

LIBYA

Status and treatment of Qadhadhfa clan in Libya and determination of clan membership



Maps Source: The CIA World Factbook

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List of questions :

- 1./ To what clan / tribe belonged Muammar Gaddafi? What is the characteristics of Gaddafi members of the clan / tribe (their common name, clothing or other external sign)?**

- 2./ How can you find out who in Libya is from what clan / tribe or determine the membership of a respective clan / tribe; can it be seen e.g. of the name, way of dressing or other external signs?**

- 3./ Are common members of Gaddafi clan / tribe or Gaddafi supporters from the ranks of ordinary citizens in any way punished, sanctioned, or otherwise stigmatized currently?**

Question 1:

To what clan / tribe belonged Muammar Gaddafi? What is the characteristics of Gaddafi members of the clan / tribe (their common name, clothing or other external sign)?

Answer :

Wikipedia, **Qadhadhfa**, 11/06/2016, reports:

‘ The **Qadhadhfa** (also al-Qaddafi, Gaddadfa, Qaddadfa, Gaddafa; **Arabic**: القذافنة) is one of the branches of the **Houara** tribe, living in the **Sirte District** in present-day northwestern **Libya**. They are now mostly centered at **Sabha**.¹

Question 2:

How can you find out who in Libya is from what clan / tribe or determine the membership of a respective clan / tribe; can it be seen e.g. of the name, way of dressing or other external signs?

Answer :

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Netherlands), *Libya: Militias, Tribes and Islamists*, 19/12/2014, reports:

‘ Even if tribal ties have diminished within the Libyan society as a result of urbanization, it still continues to be a part of the Libyan identity. Tribes are not regarded as collective actors ruled by leaders, but rather as segmented sub-tribes, lineages and extended families. And it is particularly the latter that maintain the power relations between and within tribes. Tribal identity represents a common nominator for Libyans’ way of life. Tribal culture contains ethics, norms and the adoption of values that make up concrete institutions and procedures. The most important of these is customary law (urf) and the gathering of leading men in murbu’ (the men’s room or guestroom in tribal houses). Tribal structures still remain strong, and tribal institutions have contributed to providing order in the political and security vacuum that prevailed after the fall of the Qadhafi regime. People’s vote are indirectly guided by tribal/family ties. The majority of independent representatives in the 2012 elections represented the interests of individuals, families or tribes. During the uprising tribes attained both arms and experience and therefore gained local influence and territorial control. Minority groups like Amazigh, Tuareg and Tubu have gained significant freedom through de-facto self-rule. In the northwest, Libyans have identified with one of two rival alliances; a ‘lower’ tribal alliance along the coast, including Misrata, Zawiya, and some of the Farjan tribes,

¹ Wikipedia, *Qadhadhfa*, 11/06/2016, (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Qadhadhfa>), consulted, abridged 07/02/2017

and an ‘upper’ which consists largely of Bedouin alliances in the mountains and also further south including Zintan, Warfallah, Qadhadhfa, Maqarha and Warshafana tribes. The northeast maintains tribal alliances to Operation Dignity. Supporters include some of the Farjan tribes – which Haftar belongs to – in the Gulf of Sirt, Maghariba, Ubaydat and al-Bar’asa. Some of these tribes also support federalism like Maghariba, Hassi and al-Awaqir. The extremist groups in the Gulf of Sirt and the northeast try to downplay tribal affiliations, emphasizing the common bond of Islam.²

Question 3:

Are common members of Gaddafi clan / tribe or Gaddafi supporters from the ranks of ordinary citizens in any way punished, sanctioned, or otherwise stigmatized currently?

Answer :

ACCORD, *Anfragebeantwortung zu Libyen: Lage von Menschen, die im Verdacht stehen, UnterstützerInnen des Gaddafi-Regimes zu sein 2014 bis heute [a-9987-2 (10002)]*, as of 19/01/2017 January 2017, reports:

‘ „Former henchmen of Colonel Gaddafi are being recruited to join the Western-backed battle to drive the Islamic State from Libya, the Telegraph has learned. Commanders who fought on Gaddafi's side during the revolution in 2011 have signed up to a coalition now gearing up to push Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (Isil) from his home city of Sirte. The commanders - some of whom fled Libya after the revolution - see the move as a chance to redeem themselves in the eyes of their fellow countrymen.“ (The Telegraph, 7. Mai 2016) (...)

„The bodies of at least 12 loyalists to the former Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi have been found in the country's capital, Tripoli, only days after they were released from prison. The victims were part of a group who had been held at the al-Ruwaimi prison, Tripoli's general prosecutor confirmed. Libya's internationally backed Government of National Accord (GNA) issued a statement condemning the murders and ordered an investigation into the deaths.“ (Al Jazeera, 12. Juni 2016) (...)

„Mattia Toaldo, a specialist on Libya at the European Council on international relations, has identified three types of Gaddafi loyalists: the supporters of Saif el-Islam, the favourite son of Gaddafi, detained since 2011 in the city of Zentan in the west of the country; the supporters of General Khalifa Haftar, in the east of the country; and the orthodox supporters of the Jamahiriya. [...]

Those who joined with Haftar benefited from the amnesty law passed by the Tobruk parliament for perpetrators of crimes during the uprising in 2011. A text aims to bring back those in exile, which number between 1.5m and 3m, including a majority of Gaddafi loyalists who sought refuge in Tunisia and Egypt. The clan of Saif al-Islam is probably the best organised and brings together a portion of orthodox supporters. Although sentenced to death on 28 July 2015 in absentia in Tripoli, al-Islam is still alive in Zentan. Officially a prisoner of the local militia, he enjoys very lax conditions of detention and is reportedly free to travel around the city. (...)

The most revolutionary militia in Tripoli has understood the potential danger of such a rampant nostalgia to develop. In June, they assassinated 12 loyalists in Tripoli from the

² The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Netherlands), *Libya: Militias, Tribes and Islamists*, 19/12/2014, (<http://www.refworld.org/docid/54afd8be4.html>), consulted at UNHCR Refworld, abridged 10/02/2017

Jamahiriya who had just completed their prison sentences for crimes committed in 2011.“ (Middle East Eye/MEE, 11. November 2016)³

European Affairs, *Ceasefire fails, the conflict between Awlad Suleiman and the Qaddadfa tribes resumes*, 21/11/2016, reports:

‘ Tribal fighting has continued in Sebha for the fourth day with at least 15 people now killed and more than 35 wounded. The conflict between the Awlad Suleiman and the Qaddadfa tribes paused briefly this morning when a two-hour ceasefire was agreed. However, shooting resumed well before the period elapsed. The fighting has focused on the Al-Minshiya and Al-Mahdiya areas but families have been seeking to quit other areas of the town as the fire fights move around. Inhabitants confined in their homes for the battles reported properties shaking as heavy mortars and a tank cannon were fired as well as a heavy calibre DShKM (Dushka) machine gun. Sebha Medical Center called in all its staff to help with what it said was a state of emergency as more and more dead and injured were brought in. A spokesman warned that the hospital no longer had the medication nor the staff to deal with a crisis of this size.’⁴

National Committee for Human Rights in Libya (NCHRL), *Statement on the Violence Against the Qadhadhfa Tribe in Sebha*, 17/11/2016, reports:

‘ The National Committee for Human Rights in Libya expresses deep concern over the violence and hostilities against the qadhadhfa tribe in Sabha, which erupted Tuesday evening, where an armed group belonging to the tribe of Solomon killed seven people, including a woman, two children, three young men and an elderly man.

The victims are:

- 1- Ali bin Ali Al-Gaddafi
- 2- Mohammed Ali Alfruja Gaddafi
- 3- Mansour lamp Almargi Gaddafi’s four-Boubacar Daou Zenker Gaddafi
- 4- Saad Boubacar Daou Zenker Gaddafi
- 5- Mohamed Boubacar Daou Zenker Gaddafi and his sister

(...) As the National Commission for Human Rights in Libya condemns and denounces these crimes and violations, the systematic targeting of civilians of the qadhadhfa tribe in Sabha and the ongoing project of extermination being waged by armed criminal groups that belong to the tribe of Solomon. These crimes are heinous and this latest crime is the fourth attack in five years.(...)

The National Committee for Human Rights in Libya demands the urgent intervention of the UN High Commissioner of Human Rights (Geneva) and the Department of Human Rights of the UNSMIL to protect the qadhadhfa tribe from crimes and abuses against them under the responsibility to protect civilians and to bring the perpetrators to justice.’⁵

³ ACCORD, *Anfragebeantwortung zu Libyen: Lage von Menschen, die im Verdacht stehen, UnterstützerInnen des Gaddafi-Regimes zu sein 2014 bis heute [a-9987-2 (10002)]*, 19/01/2017, (http://www.ecoi.net/local_link/335009/463543_en.html), consulted at ecoi.net, abridged 09/02/2017

⁴ European Affairs, *Ceasefire fails, the conflict between Awlad Suleiman and the Qaddadfa tribes resumes*, 21/11/2016, (<http://www.europeanaffairs.media/2016/11/21/ceasefire-fails-conflict-awlad-suleiman-qaddadfa-tribes-resumes/>), consulted, abridged 13/02/2017

⁵ National Committee for Human Rights in Libya (NCHRL), *Statement on the Violence Against the Qadhadhfa Tribe in Sebha*, 17/11/2016, (<https://vivalibya.wordpress.com/2016/11/17/nchrl-statement-on-the-violence-against-the-qadhadhfa-tribe-in-sebha/>), consulted, abridged 13/02/2017

UK Home Office, *Country Information and Guidance Libya: Ethnic minority groups*, June 2016, reports:

'Some members of ethnic minority groups have been accused of supporting, or are perceived to have supported Gaddafi during the uprising. Perceived supporters of Gaddafi and his regime are at risk of extra-judicial killings, abduction, enforced disappearance, arbitrary detention, including in unofficial detention centres, torture, ill-treatment and death in detention. These abuses have been perpetrated by the authorities of the Interim Government or its armed affiliates, as well as by armed militias operating outside of government control.

2.3.3 Communities perceived to be loyal to Gaddafi based on their ethnicity have also experienced harassment, violence, intimidation, discrimination forced displacement, indiscriminate shelling, looting and the burning of homes. Camps for internally displaced persons (IDPs) housing minority ethnic groups have been attacked by militias resulting in arbitrary arrests, abductions, deaths and the re-displacement of their residents. (...)

2.4 Protection

2.4.1 Those perceived to be supporters of the Gaddafi regime cannot access effective protection from the government. (...)

2.5 Internal relocation

2.5.1 Where members of ethnic minority groups do encounter local hostility they may be able to avoid this by moving elsewhere in Libya, but only if the risk is not present there and if it would not be unduly harsh to expect them to do so.

2.5.2 However, if the person is known to be or will be perceived as a supporter of the Gaddafi regime it is unlikely that they would be able to internally relocate in order to escape the risk of persecution. Hatred and resentment against Gaddafi, and all those associated with his regime, remains widespread throughout the country. The country information suggests that persons suspected or known to have supported Gaddafi, his forces and/or his regime are frequently taken captive from the streets and at checkpoints.⁶

⁶ UK Home Office, *Country Information and Guidance Libya: Ethnic minority groups*, June 2016, (http://www.ecoi.net/file_upload/1226_1467803769_libya-ethnic-minority-groups-v2-0.pdf), consulted at ecoi.net, abridged 13/02/2017