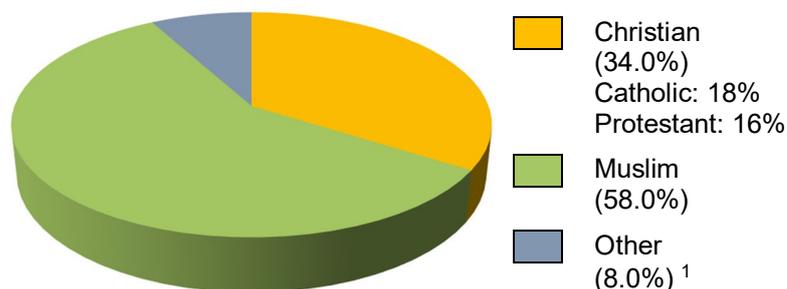
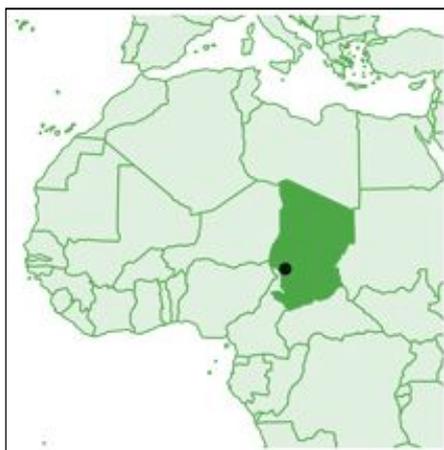


# CHAD



Area <sup>2</sup> :	Population <sup>3</sup> :	Political system:	Major Language(s):
1,284,000 km <sup>2</sup>	11,631,456	Autocracy	French, Arabic, Sara <sup>4</sup>

## Legal Framework on Freedom of Religion and actual application

As in the neighbouring countries of Nigeria, Niger and Cameroon, so too in Chad the security situation has been extremely tense during the period of this report. In particular, the attacks by Islamist militia group Boko Haram, which operates from central bases in north-east Nigeria, has caused terror among the population and has left tens of thousands of refugees. The region most severely affected is around Lake Chad in the west of the country, which is used by Boko Haram as its preferred base and retreat. So far, the Chad authorities have had little success in protecting their citizens effectively.<sup>5</sup>

According to its constitution of 14<sup>th</sup> April 1996, which is based on the French model, Chad is a presidential republic with a multi-party system, but with strongly autocratic features.<sup>6</sup> The constitution was drawn up by the Sovereign National Conference during a three-year transitional phase and was put to a referendum on 31<sup>st</sup> March 1996, winning 61.5 percent of the vote. However, the task of preparing the constitution was made more difficult for the conference because first it had to address the problem of decades of violent conflict. Since the year 2000, the Patriotic Salvation Movement (MPS), the ruling party, had been striving to introduce changes to the constitution in order to lift the limitation that restricts the presidential term of office to only two terms. However, in a joint declaration, almost all the opposition parties fiercely opposed this attempt by President Idriss Déby and his party to ensure his own re-election in this way; he has now been governing the country continuously since 1990.

However, in spite of their attempts, the amendment to the constitution was approved by Parliament in May 2004 and confirmed on 6<sup>th</sup> June 2005 in a referendum. This was accompanied by repeated opposition protests of electoral manipulation which continued long after the vote was taken. This amendment to the constitution effectively deprived the country and the opposition of any hope of a change of regime. Since then there have been repeated attempts at coups and rebel attacks, including from within the government's own ranks. But so far, Déby's regime, which regards itself as the sole guarantor of stability and development, has succeeded in fighting off all these attacks. And it plans to continue ruling after the elections of April 2016 (the results of which were not known at the time of writing), despite fierce criticism from the opposition.<sup>7</sup>

Article 1 of the constitution establishes the principle of a secular state and the separation of state and religion, while Article 5 bans any propaganda that aims to undermine the "secular character

and unity of the state”, including any propaganda of a “confessional” nature.<sup>8</sup> Article 14 guarantees all citizens’ “equality before the law, without distinction as to origin, race, gender, religion, political outlook or social class”. In Article 27 of the constitution “religious freedom” is listed among freedoms that may only be limited to preserve the freedoms and rights of other citizens and by the need to preserve public order and morality. Article 54 however places limitations on the right to conscientious objection and states that “No one may appeal to his religious convictions or political views in order to escape an obligation that is dictated by the national interest.”

## **Incidents**

Islamist violence appears to be gaining ground in Chad and at the same time government policy is becoming increasingly authoritarian. And yet, relations between the religious faiths in this country of the Sahel continue to be exemplary in many respects. Research shows there were no particular incidents during the period under review indicating a decline in inter-religious relations.

For the most part, people of different faiths in Chad have always lived peaceably side by side. The majority of the population are Muslims. Chad is essentially divided geographically along religious lines, with the north predominantly Muslim in faith, while the south is predominantly Christian. Chad’s Interior Ministry oversees religious affairs and its function is to maintain and supervise religious freedom in Chad and act as a mediator in the event of conflict.

Chad is a religiously neutral, secular state and the constitution bans religious instruction in state schools. However, it permits the establishment of private faith schools run by Churches and other faith communities. All organisations, whether religious or not, are required to register with the Interior Ministry. Failure to do so can result in a fine or a prison sentence.<sup>9</sup>

In its speeches and official statements, the government of Chad actively promotes religious respect and tolerance.<sup>10</sup> Religious groups are invited to improve relations with one another and to strive for cooperation. The state continues to support the construction of the Catholic cathedral in the capital, N’Djamena, which is set to become one of the largest churches in central Africa, and also the restoration of the existing diocesan church of Notre Dame.<sup>11</sup> Relations between the various religious groups in the inter-denominational bodies in Chad are good, and there is a prevailing spirit of mutual respect and esteem. The representatives of the various religions visit one another on their respective religious festivals. On 20<sup>th</sup> August 2014, there was a meeting of Muslim, Catholic and Protestant leaders in Moundou where a project was launched aimed at promoting religious tolerance and peaceful coexistence among refugees and returning Chadian expats.

On 11<sup>th</sup> January 2016, in an address to the diplomatic corps in the Vatican, Pope Francis recalled the ratification of the treaty with the Republic of Chad with regard to the legal status of the Catholic Church in the country. It was, said Pope Francis, a sign that “peaceful coexistence among the members of different religions is possible [and that] religious freedom is recognised.” He said the treaty showed that the “possibility is granted to each [person], in mutual respect for the cultural identity of the individual, to work together for the building up of the common good”.<sup>12</sup>

Nonetheless, this peaceful coexistence between the religions in Chad is now in danger. The threat comes above all from the violence of the Islamist terror group Boko Haram, which continues to carry out repeated attacks. According to reports provided by security forces in the country, in December 2015, at least 30 people were killed and around 80 others injured in three separate suicide attacks on a market in the town of Loulou Fou, on an island in Lake Chad. At the beginning of the year 2015 thousands of people had fled from the attacks of Boko Haram to this island. In early November 2015 a state of emergency had been declared in the region following a series of attacks by Boko Haram. Since then, more than 5,000 soldiers have been stationed on the islands and in the villages around Lake Chad.

Lake Chad is on the borders of Chad, Nigeria, Niger and Cameroon, and this region, with its densely forested shores, is a favoured base for Boko Haram, which wants an Islamist state in

northern Nigeria. Several countries in the region, including Chad, have formed a coalition against Boko Haram, which for some time now has been extending its attacks beyond Nigeria and into the neighbouring countries. In March 2015 Boko Haram proclaimed its allegiance to fellow Islamists Daesh (ISIS).

Earlier, in October 2015, 41 people were killed in three separate attacks. According to the Chadian security forces, which held Boko Haram responsible for the attacks, more than 50 people were also injured in these explosions in the town of Baga Sola on the shores of Lake Chad. The attacks reflected the extreme brutality of the militants. According to reports, the first attack was on the busy fish market in Baga Sola. Shortly afterwards, there were two further explosions in a refugee camp on the edge of the town.

## Prospects for Freedom of Religion

Islamist terrorism in the region is having a serious effect on the lives of people, regardless of whether they are Christians or Muslims. According to a report by the United Nations Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), Boko Haram is preventing over a million children from attending school. According to a UNICEF report of December 2015, more than 2,000 schools in Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad and Niger have been closed, along with many other institutions, in some cases for over a year now.<sup>13</sup> This absence of formal education is fertile soil for radicalisation and extremism, the agency points out, adding that even before the conflict there were more than 10 million boys and girls denied appropriate education. According to UNICEF, hundreds of schools have been attacked, looted or burned down, while many other schools in the region have been turned into shelters for refugees. Many teachers have fled. Boko Haram has deliberately declared war on Western education. In addition to northern Nigeria, Niger and Cameroon, Chad is now increasingly affected.

Another central challenge for the people of Chad is the influx of refugees from neighbouring countries especially Nigeria, the Central African Republic (CAR) and Sudan. At the same time, the country is grappling with the reintegration of Chadians returning from abroad. The refugees are living scattered in camps, or in some cases among the local communities, in the villages or in the towns.<sup>14</sup> Refugees from Sudan make up the largest group, about 380,000 people, followed by around 100,000 refugees from the CAR. As one of the poorest countries in the world, Chad has huge challenges helping these people. The government is working closely with UN agencies and other aid organisations to address the humanitarian crisis.<sup>15</sup>

The government is pinning its hopes on the rich mineral reserves recently discovered in Chad.<sup>16</sup> For example, in 2003 Chad became an oil exporting country, with the completion of an oil pipeline to the Atlantic coast. So far, the oil revenues coming into the country, whose institutions are unfortunately viewed as particularly corrupt, has brought little perceptible sign of a reduction of poverty. Nor has there been any wider development that might profit not only the few, but the broad majority of the population.

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<sup>1</sup> U.S. State Department 2016: International Religious Freedom Report 2014 – 2009 census

<sup>2</sup> CIA 2016: *The World Factbook*, estimation of 2015.

<sup>3</sup> CIA 2016: *The World Factbook*, Schätzung Juli 2015

<sup>4</sup> French, Arabic, Sara and 120 languages and dialects CIA 2016: *The World Factbook*

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-35882396>

<sup>6</sup> Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ): Tschad 2016

<http://liportal.giz.de/tschad/geschichte-staat/>

<sup>7</sup> Bundeszentrale für Politische Bildung, <http://www.bpb.de/internationales/weltweit/innerstaatliche-konflikte/176525/tschad>

<sup>8</sup> [https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Chad\\_2005.pdf](https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Chad_2005.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> Ebd.

<sup>10</sup> Ebd.

<sup>11</sup> Ebd.

<sup>12</sup> [http://de.radiovaticana.va/news/2016/01/14/die\\_papstrede\\_vor\\_dem\\_diplomatischen\\_corps/1200148](http://de.radiovaticana.va/news/2016/01/14/die_papstrede_vor_dem_diplomatischen_corps/1200148)

<sup>13</sup> [http://de.radiovaticana.va/news/2015/12/23/boko\\_haram\\_hindert\\_eine\\_million\\_kinder\\_am\\_schulbesuch/1196072](http://de.radiovaticana.va/news/2015/12/23/boko_haram_hindert_eine_million_kinder_am_schulbesuch/1196072)

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<sup>14</sup> <http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/page?page=49e45c226&submit=GO>

<sup>15</sup> Ebd.

<sup>16</sup> BBC 2016: Chad country profile (<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-13164686>)