

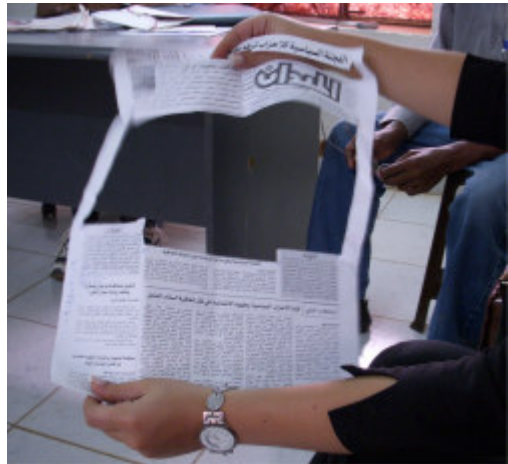
# XIX ARTICLE 19

For Immediate release - 14 November 2008

## Sudan: Journalists Attend Mass Protest in Defence of Freedom of Expression and the Press

**ARTICLE 19 joins in solidarity with Sudanese civil society organisations and media houses demonstrating against the censorship and intimidation of Sudanese media in Khartoum.**

On 4 November more than 50 Sudanese journalists went on a 24 hour hunger strike and three Sudanese newspapers shut down for three days to protest against the censorship imposed on the press by Sudanese National Security Services, including the daily pre-print and post-print censorship, and repeated suspension orders.



The press crackdown appears to be directed at discouraging news reports on the Sudan opposition leaders' summit due to be held on the conflict in Darfur.

Newspapers based in the Sudanese capital, have been increasingly subject to pre-print censorship, a practice which began on 6 February 2008. Security forces visit and censor newspapers every day before they go to print by physically removing articles they deem problematic and taboo. Censorship of the print press in Khartoum has largely been centred on issues including the Darfur conflict, and the turbulent political relationship with neighbouring Chad. Media houses not complying with the censors risk having their publications confiscated and destroyed after they have gone to print.

On 8 November the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) also removed its officers working in the press department of the National Security Service in protest to its activities which they have deemed 'anti-constitutional'

ARTICLE19 urges the Sudanese authorities to return to the framework of its agreement for peace in Sudan. Freedom of expression is guaranteed in the Comprehensive Peace Agreement and Section 39 of the Sudanese Interim Constitution:

- 1) Every citizen shall have an unrestricted right to the freedom of expression, reception and dissemination of information, publication, and access to the press without prejudice to order, safety or public morals as determined by law.*

- 2) *The State shall guarantee the freedom of the press and other media as shall be regulated by law in a democratic society.*
- 3) *All media shall abide by professional ethics, shall refrain from inciting religious, ethnic, racial or cultural hatred and shall not agitate for violence or war.*

ARTICLE 19 strongly urges the Sudanese authorities to uphold their obligations under international law which include the right to *'freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinion without interference and to seek receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers'* (Article 19, ICCPR).

ARTICLE 19 also calls upon the Sudanese authorities or the government of National Unity to immediately cease the censorship imposed on Sudanese newspapers.

**NOTES TO EDITORS:**

- For more information: please contact Africa Programme Officer Roxanne Abdulali, at: [roxanne@article19.org](mailto:roxanne@article19.org), +254 20 3862230/2.
- ARTICLE 19 is a member of a consortium *'promoting freedom of expression and civil society involvement in developing democratic media legislation in Sudan'*; in partnership with Khartoum Centre for Human Rights and Environmental Development, the Association for Media Development in South Sudan, the Olof Palme International Center, International Media Support and Norwegian People's Aid. The consortium is supported by the European Commission and Norwegian Ministry for Foreign Affairs.
- 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.