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**PRESS RELEASE**

**Sudan: ARTICLE 19 Launches its State-by-State Media Assessment**

**An ARTICLE 19-led Consortium yesterday launched a report in Juba, South Sudan, which outlines the dire situation faced by the Sudanese media at a critical time in the country's political history.**

*Mapping the Void* which addresses the practical as well as legislative situation for journalism in the county finds evidence of radio stations broadcasting in poor conditions, on the one hand, and well-equipped and high-tech stations without adequately trained staff on the other. The research was conducted in 14 of the 25 Sudanese states by a consortium of six national and international organisations, including ARTICLE 19.

In one example, researchers found that broadcasting services in Kadugli, Southern Kordofan State had been suspended, despite being linked to the national broadcast network in Khartoum and that “...*newly procured broadcasting equipment was mothballed and rotting in containers out in the yard and a newly-installed transmission mast...lay disused and crumbling out in the open. Indeed, at the time of the field visit, the staffers were on strike for non-payment of salaries since December 2007.*”

ARTICLE 19 and its partners in the Sudan Consortium on Promoting Freedom of Expression and Civil Society Involvement in Developing Democratic Media Legislation in Sudan undertook several missions throughout 2008 and 2009 to a number of states, including Western Equatorial, Jonglei and River Nile, collecting data on the type, capacity and performance of the media across Sudan.

The report describes a virtual monopoly of the State over broadcast media; harassment of journalists; self-censorship; a void in the professional, language and technical capacity of media practitioners; severe budgetary constraints experienced by media institutions; and poor communication and support from the central information ministries to state ministries.

The resulting news and information vacuum threatens the rights to freedom of expression and information and, by extension, democracy and good governance for the people of South Sudan at a critical juncture in the post Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) period.

The report seeks to alert the government, media and donors to the perilous state of the media outside of Khartoum and Juba, and calls for a comprehensive strategy and urgent action to address the void.

**NOTES TO EDITORS:**

- For more information please contact: Roxanne Abdulali, Africa Programme Officer, [roxanne@article19.org](mailto:roxanne@article19.org), +254 20 3862230
- The report is available at: <http://www.article19.org/pdfs/reports/sudan-mapping-the-void.pdf>
- Members of the Consortium included ARTICLE 19, the Khartoum Centre for Human Rights and Environmental Development, the Association for Media Development in South Sudan, International Media Support, Norwegian People's Aid and the Olof Palme International Centre. The project was generously supported by the European Commission and NMFA.
- ARTICLE 19 is an independent human rights organisation that works around the world to protect and promote the right to freedom of expression. It takes its name from Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which guarantees free speech.