

# Reporters Without Borders

<http://www.rsf.org/sudan-journalists-censored-held-in-sudan-31-01-2011,39433.html>

Africa - Sudan

Silence about uprising

## Journalists censored, held in Sudan protests

31 January 2011

Reporters Without Borders expresses its deep concern over the recent worsening condition of press freedom in Sudan. The country is already hostile to the work of journalists and seizures of journals and arrests of media professionals yesterday in connection with popular demonstrations raise fears of a major return of repression.

"We condemn the wish of the Khartoum government to censor news by intimidating journalists and dissuading them from covering protest movements," the press freedom body says.

"As in Tunisia and Egypt the people, and in particular students, want to give voice to their yearning for freedom by shouting slogans such as 'Revolution against dictatorship'. As in the case of neighboring Egypt the security forces have put down the movement with severity and have tried to prevent the media from reflecting these events."

Yesterday demonstrations were organized in several cities, in particular in Khartoum and Omdurman. They were initiated by social networks such as Facebook, where a group calling itself "January 30, a word to the sudanese youth" called for peaceful demonstrations. The protests demanded the end of "injustice and humiliation."



Drawing inspiration from the recent revolution in Tunisia and the uprisings under way in Egypt the demonstrators expressed their anger against the political, economic and social running of the country.

Several dozen people were arrested, among them a number of journalists, including **Hamza Baloul**, correspondent of the Qatari newspaper *Alsharq*, **Sarah Tag** of the newspaper *Al-Sahafa*, **Ali Haj Amin** of *Ajras Alhurrya*, **Hussein Khogali**, editor of the daily *Al-Wan*, and **Mohamed Amir Musa**, from the Turkish news agency *Al-ikhlas*.

A photographer working for *Agence France-Presse (AFP)* was held by the military for almost two hours and a dozen journalists were told not to cover the demonstrations. Some Internet sites were also blocked, in particular those calling for demonstrations. Overnight 30 January the dailies *Al-Sahafa* and *Ajras Alhurrya* were seized, preventing them from publishing the following morning.

"Sudan, which already occupies 172nd place out of 178 in our world press freedom ratings, continues to confirm its role as bottom of the class in press freedom," Reporters Without Borders said.

"To be sure a diverse press does exist in Sudan but the moment it touches on sensitive subjects, repression is brutal. The demonstrators were protesting peacefully and the journalists who were arrested or prevented from doing their job were only carrying out their mission to inform. The

authorities' assertion that they were a threat to national security does not stand up."

The forthcoming partition of the country after the self-determination referendum in the south gives rise to many debates that the government wishes to crush. The referendum process was tarnished by some press freedom violations. Reporters Without Borders condemned recently the detention and charging of [two journalists in the east of the country who risk the death penalty](#).

The press freedom organization also recalls that five other journalists are at present in jail in Sudan: **Gafar Alsabki Ibrahim**, journalist with *Al-Sahafa*, held since 3 November 2010, **Abdurrahman Adam**, who works with *Radio Dabanga*, since 30 October 2010, and **Abuser Al Amin, Ashraf Abdelaziz** and **Altahir Ibrahim** (also known as **Altahir Abugawhara**), all three journalists working for the now-banned opposition daily *Rai al-Chaab* (*The Opinion of the People*), held since May 2010.

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#### Other images



JPEG - 50.2 kb  
235 x 163 pixels

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