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<http://www.rsf.org/sudan-sudanese-authorities-urged-not-to-23-05-2014,46347.html>

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Africa - Sudan

Prior censorship

## Sudanese authorities urged not to introduce "censorship bureau"

23 May 2014

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Reporters Without Borders urges the Sudanese authorities not to carry out a newly announced plan for prior censorship of the print media.

Information minister Ahmed Bilal Osman announced on 21 May that a "special commission" would soon be created to examine all proposed articles about corruption to decide whether or not they can be published. The commission would be under his ministry's supervision and would consist of members of the president's office, the government and parliament, he said.

*"The idea of the government assuming the right to determine the content of newspapers before publication is completely unacceptable, even if the minister says the aim is to guarantee the accuracy of their reports, not obstruct freedom of information,"* said Reporters Without Borders research director Lucie Morillon.

*"In view of the [many newspaper suspensions and confiscations](#) of issues since the start of the year, everything suggests that the authorities are in fact looking for a way to introduce prior censorship, in order to prevent the publication of reports that could compromise government officials."*

The information minister's announcement coincided with an announcement by the justice minister of a resumption of systematic legal proceedings in response to the publication of articles about alleged corruption. If a newspaper publishes a report about a corruption case, it could be immediately withdrawn from circulation while the courts examine the facts of the case, he said.

The two announcements came a day after the newspaper [Al-Saiha was suspended](#) for published an article accusing the under-secretary for justice of corruption.

Sudan is ranked 172nd out of 180 countries in the [2014 Reporters Without Borders press freedom index](#).

*Photo : Ahmed Bilal Osman (ASHRAF SHAZLY/AFP/G)*

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