

Reporters Without Borders

<http://www.rsf.org/sudan-security-forces-hound-journalists-18-03-2011,39824.html>

Africa - Sudan

Harassment

Security forces hound journalists who cover their abuses

18 March 2011

Reporters Without Borders condemns a campaign of harassment that Sudan's security forces are waging against journalists in an attempt to silence media criticism. At their request, the attorney general questioned three journalists who drew attention to their mistreatment of human rights activists, including cases of rape.

"The collusion between the attorney general's office and the security forces is unacceptable," Reporters Without Borders secretary-general Jean-François Julliard said. "What gives them the right to dictate to the judicial authorities the investigations they should conduct? This is yet another example of a determination to gag the press and curb free expression. Nothing should be allowed to prevent the media from covering human rights violations in Sudan, which continue to be extremely worrying."

The three journalists and human rights activists who were questioned by the attorney general are **Faisal Salih**, **Amal Habbani** and **Faiz Alselaik**. They were interrogated about their coverage of rape allegations by women activists. After one of the victims, Safia Ishag, gave a detailed account of being gang raped by three members of the security forces, several journalists took up their cause and called for a judicial investigation. The security forces responded by accusing them of spreading false information and pressured the attorney general's office to sanction them.

The United Nations independent expert on human rights in Sudan accused the authorities on 14 March of violating fundamental freedoms, including free expression, while Human Rights Watch accused the authorities of systematic repression as well as mistreatment and sometimes torture of detainees.

Reporters Without Borders has repeatedly condemned the conditions in which journalists are detained in Sudan and drew attention to the fact that employees of the newspapers *Rai-al-Shaab* and *Al-Midan* and other media personnel arrested in February were being tortured.

Reporters Without Borders is relieved to learn that the three journalists with the opposition weekly *Al-Midan* still being held in Khartoum – **Mohamed Aldirderi**, **Samir Salaheldin** and **Abdelazeem Albadawi** – were finally released on 14 March after a month and a half in detention. [More information about their case.](#)
