

Sudan seizes three papers

KHARTOUM, SUDAN: Sudanese security authorities on Sunday [2 September 2012] confiscate editions of three daily newspapers after being printed and without giving their editors any reasons.

Sudan officially ceased direct press censorship in 2009 but continues to suspend and confiscate newspapers as a way of retaliation if they reported on a long list of issues considered sensitive. Newspapers also complain that they continue to receive phone instructions, usually via text messages from the National Intelligence and Security Services (NISS), ordering them not to report on certain issues.

The three papers confiscated on Sunday are the privately owned *Al-Sahafah*, *Al-Jarida* and the pro-government *Akhir Lahzah*.

Al-Sahafah's editor, Al-Nur Ahmad Al-Nur told Reuters that agents of the National Intelligence and Security Services (NISS) confiscated the entire print-run of his paper's Sunday edition after it had been printed and without mentioning any reason. "We consider the confiscation to be equal to an economic penalty on the newspaper," he said.

More details came from *Al-Sahafah's* managing editor, Hassan Al-Batari, who said that an NISS agent arrived at the paper's offices after Sunday's edition was printed and told them he had orders to confiscate the entire print-run without any reasons.

He also confirmed that the NISS still practices pre-publication censorship. "Pre-publication censorship is practiced sometimes through phone instructions from NISS agents". He added that sometimes NISS agents visit the paper's offices before it goes to the printing press and demand removal of reports and articles related to security issues.

The managing editor of *Al-Jarida*, Idris Al-Douma also told Reuters that a security agent went to the printer's house after midnight and confiscated their Sunday's edition. "They confiscated every copy of the paper," he said.

Sudan Tribune also learned that the pro-government daily *Akhir Lahzah* has had its Sunday's edition confiscated by NISS agents after being printed.

Confiscation of printed edition inflicts severe financial damages on the papers which are already hard-pressed due to the economic crisis that befell the country since it lost three quarters of its oil production following the secession of South Sudan in July last year.

Three newspapers have been suspended indefinitely since the start of this year. One of them, *Al-Ahdath* newspaper, later announced it had run out of business.

Press repression has increased in Sudan since the secession of South Sudan and the outbreak of new armed conflicts in the country's border regions of South Kordofan and Blue Nile. Security authorities are focused on newspapers since the broadcast media sector is tightly controlled by the government.

Reporters Without Borders, a media watchdog, ranks Sudan as 170th of 179th in a global press freedom index it compiles.

Source: [allAfrica](#)

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