THE REALITY IS VERY DARK
THE RIGHT TO FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION IN SUDAN
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Introduction.

The right to freedom of expression in Sudan has deteriorated rapidly in recent years due to a myriad of factors. As the regime has struggled to maintain control over the Sudanese state, repression has increased dramatically. The Government of Sudan (GoS) has increased the use of its security apparatus, particularly the National Intelligence and Security Services (NISS) to conduct censorship of print and online media in Sudan. From 2014 – 2015 the African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies (ACJPS) has documented a renewed surge in restrictions on the freedom of expression and information imposed by the Government of Sudan (GoS). The crackdown has severely circumscribed the availability of independent information in Sudan and repression of material deemed by the NISS to be critical of the ruling National Congress Party (NCP).

This report examines two parallel periods in 2014 and 2015: January – August 2014 and January – April 2015. Both periods experienced heavy levels of censorship. January – August 2014 included heavy levels of censorship amidst President Bashir’s announcement of the National Dialogue process and the opening of political space. January – April 2015 took place in the lead up to the national general elections and amidst increased organising between the rebel coalition the Sudanese Revolutionary Forces (SRF) and the opposition alliance the National Consensus Forces (NCF). 2015 also saw the increased leveraging of criminal charges against opponents of the regime, including journalists.

Both periods also included censorship of traditionally pro-government newspapers, indicative of the growing internal rift within the NCP. Shifts in public posturing and contradictory actions by the NCP suggest that there is an ongoing debate within the party about the modalities for future governance in the country and the inclusion of opposition political parties.
Censorship tactics used by the NISS.

Tactics utilised by the NISS include summoning journalists, preventing the distribution of printed copies of newspapers without rationale; imposing “red lines” on media through telephone communication to editors-in-chief; and blacklisting journalists from publishing their work in newspapers. Red line issues include corruption, human rights violations, reporting on the conflicts in South Kordofan, Blue Nile and Darfur, and the relationship between Sudan and other Gulf states.

Newspapers, including pro-government newspapers, have been subjected to pre and post censorship before publication, causing tremendous financial loss. Authorities also threatened journalists and editors via telephone, including to editors-in-chief of electronic newspapers, and sent fabricated news via e-mail to newspapers, forcing editors and news departments to publish them in their front pages or feature them as lead stories. The NISS has also created burdensome procedures for journalists, such as completing an 18 page “Data and Personal Information Form”. This form includes private information such as telephone numbers, names of relatives and friends, monthly salary, and detailed directions to their homes.

News items planted by the NISS appear to be designed to promote the policies of the NCP and halt the publication of any critical material. Some news stories sent by the NISS to Khartoum newspapers appeared to be false and incorrect. A reliable source reported to ACJPS that they believed that these items were intended to cause confusion and conflict within opposition political parties, as well as civil society. The NISS has also forced newspapers to run negative stories about certain individual members of the NCP, in an apparent attempt to smear their characters. During confiscation, NISS officials do not provide oral or written reasons for confiscating or preventing newspapers from distributing their printed copies.
The Government of Sudan has applied unconstitutional laws and regulations which allow the NISS broad powers which are routinely used to control the media in Sudan. This also has the impact of self-censorship, in which journalists censor themselves to avoid the potential of criminal charges.

Article 39 of the National Interim Constitution states that “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”. It further stipulates that “the state shall guarantee the freedom of the press and other media as shall be regulated by law in a democratic society”.

Other existing domestic legislation contradicts Sudan’s constitutional right to the freedom of expression. In 2009, the National Assembly passed the Press and Publications Act. Under article 5 (2), there should be no restriction on the press unless specified by law and for the protection of national security and public health and order. The Press and Publications Act also forbids newspapers to be confiscated or forced to close. It also states that journalists and publishers should be exempt from criminal prosecution for exercising their right to the freedom of expression, unless otherwise prescribed by law.

The Act is mute on the issue of pre-print censorship, which was arguably the most important to securing the freedom of association and expression in Sudan’s press. It has retained the Council of Press and Publications, whose composition is made up of 40% of members who are appointed by the President of Sudan in accordance with the provisions of Article 10. Article 10 stipulates that “the President constitutes the council provided that it is representative of journalists, publishers, printing houses, distributors, national figures, women with recognition to the multiplicity of Sudanese society; the council shall be under the supervision of the Presidency; the Presidency may inform the council of the official policies of the state in relation to the journalistic profession.”

The Act grants the Council the power to license newspapers in accordance with Article 22. The Act also requires newspapers and other publications to deposit a sum determined by the Council into an independent bank account. The Council also has the power to impose sentences against newspapers, including the suspension of newspaper publication for three days. The Act does not explicitly bar preprint censorship, but contains broad exceptions that authorities can use to justify any censorship. It confirms that the press works “freely and independently in accordance with the constitution and the law with consideration to public interest, rights and
privacies of the others and without prejudice to public morality,” and “no restrictions will be imposed on freedom of press except what is envisaged by law in relation to the protection of the national security, order, and public health; newspapers shall not be confiscated, its offices will not be shut, and journalists and publishers shall not be detained for exercising their profession except in accordance with the law.”

In particular, the application of exceptions is problematic in that the scope for its application is vague and imprecise. In practice, similar provisions have been interpreted in such a way as to grant government authorities broad discretion. In addition, the new law does not remove the power of intelligence services (the NISS) to censor papers ahead of publication under Sudan’s National Security Act. The Act has also retained the special courts for the press, in accordance with Article 34. These courts have wide discretionary powers in passing sentences. They have the power to impose fines of any amount in accordance with Article 35, sidestepping a particularly controversial provision in the draft bill which would have provided for fines of 50,000 Sudanese pounds (US $25,000).

The courts also have the power to stop the newspapers indefinitely and ban print houses from press work, suspend the editors, the publisher or the journalist who committed the misdemeanour for a period determined by court, and cancel or suspend press registration. Under the new press law, the press council is invested with the authority to close down newspapers for three days. However, the courts have broad discretion in imposing penalties and may order closure for a longer period, not subject to any legal limitations. This provision fails to provide adequate guidance to the judiciary and to place limits on judicial discretion. This change in the law is set against a recent history in which freedom of expression has been systematically violated.

The 2009 Press and Publications Act also falls short of Sudan’s international and regional human rights commitments, including the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

These types of sentences are known as “indirect imprisonment”, because the fine could be very high and lead to imprisonment for failure to pay.
In late January 2014, there were reports that President Omar al Bashir would publicly present an agenda for major political reform on 27 January 2014. It was rumoured that plans for the formation of a coalition government would be announced and would include the representation of major opposition parties to work on drafting a new constitution and preparing for elections following the dismissal of several senior NCP members from Bashir’s cabinet in December 2013.

The speech, which was televised live on 27 January 2014, was attended by several opposition party leaders, including Hassan al-Turabi of the Popular Congress Party, Ghazi Salah Al-Deen Al-Attabani of Reform Now, and Sadiq al Mahdi of the Umma Party. In the speech, Bashir stated that the NCP was determined to take the lead in preparing Sudan for the “leap” towards national reconciliation and expressed readiness for a political dialogue with all parties, including armed rebel groups if they renounced violence. No proposal for a coalition government was mentioned. Opposition party members criticised the speech for failing to set out any concrete commitments for reform. In a rare move, Sudan’s official news agency, SUNA, published comments made by Hassan al-Turabi that the speech contributed “nothing new” and failed to commit to remove restrictions on fundamental freedoms.

On 1 April 2014 the GoS reiterated its commitment to reform. Bashir ordered the release of all political prisoners in the country and stated that the GoS is committed to a “national dialogue” and “safeguarding the freedom of expression of individuals and groups”. He also directed authorities to allow political parties to carry out their activities inside and outside their headquarters in accordance with national legislation, and for press freedoms to be enhanced to contribute to the national dialogue.

This promising rhetoric was directly contradicted by actions taken by Sudanese authorities. Though a number of political detainees were released in the following days, others were subsequently arrested. On 1 May 2014 the Political Parties Affairs Council (PPAC) announced that the Sudanese Republican Party’s application to register as a political party had been rejected. The PPAC argued that the Republican Party’s political ideology contradicted the constitutional provision that law in Sudan be based on Islamic sharia law and the conditions for the establishment of political parties in Sudan.
A member of one of Sudan’s youth movements told ACJPS in 2014 that even if the restrictions on the press were lifted, the reality is very dark.

“The financial situation of most media outlets is quite dire, as they are also subject to the demands of advertisers. If there is any ease of the present restrictions, it won’t be more than a trick to appease the international community because of the critical situation the country is facing...the authorities may announce the so-called ease of restrictions, but they will regress as the ruling regime relies on oppression to continue its control of power. Media institutions, such as radio and TV, are state-controlled. The NISS has recently bought a number of newspapers and acquired a large number of its shares.”

One newspaper editor who wishes to remain unnamed suggested in an interview with ACJPS that the crackdown on freedom of expression and the growing rift within the NCP are intertwined, stating that efforts by the NCP to achieve political dialogue are likely to result in a partial, rather than comprehensive, settlement with opposition political parties that will likely cede some space for the freedom of expression. From a tactical viewpoint, competing actors within the ruling party view the media as a tool to win battles. This might shed light on the recent censorship of papers traditionally loyal to the ruling NCP. It also suggests that the authorities will continue censorship of newspapers that are perceived as being loyal to factions within the ruling party.
A second newspaper editor reported to ACJPS that:

“The current crackdown is remarkably more systematic as compared with previous crackdowns, as even newspapers that were able to publish on red line issues in the past and have limited audiences are being prevented from publication...there is currently an NCP faction which rejects dialogue; the number of its members is limited, but it appears that there are influential figures in its leadership. This current is trying to bolster its position by enforcing a crackdown on newspapers...In order for the NCP to make gains, it has to provide great openness, including in the provision of press freedom.”

Sudan Tribune, “Bashir orders release of political detainees, ease in restrictions on parties and media”, 6 April 2014.

The monitoring report below details a number of incidents that took place from January – August 2014, including summonings, the confiscation and prevention of distribution of newspapers, and the harassment and arbitrary detention of journalists.
Newspapers Prevented from Distribution following Verbal Orders from NISS

- On 11, 22, and 24 January 2014 the NISS in Khartoum prevented the distribution of printed copies of Al Gareeda newspaper. The order came through a phone call.
- On 26 January 2014 the NISS in Khartoum suspended Al Gareeda newspaper. On the same day at 2pm, the Chief Editor of Al Gareeda, Mr. Edris Aldoma, was summoned by the NISS for interrogation and was ordered to suspend the printing and distribution of the newspaper indefinitely. The NISS accused Al Gareeda of ‘violations of publishing’ following the publication of articles concerning hardship faced by the Sudanese population due to severe increases in food, fuel and gas prices. The Chief Editor was also questioned about other articles, including one concerning alleged corruption in government-owned cotton factories and cotton production in Sudan. Al Gareeda resumed distribution on 14 February after permission was issued verbally by the NISS.
- On 4 February 2014 Al Ayaam, Alwan, and Alsahafa newspapers were prevented from distributing printed copies of their daily issues by a NISS administration decision that gave no reason for the suspension. The three dailies resumed publishing and distribution the following day, 5 February.
- On 20 February 2014 the NISS visited printing houses and issued a verbal order preventing the distribution of printed copies of three daily independent newspapers, Aakhir Lahza, Al Ehram Alyoum, and Alwatan. No specific rational was given by the NISS. The papers resumed distribution the following day, 21 February.
- On 21 February 2014 Al Tagheer was prevented from distribution by the NISS. Al Tagheer is owned by the Khartoum Minister of Health and is traditionally pro-government.
- On 25 February 2014 Al Aswak newspaper was prevented from distribution by the NISS. Al Aswak newspaper is owned by Mahjoub Orwa, a member of the Muslim Brotherhood.
- On 26 February 2014 printed copies of the independently owned Eilaf newspaper were confiscated. Eilaf newspaper focuses on economic issues in Sudan. The magazine’s chief editor, Khalid Altegani, stated that no rationale was given by the NISS. Dr. Altegani is a member of the National Front for Change, a movement that emerged after the September 2013 protests and includes a number of independent Islamists.
- On 3 March 2014 the NISS confiscated printed copies of three traditionally pro-government newspapers, Al Ahram Alyoum, Al Houra, and Al Sudani. Al Sudani is owned by Jamal Alwali, a member of the NCP. Al Houra is owned by a member of the Muslim Brotherhood. Al Ahram Alyoum is a traditionally pro-government newspaper.
On 4 March 2014 the NISS again confiscated printed copies of Al Sudani. Printed copies of another traditionally pro-government newspaper, Aakhir Lahza, were also confiscated. The daily issue of Al Gareeda was also confiscated for the fourth time in 2014. Aakhir Lahza and Al Sudani are traditionally pro-government.

On 5 March 2014 the NISS confiscated printed copies of the independent Citizen newspaper, a newspaper published in English. The traditionally pro-government Alhura newspaper and Eilaf were also prevented from distribution.

On 6 March 2014 Al Hurra newspaper was confiscated by the NISS. Al Hurra newspaper is owned by the Muslim Brotherhood.

On 10 March 2014 Al Jareeda newspaper was confiscated by the NISS.

Sudanile reported that on 10 March 2014 the NISS confiscated printed copies of Al Tagyeer and the Gazette without giving any specific rationale.

On 18 March 2014 Al Youm Al Tali newspaper was confiscated by the NISS. Al Youm Al Tali is a traditionally pro-government newspaper.

On 19 March 2014 Al Jareeda newspaper was confiscated by the NISS.

On 23 March 2014 Al Saiha newspaper was confiscated by the NISS.

On 30 March 2014 Al Midan newspaper was confiscated by the NISS. Al Midan is affiliated with the Sudanese Communist Party.

On 1, 3, 6, and 8 April 2014 Al Midan newspaper was confiscated by the NISS.

Al Midan is affiliated with the Sudanese Communist Party.
Newspapers and journalists allowed to resume publishing.

- On 12 February 2014 Al Tayar newspaper was suspended following a verbal order from the NISS. They were allowed to begin publishing again on 5 March 2014 following an order from the Constitutional Court. They were reportedly suspended following an article written by Professor Mohamed Zain Abideen called “Moments with the President”, as well as publishing an article on the corruption scandal involving the Cotton Company Limited. Mr. Al Abideen was briefly detained following the publication of the article.

The corruption case of the Sudanese cotton company was presented by former minister of Justice Mr. Mohamed Bushara Dusha before the parliament and this led to the President to push the Chairperson of the Sudanese Constitutional Court to resign due to his illegal involvement in the settlement of the case. The Chairperson of the Constitutional court resigned on 15 April 2015.

In another development, Mr Husham Said Ahmed, the former executive director of the Sudanese Cotton Company was attacked and killed by unknown assailants on 28 July 2015. A reliable source told ACJPS that Mr. Ahmed was supposed to appear before the court to testify against the corruption scandal of the Sudanese cotton company.

On 19 July 2014, unknown armed men raided the Al Tayar newspaper’s office located in Khartoum and threatened all journalists present with a gun as well as beat up the chief editor Mr. Osman Marghani. Mr. Marghani was later taken to the hospital however he had to be taken to Cairo for further medical care. The chief editor underwent an eye surgery in Cairo Egypt. A reliable source confirmed to ACJPS that the assault on the chief editor was related to the corruption case of the Sudanese Cotton Company.

Journalist banned from writing

- In April 2014 Hayder Khairallah, (m), a journalist at Al Jareeda, was allowed to begin publishing following President Omar al Bashir’s speech on 2 April. He had previously been banned on the 4th of March 2014 from publishing the column “Hail Homeland”, criticising the NCP for corruption.

- In April 2014 Mohamed Abdul Magid, (m), a journalist at Al Saiha, was allowed to begin publishing following President Omar al Bashir’s speech on 2 April. He had previously been banned in March 2014.

- In October 2010, Miss Amal Habani was banned from writing by the owner of Al Jareeda after Miss Habani was accused by NISS of defamation on her article published in 2010 in Al Jareeda newspaper about NISS agents raping youth activists in detention centers.

- In June 2012 Miss Habani was also banned again from writing by NISS after a phone call to the chief editor. She tried to write for
other newspaper like Al Khatoum, Al tyaar, Al Ehram ayoum but all turned her down because of NISS’ standing order. Moreover, she tried to volunteer with Omdurman TV before she got to know that NISS still did not want her to practice or work

- On the 8th of July 2014 Mr. Zuhir Al Saraj was banned from writing from Al Jareeda after NISS orally ordered the chief editor of Al Jareeda to ban him from writing

**Newspapers allowed to resume publication.**

Al Siha newspaper was suspended on 20 May 2014, for unknown period by NISS without any reason being given after print runs of its 71st issue were confiscated. On 6 July 2014, NISS allowed Al Siha to reopen only to stop the day’s print from publication. On 16 October 2014 Al Siha was allowed to reopen for publication by NISS following a directive from the Sudanese President, Omar Hassan El Bashir.

On 2 July 2014 Raai Al Shab newspaper affiliated with the Sudanese Popular Congress Party was allowed by NISS to resume publication with conditions (the newspaper did not disclose the details of the conditions). However, the newspaper did not reopen since its closure on 29 January 2014.

On 8 January 2013 the Khartoum Civil Court (case no.906/2012) issued a verdict against NISS ordering them to compensate Al Maiden newspaper, a newspaper affiliated with the Sudanese Communist Party.

The court awarded damages of an amount of Sudanese pound (SDG) 11,440 as costs for loss suffered due to four confiscations of print runs that occurred on different dates in 2011.

**Council of Press and Publication decisions against journalists and newspapers.**

In 2010 the Council of Press and Publication prevented Mr. Faiz El Sheikh Al Slik from assuming the position of chief editor of Ajras Al Huria newspaper without reasons given.

In 2010 the Council of Press and Publication prevented Ms Amal Habani from taking up the position of Al Jereeda newspaper without giving any reason.

On 3 April 2013 Council of Press and Publication did not take any action when NISS media department orally informed Al Sahafa newspaper to withdraw Dr Al Nurr Hamad from the position of chief editor of the newspaper and replace him with another person or else face closure of the newspaper. This was done without clear reasons given. However, Dr Al Nurr could continue to work as a journalist.

On 1 July 2015 the Council of Press and Publication suspended Eilaf economic newspaper for a day stating that the newspaper did not follow media regulations issued in 2013. The newspaper stated that they did not receive a copy of the regulation nor knew of its existence.
On 1 July, Eilaf had taken its issue of the day to the printing house only to discover a letter dated 26 June 2015 preventing nine newspapers from printing because they did not follow the media development regulation. However, only Eilaf was prevented from print on that day.

On 13 January 2016, the Council of Press and Publication fined Alwan newspaper, a newspaper affiliated with NCP, Sudanese pounds 10,000 and also fined journalist Miss Lubaba Al Fadul Sudanese pound 5000 because of an article she wrote about the memorial of Mr. Khalil Ibrahim, the former chairperson of Justice and Equality Movement, an opposition military movement.

On 12 July 2015 the Council of Press and Publication suspended Al Meidan newspaper, a newspaper affiliated with Sudanese Communist Party. The suspension of the newspaper was a penalty in relation to an article on the situation of Christians in Sudan that the newspaper had published on 10 July 2015.

Summons and Harassment of Journalists by the NISS.

- On 15 January 2014 Ibrahim Al Sagheer, (m), a journalist at Akhbar Al Youm, was interrogated. No further information is available.
- On 15 January 2014 Asim Al Balal, (m), the managing editor of Akhbar Al Youm newspaper, was summoned. He was interrogated for three hours as to why he published an article on the rising rates of US currency against the Sudanese pounds, and the source of this information.
- On 15 January 2014 Kamal Awad Al Jizouli, (m), the secretary general of the Sudanese Writers’ Union, was summoned. He was interrogated as to why he organised a memorial service at the Sudanese Writers’ Union for Mahmoud Mohamed Taha, the late founder of the Sudanese Republican Party who was executed on charges of apostasy in 1985.
- On 27 January 2014 Iqbal Al Adnani, (f), a journalist with Al Taghyeer, was summoned. She was interrogated shortly after publishing an article regarding corruption in the wheat manufacturing sector.
- On 29 January 2014 Idriss Aldouma, (m), and Awad Mohamed Ahmed, (m), the editor in chief and publisher of Al Jareeda were summoned by the NISS. They were interrogated as to why they published an article discussing shortages of fuel and food items in the country.
- On an unknown date in February 2014 Fatima Rabeh, (f), a correspondent with Al Ahram Al Youm, was arrested by the Gezira State Secret Police. A case, no. 403/2014, was filed against her under articles 159 of the 1991 Criminal Act and 24, 26, and 66 of the Press and Publications Act. She was summoned after filing a report on the Governor of Gezira state’s health. The case remained pending because the complainant was not willing to continue.
- On 6 February 2014 Bakri Medani, (m), the editor in chief of Al Hurrah, was arrested by the secret police in Gezira state. A case,
no. 403/2014, was filed against him under articles 159 (defamation) and 24, 26, and 66 of the 2009 Press and Publications Act. The complainant was Alaa Al Din Abdul Wahab, director of Protocol at the Secretariat of the Gezira state, at the behest of Professor Al Zubair Bashir Taha. Professor Taha is the former Governor of Gezira state. Mr. Medani reportedly published an article stating that Professor Taha fainted during a heated argument with a delegation from Um Al Qurra. Professor Taha demanded compensation of 3 billion Sudanese pounds.

- On 15 February 2014 Mohamed Fathi Mohamed, (m), a freelance journalist, was interrogated about a number of stories he had reported on in Dalgo locality, Northern state. He was ordered to stop reporting in the state.
- On 23 February 2014 Hassan Birakiya, (m), a journalist at Al Jareeda, was interrogated. There is no further information available.
- On 4 March 2014 Ameera Al Jaali, (f), a journalist at Al Youm Al Tali was summoned and informed that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was unhappy with her clothing when covering news at the Ministry.
- On 4 March 2014 Sabah Musa, (f), a journalist at Al Youm Al Tali was summoned and interrogated on her sources of information on an article she published on a gold shipment from the United Arab Emirates.
- On 23 March 2014 Salma Marouf, (f), a journalist at Al Youm Al Tali was summoned and interrogated on a news item she published on mining in Sudan.
- On 23 March 2014 Mutaz Mahgoub, (m), a journalist at Al Intibaha, a traditionally pro-government newspaper, was summoned and interrogated regarding a news item he published on the parliament and Sudan Airways.
- On 25 March 2014 Hassan Ismail, (m), a journalist at Al Khartoum, was interrogated. No further information is available.
- On 26 March 2014 Mahjoub Erwa, (m), a columnist, publisher, and chairperson at Al Aswak, an economist newspaper, was interrogated on news items he published on currency rates in Sudan.
- On 27 March 2014 Ahmed Abdallah Al Toum, (m), a journalist at Al Aswak, an economist newspaper, was interrogated on news items he published on currency rates in Sudan.
- On 1 April 2014 Zawahir Al Siddig, (f), a journalist at Al Youm Al Tali, was interrogated. No further information is available.
- On 1 April 2014 Hassan Birakiya, (m), a journalist at Al Jareeda, was interrogated by the NISS. Mr. Birakiya had previously refused to fill out the Data and Personal Information Form requested by the NISS. He was forced to submit the form and also questioned about recent workshops he had attended.
• On an unknown date in April 2014 Faisal Awad, (m), an online journalist, was interrogated about material he had published online. He was released the same day.

• On 10 April 2014, Madiha Abdallah, (f), the editor in chief of Al Midan, was summoned alongside the administrative manager of Al Midan, Suleiman Widaa. They were interrogated on a statement she had made regarding the confiscation of Al Midan on 30 March 2014.

• On 24 April 2014 Ammar Jibril, (m), a correspondent at Al Tagheer newspaper in Nyala, South Darfur, was interrogated after a report was filed by the Governor of South Darfur state against him. He was transferred to Khartoum.

• On 2 May 2014 Edris Aldoma Mohamed Widaa, (m), the Chief Editor of Al Jareeda, was summoned by the Prosecutor for Press and Publication after publishing an article on the famine in Sharia area of East Darfur.

• On 29 May 2014 Baha Aldin Taha, (m), a journalist at Al Tagheer, was summoned by the Prosecutor for Press and Publication after publishing an article on the famine in Sharia area of East Darfur.

• On 29 May 2014 Imam Mohamed Imam, (m), the chief editor of Al Tagheer, was summoned by the Prosecutor for Press and Publication.

In other instances, journalists have been summoned by the Prosecutor for Press and Publications and the Prosecutor for Crimes against the State.

• On 10 June 2014 police arrested Hassan Ishag, a journalist with Al Gareeda newspaper, after he attended a public forum held by the Sudanese Congress Party in North Kordofan. He was reportedly transferred to Al Nuhod prison without charge following a decision by the local Governor to detain him under the emergency law in force in the state. He was detained without charge until September 2014.

• On 5 May 2014 police in Khartoum arrested BBC correspondent, Mohamed Osman near Al Haj Yousif court after he attended the trial of Meriam Yahiya Ibrahim, a woman convicted of apostasy in Sudan in May 2014. He was released shortly after he presented evidence to the police that he had previously obtained consent from the presiding judge to attend the trial.

• At 6:30pm on 19 July 2014 Osman Merghani, chief editor of Al Tayeer newspaper was attacked by a group of armed men in his office. Mr Merghani was taken to the hospital, and later transferred to Egypt for further treatment. The attackers identified as members of the Abuhamza Group. ACJPS later received information from a reliable source that the attack was intended to intimidate Mr. Merghani from publishing on the Sudan Cotton Company.
On 12 – 28 May 2014 Ahmed Yousif Altway, (m), the chief editor of Al Sayha, was summoned by the Prosecutor for Land.

On 29 May 2014 Hafiz Alkhir, (m), a journalist with Al Sayha, was summoned by the Prosecutor for Crimes against the state.

In June 2014 Ibrahim Merghani, (m), the chief editor of the political section of Al Sayha, was summoned by the Prosecutor for Press and Publication after publishing an article on the famine in the Sharia area of East Darfur.

In June 2014 Isam Alamin, (m), a journalist with Al Tagheer, was summoned by the Prosecutor for Press and Publication after publishing an article on the famine in the Sharia area of East Darfur.

On 1 June 2014 journalists with Al Sayha Nabawya Sir Alkhatim, (m), Marwa Kamal, (f), Amar Awad, (m), Faisal Abdelrahman, (m), Altayeb Yasin, (m), Luy Abdelrahman, (m), Osman Mudawi, (m), Mahjoub Osman, (m), Abdelwahab Jumaa, (m), Abdilhamid Awad, (m), and Ahmed Yousif Altay, (m), were summoned by the Prosecutor for Press and Publication. Alhudaybi Yasin, (m), Osman Mudawi, (m), and Abdelwahab Jumaa, (m), were later referred to the Attorney for Crimes against the state.

**False new stories.**

On 29 September 2013 during the 2013 September protests that ended in the killing of 185 protestors and arrests of hundreds by the NISS, falsified news stories were created to draw the attention of the media away from the on-going violations. As a result, journalist Abdul Fadil Mohamed Hamud resigned from Al Sahafa newspapers after two falsified articles were published under his name.

**Trials and Criminal Complaints.**

At 9am on 11 December 2014 journalist Hiba Abdelazim (f), of Al Sudani newspaper was tried before the Intellectual Property Court of Khartoum under article 159 (defamation) of the 1991 Sudanese Penal Code. The complainants were senior officers within the Ministry of Social Affairs of Khartoum. Ms. Abdelazim had published an article on 17 March 2014 on corruption at the Ministry of Social Affairs. No updates on Ms. Abdelazim’s case are available.

**Online Censorship**

Censorship of online websites and surveillance of electronic and other communications within and between opposition political party members and other individuals deemed to be opponents of the ruling NCP is also an emerging issue. According to experts, Sudan utilises a sophisticated computer spyware to monitor activities by opposition political parties, journalists, and
activists. This electronic communications monitoring has begun to draw condemnation within the parliament, with several members of parliament demanding reform of the Informatics Crimes Law of 2007 which enables monitoring and blocking of websites by the authorities. In February 2014 the head of the Communications Committee in the National Assembly claimed that internet censorship and monitoring of phone calls would stop. However, on 27 March 2014 Mustafa Abed Elhafis, a board member of the Sudanese telecom regulator the National Telecommunications Corporation (NTC), reportedly stated that all websites that spread false information on current political situations, including security situations, would be blocked, including websites that violate Muslim norms and “threaten Sudanese ethics and culture”. Discussions on the reform of the Informatics Crimes Law is reportedly on-going, but without inclusion of media experts and civil society.

Sudanese authorities have also sought to control and monitor social media, such as Facebook, WhatsApp, and Viber. On 27 February 2014 Sudanese authorities announced their intention to block Facebook and WhatsApp in order to curb the transmission of “negative” and “immoral” materials. The Minister of Science and Media Mrs Tahanii Abdala Atia stated on 4 April 2014 that “people are using social media in a naive way, specifically WhatsApp”. Ms. Atia stated that the government had the capacity to block WhatsApp, but had not yet in the hopes that the Sudanese public would use it positively rather than to “spread rumours and immoral issues”.

On 22 May 2014 the Sudanese Minister of Information Dr. Ahmed Billal Osman threatened to impose further restrictions on media in Sudan as it had been used incorrectly. On 9 July 2014 the head of NISS General Mohamed Atta accused social media of transmitting false news and rumours, and to organise demonstrations disrupting peace and security in Sudan. On 18 August 2014 Sheikh Ahmed Mohamed Alhassan stated the use of WhatsApp led to disrespect of Islam.

From January – April 2014 the online newspaper Sudanile, which is run and published from within Sudan, was subjected to harassment on a number of occasions. It received several summons and threats by members of the NISS. Journalists and employees at the online newspaper were interrogated and imprisoned for hours, and published news reports were removed after publication. The newspaper was also subjected to pre-print censorship by being given a list of items they were prohibited from writing on. Writers and contributors to the website who had previously published articles critical of the ruling regime were prohibited from publishing on the website, and advertisers who had previously published on Sudanile were formally warned not to.

On 1 April 2014 Sudan Tribune was hacked. Hackers managed to steal and reset the password of the editors and other reporters. A false news story was posed by the hackers, alleging the assassination of Dr Riek Machar, leader of the rebel Sudanese Peoples’ Liberation
Movement in Opposition (SPLM-IO). Website managers were able to maintain control shortly thereafter.

On 7 May 2014 many Facebook pages were hacked, particularly of prominent male and female youth activists. Hackers used these pages to display pornographic images.

On 12 April 2015 during the Sudanese general election Hurriyatat, Sudanile, Aain all an online news site were hacked by unknown hackers. A reliable source told ACJPS that this took place five days before Sudanile resumed publication.

Online censorship is not an isolated violation during the election period because the day before the general election chief editors received phone calls from NISS not to publish anything about boycotting of the election that was announced by the opposition.


In the months leading up to the general elections in April 2015, the human rights situation in Sudan has deteriorated significantly. Past months have seen increased censorship of the media and journalists, harassment and intimidation – including closures – of civil society organisations, and the arbitrary arrest and detention of perceived critics of the ruling National Congress Party (NCP). The restrictions are believed to be a tactic by the National Intelligence and Security Service (NISS) to circumscribe the already restricted space for the freedom of expression and prevent the dissemination of news deemed critical to the ruling party ahead of elections.

Daily print runs of Al Midan newspaper, affiliated with the Sudanese Communist Party, were confiscated ten times between January and February. Its Chief Editor, Madiha Abdalla, was charged under articles 50 (Undermining the Constitutional System), 63 (Calling for Opposition to Public Authority by use of Violence or Criminal Force), and 66 (Publication of False News) of the 1991 Sudanese Penal Code. The charges are believed to be related to articles published by Al Midan that cited the opinions of Abdelaziz Al Hilu from the Sudanese Peoples’ Liberation Movement – North (SPLM-N) and on the burning of palm trees by the government to clear land in Northern Sudan. Article 50 of the Penal Code falls under the category of crimes against the state and carries the death penalty.

On 16 February the print runs of 14 newspapers were confiscated by the NISS without any formal reasons being given. Media sources speculated that the confiscation could have been linked to the publication of articles on 15 February which reported military gains made by the SPLM-N in battle with the Sudanese Armed Forces, and news of scores of containers with radioactive materials reportedly found at Port Sudan. Many of the newspapers confiscated on 16 February were owned by prominent NCP members, indicative of growing rifts within the ruling party and attempts by President Omar al Bashir to assert his authority within the NCP.
The confiscations also indicate Bashir’s control over the NISS. Civil society groups have also faced restrictions. On 18 and 29 January the Registrar of Cultural Groups within the Ministry of Culture ordered the closures of the Mahmoud Mohamed Taha Centre and the Sudanese Writers’ Union respectively. No reason for closure was provided in either case.

The previous month, on 21 December 2014, the NISS raided the offices of the Sudanese Human Rights Monitor (SHRM), a human rights organisation in Khartoum, whilst a workshop on the Universal Periodic Review of Sudan was taking place. One journalist was arrested and released the same day without charge and a number of laptops and documents were confiscated. The organisation received no formal notification about the reasons for the raid, though it was likely connected to the arrest and detention of its founder, Dr. Amin Mekki Medani. Dr. Medani was detained just before midnight on 6 December 2014 after returning from the “Sudan Call” negotiations held in Addis Ababa that he had attended as a civil society representative. The document, signed on 3 December 2014, calls for the dismantling of the one-party state regime and the installation of a state founded on equal citizenship, and was signed by representatives from the rebel coalition the Sudanese Revolutionary Forces (SRF), the opposition coalition the National Consensus Forces, the National Umma Party, and the Alliance of Sudanese Civil Society Organisations. It commits signatories to work towards the end of the conflicts raging in different regions of Sudan, and also pledges to work towards legal, institutional, and economic reforms. Two prominent political activists were also detained the same night after their return from the Sudan Call negotiations. Mr. Farouq Abu Eissa, Chairperson of the National Consensus Forces (NCF) and Dr. Farah Ibrahim Mohamed Alagar, former NCP Chairperson in Blue Nile state, were arrested by the NISS from their homes during the same night. The three men were detained incommunicado at NISS offices in Khartoum for 15 days before they were transferred to Kober prison and permitted family visits on 21 December.

A number of Sudan Call signatories have rejected participation in the national dialogue process, stating that the dialogue is intended solely to legitimise the NCP, particularly ahead of elections. In February the Sudan Call forces set out their position on a preparatory meeting for the National Dialogue to be organized by the AUHIP. They agreed to take part in the preparatory meeting but set out key prerequisites, including a postponement of the elections and an investigation into the protest killings of 2013. On 1 April 2015 the AUHIP suspended the preparatory meeting indefinitely after the GoS refused to take part.
On 2 December 2014 the deputy of the National Assembly of the Sudanese Parliament, Isa Bushra (m), summoned 15 journalists for interrogation after they attended a parliamentary session. They were interrogated for an hour and a half, and accused of having a hidden agenda after their respective papers published an article on the mass resignation of cleaners working for a company which services the National Assembly. Mr. Bushra withdrew the accusations after the interrogation.

- Sarah Taj Alsir, (f), Al Gareeda
- Masahier Darag, (m), Almustagila
- Murtada Ahmed, (m), Alahram Alyoum
- Myada Salah, (f), Al Sudani
- Hiba Ibaid, (f), Al Intibaha
- Mohamed Haj Almouz, (m), Akhbar Alyoum
- Thana Abdeen, (m), Akhir Lahza
- Eiman Abdelbagi, (f), Almijhar
- Shadia Saeed Ahmed, (f), Altaghier
- Hafia Nor Aldaiem, (f), Elaf
- Rugaya Alzaki, (f), Alray Alam
- Inam Ibrahim, (f), Alakhbar
- Younis Osman, (m), Al Tayar
- Salwa Saeed Ahmed, (f), Sona
- Shadia Amasaib, (f), the Sudanese Centre for Press Services

On 7 December 2014 the NISS summoned Chief Editor Gusim Khalid, (m), and Editing Manager Ayman Kabosh, (m), of Almushahid newspaper. They were interrogated on an article published by the newspaper on a sports team in Sudan.

On 7 December 2014 the NISS confiscated printed copies of Almijhar Alsyaly newspaper. No rationale was given.

On 10 December 2014 the Criminal Court of Al Nuhod, West Kordofan, acquitted Aisha Asamani, (f), after she was arrested by detective police and charged with photographing military areas under article 57 (entering and photographing military works and installations) under the 1991 Sudanese Penal Code. Ms. Asamani is a journalist. The case file is no. 4/7/2014. The complaint was lodged by Hassan Ibrahim, a member of the NISS. The judge ruled that Ms. Asamani’s photographs of Al Nuhod prison did not fall under the mandate of military areas and installations. The charges were dropped and the judge ruled that her mobile telephone, which had been confiscated by security forces on 4 July 2014, be returned to her. During the course of the proceedings, Ms. Asamani travelled from Khartoum to Al Nuhood twice to appear before the court, once on 26 November 2014, when the court was adjourned due to the absence of the judge, and once on 10 December 2014.

On 21 December 2014 seven members of the NISS raided the offices of the Sudanese Human Rights Monitor (SHRM) in Khartoum, a human rights organisation founded by Dr. Amin Mekki Medani. A
workshop on the Universal Periodic Review of Sudan taking place on the premises was stopped and participants were required to leave. One participant, Mr. Mohamed Al Fateh Hima, was arrested by the NISS and released later the same day without charge. A number of laptops and documents were confiscated.

The SHRM did not receive any formal communication from the Humanitarian Affairs Commission, under which it is registered, concerning the raid. Journalist Mohamed Alfatih Hima, (m), of Al Midan newspaper was arrested by the NISS from the offices of Sudan Human Rights Monitor. Mr. Hima had been participating in a workshop on the Universal Periodic Review attended by journalists and lawyers. Mr. Hima is a journalist working with Al Midan newspaper, affiliated with the Sudanese Communist Party, and is an active member of the Journalists’ Network for Human Rights. Mr. Hima was taken to the NISS offices on Amarat street and later to an unknown location. He was then transferred to NISS offices in the Garden City district near the Iraqi embassy. He was interrogated and subjected to ill-treatment. His phone and laptop were confiscated. Mr. Hima was released the same evening at 8pm following seven hours of interrogation. He was ordered to report the following day at 9am to the Garden City Security Offices.

Mr. Hima had previously been arrested on 15 May 2014 in Jebel Awlia, south of Khartoum, while returning from South Kordofan state. Mr. Hima was interrogated for seven hours by military intelligence before he was transferred to NISS offices in Alkalakla in Khartoum. He was later released without charge.

- On 13 December 2014 the NISS summoned journalist Asmaa Mekael Istanbul of Al Tayar newspaper to report to their Media Department. She was interrogated for three hours regarding a report she had published with Al Tayar newspaper. She was questioned about her sources and who had instructed her to write the article. Editor in Chief of Al Tayar Osman Mirghani had been informed of her summoning by the NISS immediately prior and briefed Ms. Istanbul.

- At 6pm on 30 December 2014 Ali Hamdan, (m), head of the board of directors at Almustagila newspaper, was arrested at his office in Khartoum by the police. Deputy Chief editor Zain Alabdeen Alajib, (m), was also arrested. They were both interrogated by the Prosecutor for Press and Publications in Khartoum, and charged under article 159 (defamation) of the Criminal Act and articles 24 (responsibility of the chief editor) and 26 (regulation of newspapers’ license and journalism publication) of the 2009 Press and Publications Act. The case no. is 16827. The complainant in the case is Alsadig
Alnseeba, (m), the head of the Services Committee of the Legislative Assembly of White Nile state. The two men were released after an interrogation lasting two hours. The case came following a series of articles published by the newspaper in December 2014 alleging financial corruption by Yousif Alshanbaly, the Governor of White Nile state.

- On 1 January 2015 the NISS confiscated printed copies of Al Midan newspaper from Altayseer Print House for several days. No rationale was given. The NISS permitted Al Midan to print only 1200 copies on 13 January 2015. It was confiscated again on 15 January 2015.
- On 8 January 2015 the NISS confiscated printed copies of Alsayha newspaper. NISS agents confiscated printed copies from the newspapers’ offices in Karary in Khartoum North.
- At 11am on 18 January 2015, the NISS of Omdurman, Khartoum state, raided the Mahmoud Mohamed Taha Centre whilst a ceremony commemorating the life of Mahmoud Mohamed Taha was taking place. 18 January 2015 marked the thirty year anniversary of the execution of Mahmoud Mohamed Taha, founder of the Republican Party in Sudan. The Republican Party proclaims to oppose Islamic fundamentalism and promote secularism. Taha was executed days after being convicted of apostasy in 1985 on the basis of his opposition to Sudan’s interpretation of Sharia law. On 21 January 2015 the Centre received letter no. 1/2015 from the Ministry of Culture, canceling its registration.
- On 12 January 2015 the Prosecutor for Press and Publication summoned five journalists to their offices in Khartoum for interrogation. Each of the journalists was interrogated for one hour in connection to a case filed against them by the Zakat (alms giving) office in regards to an article published by their respective newspapers on 8 December 2014. They had previously been charged under article 159 (defamation) of the 1991 Sudanese Penal Code. Their names are below:
  o Omer Seeka, (m), Al Gareeda.
  o Salma Adam, (f), Al Khartoum.
  o Musara Shibaily, (m), Akhir Lahza.
  o Ali Abisairy, (m), Al Intibaha.
  o Abdelrahman Saif Eldin Aidros, (m).
- At 10am on 13 January 2015 Madiha Abdulla, Chief Editor of Al Midan Newspaper, was summoned by telephone by the NISS to report to NISS offices at Al Amarat street for interrogation. Ms. Abdulla was informed that an arrest warrant against her had been issued. On 14 January Ms. Abdulla was interrogated by the Prosecutor for Crimes against the State after a criminal case (file no. 60) was filed by the NISS. She was charged the
same day on 14 January under articles 50 (Undermining the Constitutional System), 63 (Calling for Opposition to Public Authority by use of Violence or Criminal Force), and 66 (Publication of False News) of the 1991 Sudanese Penal Code. Article 50 of the Penal Code falls under the category of crimes against the state, and carries the death penalty. The case was transferred to Khartoum Central Court. Ms. Abdulla appeared before the judge before being released on bail at 7pm. On 17 January 2015, the Prosecutor of Crimes against the State issued further charges against Ms. Madiha Abdulla, and issued charges against journalist Ibrahim Merghani, the head of the political section of Al Midan, and writer and Communist party leader Suleiman Hamid. They were charged under articles 21 (Joint acts of criminal conspiracy), 63 (calling for opposition to public authority by use of violence or criminal force), and 66 (publication of false news) of the 1991 Sudanese Penal Code and articles 24 (criminal liability of editor in chief) and 26 (conditions of newspaper licenses) of the 2010 Media and Publications Act. The charges against the group are believed to be related to articles published including comments by Abdelaziz Al Hilu, a leader of the SPLM-N, regarding the economic situation facing the Lagawa people in West Kordofan and the burning of palm trees by the government to clear land in Northern Sudan. Ms. Abdulla has been released on bail. No court sessions have been announced.

- On 28 January Akhir Lahza daily was confiscated prior to distribution by the NISS.
- On 28 January Al Ehram Alyoum was confiscated prior to distribution by the NISS. A reliable source told ACJPS that the January 28 confiscation may have been linked to an article published the previous day on calls for a postponement of the General Election.
- On 28 January 2015 the NISS summoned Ms. Nada Ramdan, a journalist working with Al Gareeda newspaper, to their offices in the Khartoum 2 area. She remained at the office for three hours before she was released. She was not interrogated or informed of the reason for the summons, but was told that she would likely be called to report back. She has not yet been summoned again by the NISS.
- On 29 January 2015 the Registrar of Cultural Groups within the Sudanese Ministry of Culture cancelled the registration of the Sudanese Writers Union (SWU). The cancellation order, no. 1/2015, signed by the Registrar of Cultural Groups, Ms. Egbal Alhassan Mahjoub, provided brief notification of the cancellation in a couple of sentences without citing reasons or relevant legislation. The SWU was originally
founded in 1985 in Khartoum. It was forced to close in 1989 following the military coup led by President Omar Hassan al Bashir, and was not allowed to re-open until 2006, one year after the signature of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. The SWU describes its mandate as working through culture to promote dialogue and seek solutions to conflicts, with an emphasis on the freedom of expression and diversity. It convenes meetings of writers and its members publish in print and online media.

On 11 February 2015 the NISS of Khartoum summoned Ms. Enaam Adam, a female journalist working with Al Tayar newspaper, and interrogated her about an article she wrote on containers of radioactive materials she published the day before. She was released the same day.

On 16 February 2015 the print runs of 14 newspapers were confiscated by the NISS without any formal reasons being given. Media sources speculated that the confiscation could have been linked to the publication of articles on 15 February which reported military gains made by the rebel Sudanese Peoples’ Liberation Movement – North (SPLM-N) in battle with the Sudanese Armed Forces, and news of scores of containers with radioactive materials reportedly found at Port Sudan. The 14 newspapers confiscated on 16 February included 12 political titles – Al-Sudani, Al-Radi Alaam, Akhir Lahza, Al-Intebaha, Al Ehram Alyoum, Alwan, Alwatan, Awal Alnihr, Almejhar Alsiasi, Akhbar Alyoum, Al-Siha and Al Tayar – as well as two “social newspapers” known for their non-political content, Hekayat and Al-Daar.

Many of the newspapers confiscated on the 16 February are owned by prominent NCP members. The confiscations are indicative of growing rifts within the ruling party, and President Omar al Bashir’s expanding use of the NISS to assert his authority within the NCP.

Four of the newspapers targeted on 16 February were confiscated for a second time two days later, on 18 February. The NISS confiscated print runs of Al –Intebaha, Al-Sudani, Al-Mejhar and Al-Tageer without providing any rationale.

On 1, 3, 5, and 8 February 2015 Al Midan newspaper was confiscated, the tenth time since the beginning of 2015. Reliable sources reported to ACJPS that they believed that the government was launching an ongoing campaign against Al Midan in an attempt to cause financial loss and self-censorship.

On 2 February 2015 Akhir Lahza newspaper was confiscated. The confiscation is believed to be linked to an article published on 1 February 2015 suggesting that the NCP will remain in power regardless of the outcome of the April 2015 elections.
• On 11 February 2015 Al Tayeer newspaper was confiscated.
• On 18 February 2015 four newspapers were confiscated.
  o Al Intibaha
  o Al Tageer
  o Al Sudani
  o Almejhar Alsiasi
• On 1 March 2015 the NISS confiscated Akhir Lahza without any rationale.
• On 2 March 2015 the NISS of Khartoum interrogated two journalists, Mohamed Saeed Halfawi, (m), of Al Tageer newspaper, and Hanan Issa, (f), of Almustigila newspaper after they published an article from an online source called Sudanese Network control in local newspapers. The article discussed a new social phenomenon called “temporary marriage” in which truck drivers married young women along truck routes. The journalists were interrogated about the article and were accused by the NISS of portraying a negative view of Sudanese values.
• On 12 April 2015 a day before the beginning of the Sudanese elections, a number of editors in Khartoum received phone calls telling them to not publish any negative articles in regards to the elections.
• On 12 April 2015 Sudanese online, Sudanile, and Ayin were hacked. Sudanese online was fixed within a few hours, whilst Sudanile and Ayin were offline for several days.
• On 13 April, social media activists received news and photos from election centres showing the success of the boycott. The NISS called newspaper editors and warned them to not publish negative views regarding the elections.
• On 18 April 2015 the NISS confiscated copies of Al Youm Altaali. No rationale was given by the NISS.
• On 20 April 2015 the NISS confiscated Al Sudani. No rationale was given by the NISS.
On 17 October 2015, the 11th annual Khartoum International Book Fair took place in Khartoum. Those participating in the book fair included Sudanese and non-Sudanese publishing houses. This event was scheduled to take place from the 17 October to 29 October 2015.

Between 18 to 21 October, the Sudanese Art and Literary Classification Cooperation confiscated six (6) books from a side event hosted by Awrraq Egyptian Publishing house. The reason for the confiscation was that the books contained some words that offend public decency. As the African Centre monitored the situation, it was discovered that the reason behind the confiscation could be that the ideological, cultural, political and social opinions expressed by the writers are not in line with the ruling party’s ideological philosophy. The books confiscated include:

- Dirty biography for the writer, by Mohamed Khir Abdallah (m). This book was distributed at the 2014 annual Khartoum book fair. It was also distributed in Sudan along 2014 and faced no intervention or interference in its distribution from the Sudanese authorities throughout 2014.
- Orchard of fear, by Asma Osman Shire (f). This novel explains the situation in Sudan under the current regime.
- Down the bottom of the city, by Eihab Adlan (m). This novel addresses the life of marginalized people in Sudan and how they are escaping from the repression to create their own ideal life away from restrictions.
- The bearer of the coin with a hole, by Mubarak Abdulrahman Ardul (m). The novel talks about a past practice - a long history of Sudan in Nuba Mountains where Arabic was the only formal language allowed in the schools and the punishment given to those who chose to express themselves in their mother tongues while at school. Mr. Mubarak is a spokesperson for the SPLM-North who has been engaged in military clashes against the government since 2011 in the regions of South Kordofan and Blue Nile.
- Did the (Muslim) ancestors commit a mistake, by Dr. Mohamed Badawi Mustafa. The book looks at the forgotten areas from the view of Islamic history and the impact on the current situation. The area that the book discusses remains at the center of debate among some philosophical schools.
- Prostitution, an artificial market, Dr. Mohamed Badawi Mustafa. The title might be the reason behind the confiscation of the book because of the Islamisation ideology that is being pushed by the ruling party as it is a taboo to mention such words in public.
All the books confiscated were published by Awrraq Egyptian Publishing House. This is not the first time the Art and Literary Classification Cooperation have intervened and confiscated books from Awrraq. Awrraq publishing house was established in 2010 in Cairo, Egypt. Due to the heavy attack on freedom of expression, the control of the publishing houses that were mostly owned by the National Security and the increase in prices of the printing materials, Sudanese writers prefer to have their books published in Cairo.

From 2012, Awraq started printing and publishing books by Sudanese writers. 90 publications from Sudanese writers have been published up to date. 15 of them have been confiscated by the Sudanese authorities up to date.

The first incident took place at the Khartoum International Book Fair in 2012 where seven (7) books for a famous Sudanese writer, Abdelaziz Baraka Sakan were confiscated.

Article 15 (f) of the Sudanese Art and Literary Classification Law 2001, contains some provisions that infringe on the freedom of expression. This clause gives the Art and Literary Classification Cooperation the power to deny or to ban any art and literary works from entering Sudan without any reason given. Such discretion can easily be abused.

The heavy attack on freedom of expression and censorship has targeted publications (books) as well as shown serious deteriorations in freedom of expression space in Sudan as evidenced by the monitoring data gathered by African Center For Justice and Peace Studies.

On 7 April 2015, the Art and Literary Classification Cooperation confiscated a book titled Lost Country by Dr. Hidar Ibrahim. The book was confiscated at the Mafrosh Bazaar. Dr. Hidar Ibrahim is a director of Sudanese Studies Centre which was closed down by Sudanese authorities in 2013.

On 9 May 2015, the Art and Literary Classification Cooperation requested the organizer of Mafrosh Bazaar to provide a list of all the books brought to the Bazaar by the participants. Mafrosh Bazaar is a popular book fair organized at the Atine Café in central Khartoum. It takes place on every first Tuesday of the month. At the Bazaar, people come with used books for either sale or exchange. Since its inception, it has developed into a gathering for intellectuals as well as others with an interest for reading. The restrictions by the Art and Literary Classification cooperation have made it impossible for the Bazaar to continue.

On 9 May 2015, National Security denied 1000 copies of book titled Sudanese vision and production of failure written by Amro
Mohammed Abbas and printed in Cairo. The book was denied entry into Sudan by the National Security at Alabidia land port on the Sudanese-Egyptian border.

On 12 May 2015, the National Security shutdown without any reason the public library established by the youth Eritrean refugees in Al Shjarab IDP camp in Eastern Sudan. The library remains closed. Thousands of books in the library were donated by Sudanese and Eritreans. On 31 May 2015, representatives of the youth refugees submitted an appeal to the Refugees Commission in Khartoum in connection with the closing the library however there has been no development on this matter.
THE REALITY IS VERY DARK:
THE RIGHT TO FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION IN SUDAN IN 2014 - 2015