\_medium=feed&utm\\_campaign=Feed%3A+iwprstories+%28IWPR+Stories%29&utm\\_content=Goo\\_gle+Reader](http://iwpr.net/report-news/rights-disregarded-under-sudan%E2%80%99s-weak-constitution?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+iwprstories+%28IWPR+Stories%29&utm_content=Goo_gle+Reader) – Accessed 11 July 2011

<sup>61</sup> '129 People Charged with Apostasy in South Khartoum: Maximum Sentence is the Death Penalty' 2011, *Sudan Tribune*, source: The African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies, 15 September <http://www.sudantribune.com/129-People-charged-with-apostasy,40156> – Accessed 19 December 2011

authorities had threatened to demolish three church buildings; the buildings were located in Omdurman which is located on the Nile opposite Khartoum. According to Compass Direct, the authorities accused church leaders of building on government land without permission, and threatened to demolish the buildings if worship services continued.<sup>62</sup> In July 2011, security forces detained a United Nations worker in western Darfur after state media accused her of “Christianising” children in an Internally Displaced Persons camp;<sup>63</sup> Christians are barred from entering Sudan if their visit is expressly for missionary purposes.<sup>64</sup> In June 2010, police reportedly detained eight people for two days for holding a religious ceremony in their home without permission.<sup>65</sup> Converts or those who express an interest in Christianity may also come under “severe social pressure to recant”,<sup>66</sup> and Christians reportedly face discrimination in the workplace.<sup>67</sup>

According to the US Department of State (USDOS), anti-Semitic rhetoric has also been common in Sudan’s state media as well as in statements by northern government officials.<sup>68</sup>

## **6. Please provide information about the attitude of the Sudanese government towards Sufism.**

Islam was initially promoted in Sudan via leading Sufi orders,<sup>69</sup> and Sudan’s religious demography currently includes Sufi brotherhoods.<sup>70</sup>

No reports were located of Sufis being targeted for harm by the Sudanese government or authorities. Conversely, the Global Security website states that “the leaders of Sufi orders in Sudan have won acceptance by acknowledging the significance of the sharia and not claiming that Sufism replaces it”.<sup>71</sup>

A January 2011 news report states that Sufism “runs deep” in Sudan, and that Sufis tend to “shun politics”.<sup>72</sup> However, two of Sudan’s political parties have drawn support from Sufi orders. The Umma Party has traditionally attracted followers from the Ansar Sufi sect,<sup>73 74</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> ‘Officials in Sudan Threaten to Raze Three Church Buildings’ 2011, *Compass Direct*, 12 October [http://www.compassdirect.org/english/country/sudan/article\\_121869.html](http://www.compassdirect.org/english/country/sudan/article_121869.html) – Accessed 18 October 2011

<sup>63</sup> Amnesty International 2011, ‘Detained UN worker at risk of torture in Sudan’, Amnesty International website, 19 July <http://www.amnesty.org/en/news-and-updates/detained-un-worker-risk-torture-sudan-2011-07-19> – Accessed 20 July 2011

<sup>64</sup> US Department of State 2011, International Religious Freedom Report (July-December) – Sudan, 13 September, Section I

<sup>65</sup> Freedom House 2011, *Freedom in the World 2011 – Sudan*, 26 May

<sup>66</sup> US Department of State 2011, International Religious Freedom Report (July-December) – Sudan, 13 September, Section III

<sup>67</sup> ‘Country Profile – Sudan and South Sudan’ 2011, Release International website, July <http://www.releaseinternational.org/pages/country-profiles/sudan.php> – Accessed 19 December 2011

<sup>68</sup> US Department of State 2011, International Religious Freedom Report (July-December) – Sudan, 13 September, Section I

<sup>69</sup> Deng, F. M. 2006, ‘Sudan: A Nation in Turbulent Search of Itself’, *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 603, January, JSTOR database, p. 156 <http://www.jstor.org/stable/pdfplus/25097762.pdf?acceptTC=true> – Accessed 19 December 2011

<sup>70</sup> US Department of State 2011, International Religious Freedom Report (July-December) – Sudan, 13 September, Section I

<sup>71</sup> ‘Sufi Islam’ (undated), Global Security website <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/intro/islam-sufi.htm> – Accessed 19 December 2011

<sup>72</sup> ‘Sufis hoping for divine intervention in Sudan’ 2011, *CNN*, 20 January [http://articles.cnn.com/2011-01-20/world/new.sudan\\_1\\_southern-sudan-divine-intervention-darfur?\\_s=PM:WORLD](http://articles.cnn.com/2011-01-20/world/new.sudan_1_southern-sudan-divine-intervention-darfur?_s=PM:WORLD) – Accessed 19 December 2011

<sup>73</sup> US Department of State 2006, *International Religious Freedom Report for 2006 – Sudan*, 15 September, Section I

and as of 2010 was headed up by an Ansar Sufi spiritual leader.<sup>75</sup> The Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) has attracted followers from the Khatmia Sufi sect.<sup>76 77</sup>

A dated yet relevant report from the *Eastern Mediterranean Health Journal* states that Sufi-influenced healers have traditionally been influential community decision-makers, and have been respected by both their followers and the state.<sup>78</sup>

## **7. Please provide any information about the treatment of returnees from the West and failed asylum seekers.**

Limited information was located in relation to this question. An August 2011 report from the UK Home Office *Operational Guidance Note – Sudan* cites the following case law as still holding relevance:

Neither involuntary returnees nor failed asylum seekers nor persons of military age (including draft evaders and deserters) are as such at real risk on return to Khartoum.<sup>79</sup>

Two reported cases of Darfuri failed asylum seekers being targeted for harm by the authorities were located. In 2007, *The Guardian* reported that a male Darfuri failed asylum seeker who was returned to Khartoum was tortured by state authorities, before escaping with the assistance of an organisation called the Aegis Trust. The Darfuri man had apparently previously been detained and tortured as a teenager in 1990. His brother was a rebel fighter.<sup>80</sup> In 2009, *The Independent* reported that another male asylum seeker, from southern Darfur, was shot and killed by security forces within days of returning to his village. The report does not provide any further information regarding the man's background.<sup>81</sup> Both *The Guardian* and *The Independent* reported that advocacy groups had been at odds with the UK government regarding whether it was appropriate to repatriate asylum seekers to Khartoum.<sup>82</sup>

Additionally, *The Guardian* alleged that “it is very rare for a returned asylum seeker to emerge to tell their stories of torture”.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> El-Tigani, M. 2009, ‘Sufi-Brotherhood conflicts are eminent in Sudan elections and democratic politics’, *Sudan Tribune*, 15 November <http://www.sudantribune.com/Sufi-Brotherhood-conflicts-are.33114> – Accessed 19 December 2011

<sup>75</sup> ‘Sudan presidential race gains momentum’ 2010, *Sudan Tribune*, 26 January

[http://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?page=imprimable&id\\_article=33919](http://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?page=imprimable&id_article=33919) – Accessed 19 December 2011

<sup>76</sup> US Department of State 2006, *International Religious Freedom Report for 2006 – Sudan*, 15 September, Section I

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<sup>78</sup> ‘Characteristics of visitors to traditional healers in central Sudan’ 1991, *Eastern Mediterranean Health Journal*, Vol. 5, No. 1, World Health Organisation website <http://www.emro.who.int/Publications/EMHJ/0501/13.htm> – Accessed 12 July 2006

<sup>79</sup> UK Home Office 2011, *Operational Guidance Note – Sudan*, UNHCR Refworld website, August <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/4e5614b02.html> – Accessed 15 December 2011

<sup>80</sup> ‘Sudan: I was expecting to die’ 2007, *The Guardian*, 28 March

<sup>81</sup> ‘Sent back by Britain. Executed in Darfur’ 2009, *The Independent*, 17 March

<sup>82</sup> ‘Sudan: I was expecting to die’ 2007, *The Guardian*, 28 March

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