



Niger - Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on 17 October 2011

Information on Touareg rebels including treatment of someone associated with them by the police, including arrests; What is the current position between the Touareg rebels and the government/authorities

In March 2011 *IRIN News* states:

“There has yet to be any definitive resolution of the conflict pitting government troops against Touareg insurgents in the north. A rebellion that began in 1990 was fuelled by longstanding Touareg grievances, including a loss of grazing rights, and alleged discrimination by national and local authorities. Despite a ceasefire in 1995, the conflict flared up again in 2007. Accords brokered by Libyan leader Col Muammar Gaddafi in 2009 have been rejected by Touareg factions in Niger and neighbouring Mali” (*IRIN News* (11 March 2011) *Briefing: In Niger, soldiers out and civilians in*).

An introductory paragraph in the *United States Department of State* report issued in April 2011, commenting on events of 2010, notes:

“The armed conflict between the government and the Tuareg in northern Niger ended following a 2009 peace arrangement brokered by Libya. The subsequent surrender of arms by Tuareg groups was followed by the lifting of the state of alert in the North. During the year there were reports of sporadic acts of "banditry" on main roads and incursions by members of al-Qaida in the Lands of the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) into Nigerien territory. Between March 9 and 21, various delegations from the Tuareg rebel groups including the Movement of Nigeriens for Justice, the Nigerien Patriotic Front, and the Front of Forces for Rectification met with the CSRD president; they reaffirmed their commitment to work on sustaining peace, to follow through on commitments made during negotiations, and to help strengthen national unity. They urged the CSRD president and the Transition Government of Niger (TGON) to complete the 2009 peace process” (*United States Department of State*, (8 April 2011) *2010 Human Rights Report: Niger*).

This report also states:

“On March 29, the police jailed Rhissa Ag Boula, former minister and rebel Tuareg leader. Reportedly, his arrest was based on a previous final court decision (and therefore not related to other detentions during the same period) concerning the killing of an Agadez regional political leader. In 2008 the Niamey Court of Appeals sentenced Rhissa to death in his absence for ordering the killing. Authorities released Rhissa on July 5 and allowed him to leave the country. On December 4, the Niamey Court of Appeals acquitted Rhissa” (*ibid*, Section 1d Arbitrary Arrest or Detention/ Arrest Procedures and Treatment While in Detention).

Global Insight in April 2011 states:

“A shaky truce between the government and the myriad of factions and splinter groups of the MNJ, signed in 2009, still holds, but the Tuareg militants maintain the

capability to return to arms at short notice” (Global Insight (8 April 2011) *Niger's Newly Elected President Appoints Tuareg Prime Minister*).

In July 2011 *Reuters* notes:

“Fifty former Tuareg rebels turned armed bandits have surrendered their weapons to authorities in Niger, after two years on the run in the country’s remote desert north, state TV reported. Nomadic Tuaregs launched uprisings in the Sahara in the 1960s and 1990s. Renewed rebellions in early 2007 against the governments of Niger and neighbouring Mali have increased instability in a region where al Qaeda cells also operate. The rebellions largely fizzled out after peace deals signed in 2009 under Libyan mediation, although splintered Tuareg factions have also reneged on them. The region they operate in remains lawless and plagued by banditry” (Reuters (4 July 2011) *50 Tuareg former rebels surrender in Niger-state TV*).

References

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This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Refugee Documentation Centre within time constraints. This response is not and does not purport to be conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum. Please read in full all documents referred to.

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