

# Reporters Without Borders

<http://www.rsf.org/sudan-all-out-censorship-in-response-to-30-09-2013,45248.html>

Africa - Sudan

News blackout

## All-out censorship in response to anti-government protests

30 September 2013

Reporters Without Borders condemns the news blackout imposed by the authorities since a wave of protests against President Omar Al-Bashir's government began on 22 September.

"The measures taken by the government, including disconnecting the Internet, seizing newspapers and harassing journalists, show the extremes to which it is ready to go to hold on to power," Reporters Without Borders said. "This censorship is both totally unacceptable and pointless, given that the protests are continuing.

"President Bashir's [use of the National Intelligence and Security Services \(NISS\) to suppress media coverage](#) is allowing the police to deploy deadly force against the protesters with complete impunity. It also shows his vulnerability in the face of the biggest demonstrations since he came to power 24 years ago."

Reporters Without Borders added: "We urge the Sudanese government to put an end to these censorship measures, to protect journalists and to guarantee access to independent sources of information in order to encourage dialogue."

Since 22 September, Khartoum has seen a series of demonstrations with more than 3,000 people taking to the streets any one time to protest against the withdrawal of government subsidies for petroleum products and to demand Omar-Al-Bashir's departure.

The government did not wait long before starting to censor news outlets. The latest unjustified suspension, on 28 September, of *Al-Intibaha* for an indefinite period of time has sparked the strongest reactions yet, prompting the Sudanese Journalist Network, an informal association of 400 members, to declare they would suspend their work. The day before, the Arabic news channels *Al-Arabiya* and *Sky News* had been closed.

These most recent events follow a week long of toughening measures by the Khartoum government.

On 19 September already, the issues of [three newspapers, including Al-Intibaha had been seized](#) as they came off the presses.

On 25 September, the authorities disconnected the Internet throughout the country for more than 24 hours. The same day, the NISS summoned the editors of the main newspapers to its headquarters and forbade them to publish any information about the protests that did not come from government sources.

The newspaper *Al-Sudani* was ordered to close on 26 September after disobeying this directive, and the issue that it brought out the next day in defiance of the closure order was seized. The latest issue of the newspaper *Al-Mijhur* was also seized on 27 September, while the newspaper *Al-Watan* was suspended for 24 hours.

Sudanese news websites such as *Sudanese Online*, *Hurriyat* and *Al-Rakoba* are meanwhile still all closed.

Journalists have been subject to suspensions, summonses for questioning and arbitrary arrest since the start of the unrest. **Ameer Hassan**, *Al-Hurra's* correspondent in Wad Madani was

detained. *Sky News* reporter **Tarig Altigani** and *Al-Masa TV* reporter **Solafa Abu Dafira** were summoned by the security services and an *Al-Jareeda* journalist was suspended.

According to the African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies, a Sudanese human rights NGO, the police have killed more than 50 demonstrators while students, teachers, activists and members of the political opposition are being detained arbitrarily at NISS headquarters (<http://www.acips.org/?p=1635>).

Sudan is the 170th country out of 179 in the Reporters Without Borders [2013 Press Freedom Index](#).

More information about [media freedom in Sudan](#).

Photo: A bus station burned by protesters in Khartoum (Stringer / Anadolu agency)

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