

1. Identification of the ICH Element

Al Toub al Sudani: The Sudanese National Dress for Women

1.1. Name of the element in the language of the local community concerned

The common name used is *toub*. Some communities know it by the name *Foota* or *Farda*

1.2. Give a brief description of the ICH element that includes more details such as the ICH domain/s to which it belongs

Toub is the national dress of the Sudanese women and is favored by most of them. It is categorized under traditional artifacts as well as social practices, customs and festivities.

1.3. The community(ies) or group/s that recognize the element as part of their cultural heritage

The majority of the Sudanese women in their various cultural settings, especially married women of central Sudan, consider *al Toub* their dress of choice. Partial variations exist in the way women from different communities wear the dress. Women of the eastern Beja ethnicity, for instance, use a variety called *Foota* or *Farda*, while some groups in western Sudan wrap the *Toub* around their bodies the same way as elsewhere but in the opposite direction. The Shuluk of South Sudan wear the *Laou*, a shorter *Toub* which they keep in place by tying the two cloth ends at the shoulder.

The Sudanese *Toub* is shared by a number of neighboring and other countries including Mauritania, Djibouti, Somalia, Chad, Some parts of Morocco and India, where it comes in several shapes and designs which differ slightly from the Sudanese *Toab* in the dressing style, raw material and colors.

1.4. Geographical location(s) of the element (origin according to the community), where it is centered and the frequency of its practice

The *Toab* is said to have originated in today's northern Sudan at time of the Kingdom of Kush (1070 BC – 350 AC) seat to the ancient Nile civilization. From there, it found its way to the different parts of the country through education, internal migrations and the media.

1.5. Briefly describe the ICH element (preferably in not more than 200 words)

It is the traditional dress for the majority of Sudanese women, and is one of their characterizing features. It is an outer dress made of a single rectangular stretch of cloth 4.5 meters in length and 1.5 meters in breadth, worn laminating a dress of consonant colors. The two ends of the cloth are knotted at the top and the cloth wrapped around the body in a way that allows for the arms and head to emerge. Finally, the remaining part of the cloth is tossed over the shoulder. The *Toub* is mostly a married woman's dress and is patterned in different colors and designs according to the type of textile used, making it a colorful work of art that suites all tastes, cultures and traditions.

2. Characteristics of the ICH element

2.1. Directly concerned practitioners/performers of the ICH element (including name, age, gender, professional category... etc.)

The practicing communities comprise Sudanese women of different age and professional affiliations especially the married and the elderly, *Toub* designers, tailors, national and foreign textile traders, entertainers, announcers, women societies and unions.

2.2. Sectors of the local community who are concerned with the element, though to lesser degree than the previous one, which contribute to or facilitate the practice and transmission of the element (such as theatre personnel, costume specialists, choreographers and supervisors)

Textile importers, traders, spinning mills proprietors and salespersons, clearing agents, transport workers, husbands, owners of fashion accessories, bags and shoes, dress rentals, owners of banquet rooms and weds grooming parlors.

2.3. Relevant language/s or dialects

Arabic Language (Sudanese slang) as a lingua franca in addition to all local Sudanese dialects.

2.4. Material elements related to the element or its transmission such as the objects, equipment, special costumes and customary site/s and objects (if available)

Cotton, textiles, looms, needles, machines, corsets, dresses, shoes, scarfs, Jirtiq objects, ordinary threads, fluorescent threads, stones, bezels, beads, glitters, paints, colors.

2.5. Other intangible elements related to the practice and transmission of the ICH element (if available)

Poets carry the Sudanese *Toub* along when describing the good looks of their loved women. It has become the theme of tens of love poems through time.

2.6. Customary practices that govern access to and benefitting from the ICH element or parts of it

Use of the Sudanese *Toub* is governed by the genre of customary practices in all social occasions. It is central to some customs especially Jirtiq and the Zar cult. White-colored *Toub* is associated with pilgrimage to Mecca and mourning rituals. Certain restrictions have to be honored upon selecting the right *Toub* for a specific occasion. Ornamented and expensive varieties are usually avoided in grieving events.

2.7. Transmission to others in the local community

Young girls learn the art of dressing in the Sudanese *Toub* by mimicking the modus operandi of their mothers and grandmothers. A girl grows up watching her mother wearing the *Toub* indoors and when visiting, so she follows suit starting with the scarf that suits her slender figure more, while saying her prayers when she learns worshipping. Eventually, she masters the technique and gets used to wearing her *Toub* before guests and in her rounds about the neighborhood, in which case she uses what is called *Toub al Jairan* (Neighbors' *Toub*). Central to the bride's dowry constituents is the of Sudanese *Toub* the quantity of which ranges between 3 and 12 units depending on the groom's financial status. A female relative of the groom used to make the selection. Nowadays, however, the bride herself makes the shopping and selects her *Toub*s of choice either directly from the dealers or by visiting fashion designers specialized in this item.

2.8. Concerned organizations (local community organizations, NGOs and others, if applicable)

There is no specific organization exclusively concerned with the Sudanese *Toub*. That said, the dress is cherished in the occasions related to most of the private cultural bodies such as:

1. Radina Cultural Society,
2. Al Fihail Center for Art Culture and Media Documentation (House of Heritage),
3. Traditional Sudanese Music Center.

3. Status of the ICH Element: Viability and Continuity (see remark below)

3.1. Threats (if applicable) that the ICH element is exposed to within the concerned local community/ies

1. The influence of foreign fads and culture,
2. The high cost of the Sudan *Toubs* especially imported one,
3. Ideologically-driven preference of Abayas,
4. Uniform requirements of working women.

3.2. Threats (if applicable) that jeopardize transmission of the ICH element within the concerned community/ies

- Mothers are generally becoming less interested in teaching their daughters *Toub* dressing techniques,
- Married teachers and other working women are not keen, as they used to be, to distinguish themselves by appearing dressed in *Toubs* at their schools and the other working places,
- For some working women, the Sudanese *Toub* poses an impediment to the smooth performance of their jobs.

3.3. Threats that influence benefitting from the material proceeds and resources (if applicable) related to the ICH element

1. Growing market availability and increased prices of the Sudanese *Toub* made outside Sudan,
2. Local *Toub* factories were forced out of business for economic reasons.

3.4. Viability of other ICH elements (if applicable) that are related to the ICH element

Songs and poetry around the Sudanese *Toub*, wedding and childbirth occasions.

3.5. Safeguarding measures or alternative measures (if any) proposed to offset any of the foregoing threats and to boost the practice and transmission to the future generations of the ICH element

1. Provide subsidy to Sudanese men and women who work in knitting the Sudanese *Toub*,
2. Concerned government organizations should provide wedding *Toubs* at nominal prices for collective wedding occasions,
3. Organize festivals, exhibits and *Toub* fashion shows.

4. Constraints and Concurencies in regards to collecting data and benefitting from them

4.1. Consent of the concerned local community/ies on data collection and participation in the collection process

Written consent

4.2. Constraints (if applicable) in regard to the use and benefitting from the collected data

None

4.3. Names, status or affiliation of the person or persons who act as the source of information

1. Sawsan Abbas Talab – Omdurman – al Muhandiseen / owner of a knitting shop,
2. Ali Karsani – Omdurman – Libya Market/ Trader,
3. Al Tayib Hassan Awad Allah – Omdurman – Libya Market/ Trader,
4. Ayman Faisal al Tay – Khartoum North – Sa’ad Gishra Market/ Trader,
5. Nuha Ahmed – al Salama/ Housewife.

4.4. Dates and locations of the collected data

From 1 March to 12 March 2019 in the following locations of Khartoum State: Libya Market- Omdurman; Sa’ad Gishra Market – Khartoum North; al Muhandiseen District – Omdurman; al Haj Yusuf District – Khartoum North (East Nile).

4.5. Last update of the collected data

Not applicable (scheduled every 4 years)

5. References on intangible cultural heritage (if applicable)

5.1. References

1. Griselda el Ṭayib, al Aziā al Sha'biya al Taqlīdiya, DAL Cultural Forum, Khartoum, 2018.
2. Griselda al Ṭayib, Adā al Mara al Sudāniya fi Ṣanā'at al Aziā al Sudāniya, 'Abd al Mun'im al Shāzali. December 2011.
3. <http://www.sudapaedia.sd/ar/content/290>.
4. Najāt Muḥammad Aḥmad al Māḥi and 'Abd al Hāfidh al Juzūli, Iqṭibās wa Tawdhif al Maḥhāhir al Jamāliya li Zahrat al Yāsīmīn wa Awrāq Shajarat al Labakh fi Taṣmīm al Taub al Sudāni (aesthetic empirical study), al 'Ulūm al Insāniya Magazine, issue No. 17, Sudan University for Science and Technology, 2016.
5. <https://alarab.co.uk/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AB%D9%88%D8%A8-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B3%D9%88%D8%AF%D8%A7%D9%86%D9%8A-%D8%B9%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%85%D8%A9-%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%B3%D8%AE%D8%A9-%D8%B1%D8%BA%D9%85-%D8%B5%D8%B1%D8%B9%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D9%88%D8%B6%D8%A9>

5.2. Audiovisual material, recordings... etc. kept in archives, museums and private collections (if applicable)

1. Archive of the Institute of African and Asian Studies – University of Khartoum.
2. Archive of the National Council for Cultural Heritage and Promotion of National Languages.
3. Archive of al Fihail for Culture, Art, Media and Documentation (House of Heritage).

5.3. Documentary material and objects in archives, museums and private collections (if applicable)

1. No entry fee Heritage Gallery of al Fihail Art, Cultural, Media and Documentary Center.
2. Khartoum Ethnography Museum.
3. Museum of the National Council for Cultural Heritage and Promotion of National Languages.
4. Mrs. Sa'adiya al Ṣalahi (collector of cultural heritage).

6. Data related to the inventory process

6.1. The person/s who categorized, collected and inscribed the collected information in the inventory list

1. Dr. al Baloola Mohamed al Baloola
2. Dr. Ja'far Osman Sid Ahmed
3. Saif al Deen Ali Yagoub Ibaid
4. Ms. Sawsan Ali Salih
5. Saif al Deen Ramadan Matar
6. Abd Allah Mohamed Hamid
7. Balsam Abd al Hamid Ahmed
8. Ikhlas Mohamed al Hassan Majdi
9. Ahmed Mohamed Hamadtu Arbab
10. Um Asal Musa al Amin
11. Abd al Dafi' al Rida Khair Allah
12. Muhtadi Ahmed Mohamed Rania Hassan Mohamed Abd Allah

6.2. evidence of the concerned community/ies consent to (A) ICH element inventory and (B) Providing the information that will be inscribed on the inventory list

Written approvals.

6.3. Date of data entry in inventory list

18 March 2019

6.4. Methods to be applied in updating the inscribed ICH element information

Proposed to be updated every four years