

# Reporters Without Borders

<http://www.rsf.org/sudan-spectacular-wave-of-censorship-in-19-02-2015,47600.html>

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Africa - Sudan

Mass seizures

## Spectacular wave of censorship in Khartoum

19 February 2015

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**Sudan is undergoing a disturbing wave of censorship, with the confiscation of a total of 19 newspaper issues in the past three days. The seizures not only constitute a grave violation of media pluralism but also inflict major financial losses on publications that are already fighting for economic survival.**

In a spectacular series of raids in the capital on 16 February, members of the National Intelligence and Security Service (NISS) seized a total of 13 issues as they came off the presses, including almost all of Khartoum's dailies and two magazines.

The publications affected were *Al-Tayar*, *Al-Rai al-Aam*, *Al-Intibaha*, *Akhir Lahza*, *Al-Ahram al-Youm*, *Awal al-Nahar*, *Al-Watan*, *Al-Sudani*, *Alwan*, *Al-Saiha* and *Al-Mijhar al-Siyasi*, and the two magazines, *Al-Dar* and *Hikayat*.

Five other newspaper issues were seized yesterday, those of *Al Sudani*, *Al Intibaha*, *Al Sahafa*, *Al Mighur* and *Al Taghier*.

"*These massive and indiscriminate seizures constitute an unacceptable act of censorship,*" said Cléa Kahn-Sriber, the head of the Reporters Without Borders Africa desk.

"*The people we contacted in Khartoum have no idea what exactly the government did not like in these issues. But, given the general elections scheduled for April, such actions are likely to recur in the weeks and months ahead. The government seems to want to suppress any reporting that could give rise to a debate.*"

### Economic throttling

This is by no means the first time that the NISS has carried out such raids. Reporters Without Borders calculates that it seized a total of 35 newspaper issues in 2014. Its operatives always act in the same way – waiting until issues are printed and then seizing all copies to prevent their sale. No grounds are ever given and owners have no legal recourse. "*These repeated seizures represent a significant loss of income for newspaper owners,*" Kahn-Sriber added. "*The government is clearly aware of this and uses it as part of its strategy for throttling independent print media.*"

The harassment does not stop there. The well-known journalist [Madeeha Abdallah](#) is facing trial on criminal charges of complicity, undermining constitutional order and publishing false information. It was the NISS that brought these charges against her.

Her case has attracted a great deal of attention, but dozens of other journalists have been harassed, [arrested, interrogated for several hours or days and then released without any explanation being given](#). The harassment is completely "legal" inasmuch as a 2010 national security law grants the NISS complete immunity.

Sudan is ranked 174th out of 180 countries in the [2015 Reporters Without Borders press freedom index](#).

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