



Ethiopia – Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on 6 March 2014

Information on whether the Kinijit political party operate in Ethiopia or outside the country? Information on treatment of members of the Kinijit political party.

Referring to the Kinijit party in Ethiopia a research response published by the Refugee Review Tribunal of Australia quotes information provided by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade as follows:

“The Kinijit (also known as the Coalition for Unity and Democracy or CUD), is the major opposition group, and as such is blamed by the government for any threats to security that occurred after the May 2005 elections. Therefore anyone linked to the party is subjected to some form of harassment. After the 2005 elections, thousands were arrested for charges considered to be politically motivated while a significant number were reportedly forced into exile. There have been reports of the government and police targeting anyone known to be a CUD supporter much less a member. These attacks were on a larger scale in the rural areas where access is limited and thus where reports of such acts are less likely to surface. There have also been reports of random and unaccounted arrests of CUD members and supporters.” (Australia: Refugee Review Tribunal (8 February 2008) *Ethiopia: 1. Please provide information concerning the treatment of Kinijit Party members and activists. Are supporters in general (rather than members) of interest to the government? 2. What is the general position of Amara people in Ethiopia currently? 3. Are single women able to live independently or without family support and obtain employment in Ethiopia? 4. What information is available concerning the trafficking of women in Ethiopia? 5. Do women who have previously been trafficked face an increased risk of being found and re-trafficked?*)

An Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada response to a request for information on the Coalition for Unity and Democracy (CUD) states:

“The CUD is also known as Kinijit. The Secretary of the Kinijit chapter in Toronto stated in correspondence to the Research Directorate that ‘relatives of members of CUD are treated as ‘enemy’ of the government of Ethiopia’. The Secretary added that relatives of members of the CUD are subjected to treatment such as job discrimination, unlawful dismissal, refusal of business licence applications or loss of existing business licences, and denial of university admission or grants. The Independent reports that the CUD alleges that some supporters were shot dead in apparent extra-judicial killings, but does not provide further details. In January 2007, an active organizer with the CUD, who had been allegedly harassed by security forces after having being released from detention, was killed. The article indicates that he was the sixth CUD organizer to be murdered in Addis Ababa in the space of one week.” (Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada (4 January 2008) *ETH102699.E – Ethiopia: Treatment of relatives of members of opposition parties, especially the Coalition for Unity and Democracy (CUD) (2006 - 2007)*)

See also Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada response which, in a section titled "Unity for Democracy and Justice Party in Ethiopia (paragraph 1.1 Formation), states:

"The Unity for Democracy and Justice Party (UDJ or UDJP), commonly known as Andinet [also spelled Andnet and Andenet], the Amharic word for unity, was formed in June 2008 in Addis Ababa. According to the National Electoral Board of Ethiopia, it was formally registered on 22 August 2008. The UDJ was formed after the dissolution of the Coalition for Unity and Democracy (CUD, also known as Kinijit), which had been the main opposition alliance in Ethiopia." (Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada (23 July 2012) *ETH104127.E – Ethiopia: The Unity for Democracy and Justice Party (UDJ); its formation, leadership, structure, mandate, membership, issuance of membership cards; treatment by authorities; branches outside of Ethiopia; membership requirements at Toronto and Atlanta branches (2008-2012)*)

A Voice of America News report states:

"Ethiopia's political balance shifted when the country's former president, Negasso Gidada, and former defense minister, Siye Abraha, joined the Unity for Democracy and Justice, or UDJ. It is considered the main party to emerge from the breakup of the Coalition for Unity and Democracy, or CUD, that won nearly 200 parliamentary seats in the disputed 2005 elections. The CUD disintegrated after the vote, following violent anti-government protests in which an estimated 197 people died. Many opposition leaders were convicted of inciting the violence and were sentenced to life in prison. They were later pardoned, but Birtukan Mideksa -- the charismatic young co-founder of the UDJ -- had her pardon revoked and was sent back to prison to serve out her life sentence. Only a few of those elected under the CUD banner ever took their seats." (Voice of America News (26 November 2009) *Former Top Ethiopian Officials Join Jailed Opposition Leader's Party*)

This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research and Information Unit 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.

References:

Australia: Refugee Review Tribunal (8 February 2008) *Ethiopia: 1. Please provide information concerning the treatment of Kinijit Party members and activists. Are supporters in general (rather than members) of interest to the government? 2. What is the general position of Amara people in Ethiopia currently? 3. Are single women able to live independently or without family support and obtain employment in Ethiopia? 4. What information is available concerning the trafficking of women in Ethiopia? 5. Do women who have previously been trafficked face an increased risk of being found and re-trafficked?*

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