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Africa - Sudan

Newspaper suspended

Concern about Sudanese authorities' tougher line on news media

22 May 2014

Reporters Without Borders is alarmed by the authorities' increasingly repressive attitude to the media, in which the latest development has been the suspension of the newspaper *Al-Saiha* on the orders of the National Intelligence and Security Service (NISS) on 20 May.

The NISS began by confiscating the latest issue as it came off the presses but announced the newspaper's suspension later in the day without giving any reason or saying how long it would last. The closure came a few days after *Al-Saiha* published an article accusing the under-secretary for justice of corruption.

The NISS did give an explanation yesterday. It issued a statement saying the media should take care not to jeopardize national security and stability and should avoid stories that could hurt the image of the political, military or judicial authorities. The length of the suspension is still unknown.

"We call for the immediate lifting of Al-Saiha's suspension," Reporters Without Borders research director Lucie Morillon said. *"The government's talk of 'national dialogue' and respect for media freedom is clearly contradicted by its actions. As for the NISS, its thinly veiled goal seems to be to control all of Sudan's media or, at least, their editorial policies and what they publish."*

Sudanese authorities are clearly cracking down on freedom of information. In a tough message to journalists on 19 May, President Omar al-Bashir accused certain media of "repeatedly dealing with national security, military affairs and justice issues in a negative and destructive manner that subjects the safety of the nation to harm and weakens its cohesion and crumbles its texture." The media should refrain from crossing the "red lines," he added.

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

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