

Sudanese Journalists Syndicate

Monitoring report on the conditions of Sudanese female and male journalists Incidents listed from May 15 to May 31

Introduction:

Since the outbreak of the war on the fifteenth of last April, the targeting of journalists and media institutions by both military parties involved in the conflict, indicated in our first summary report, have not stopped. This constitutes a flagrant violation of the freedom of journalistic work and a violation of international laws and conventions that protect the media, and to which the republic of Sudan is a party.

The outbreak of the armed conflict in Sudan between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the militia of the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) deepened the suffering of journalists, both men and women, in Sudan. Most of the media outlets in Sudan stopped because of the continuation of the conflict, which led to the displacement of a large number of male and female journalists inside the country away from Khartoum, and the displacement of large numbers of journalists who were forced to seek refuge outside Sudan.

Many of the affected journalists live in very bad conditions, with some remaining stuck in border areas, unable to migrate due to the complications of lack of entry visas to recipient countries. Those journalists, male and female who continue to report, live in difficult conditions and face daily dangers in search of the truth in the midst of the fighting.

The Sudanese Journalists Syndicate monitored many violations against male and female journalists, which represent a threat to their lives and safety and a restriction on media freedom. The Syndicate also conducts research and keeps track of the accuracy of accounts of the numbers of refugees and displaced persons. Though the overall picture of threats, inhibitions and violations against journalism are clear, the exact data remain incomplete with so many people on the move.

In this report, we will list the total violations that the union monitored in the specified period, and they are classified according to the nature of each violation:¹

1/ Arrest and unwarranted detention

- A broadcast engineer who works for the Public Authority for Radio and Television, has been detained since the first day of the outbreak of the conflict.
- A journalist and photojournalist were arrested at one of the Rapid Support checkpoints for a whole night, and then they were taken to one of the Rapid Support centers in the suburb of Kafouri. They were released the next morning.
- A member of the Journalists Syndicate Council, was arrested by the Intelligence of the Second Infantry Division in the city of Al-Qadarif. After interrogation, he was released but his passport and phones were confiscated, disabling his ability to practice his journalistic work and forcing him to remain in Gedaref, and without giving any reasons by the Military Intelligence.
- A reporter at the News Department of the General Authority for Radio and Television, was arrested and deported to a special camp for rapid support in the Saliha area, south of Omdurman.

¹ Names of the individuals involved are known to the SJS but are left anonymous here for security reasons.

2/ Threats and intimidation

Threats are still haunting a number of male and female journalists through letters and phone conversations, according to the testimonies received by the Syndicate:

- Two colleagues reported that s/he had received death threats several times from unknown numbers.
- Two colleagues in Darfur also received threats in Darfur.
- A freelance photographer was pursued by army intelligence after going public about and documenting human rights violations. His home and neighborhood were monitored and he was questioned about his pictures.

3/ Forced disappearance

- A media colleague disappeared after leaving his home in Omdurman on 5/6/2023, heading to Khartoum, and he did not return until this moment.

4/ Injuries

- Three journalist were injured in the arm following renewed clashes in Nyala. One arm injury, one was shot in leg and hand and one suffered from shrapnel wounds after their home was attacked.

5/ Assault and looting of personal property

- One journalist and his family members were beaten, and a force from the Rapid Support Forces fired shots at his car, and mobile phones and sums of money in their possession were looted.
- One journalist was assaulted, beaten, and his phone and sums of money were looted by a group affiliated with the Rapid Support Forces in Al-Malaga Market in Nyala, while the journalist was working on documenting the looting and burning of shops as a result of the fighting.
- A member of the Syndicate Council, and a number of his companions were subjected to beatings inside their place of residence after the place was stormed and their mobile phones and all their money and clothes were stolen, and his private vehicle was stolen.

6/ Attacks on media headquarters and institutions

The Public Authority for Radio and Television has not been working and broadcasting since the fifteenth of last April and their archives were damaged:

- The institutions premises continue to be used as a military barracks, while the battles around and inside it continue. This poses a threat to the historical heritage it holds in its audio-visual libraries.
- The branch of the cooperative institution within the Public Authority for Radio and Television was attacked. The TV safe was broken at the Public Authority for Radio and Television.

The Syndicate continued to appeal to the two parties to the conflict to withdraw and not to make the radio and television headquarters a battlefield because they are civilian facilities that contain rare heritage.

- Members of the Rapid Support Forces stormed the studios of Radio Hala 96 on Nile Street, Khartoum.
- A force affiliated with the Rapid Support Forces looted the headquarters of the Al-Midan newspaper in Khartoum 2, and the operation resulted in the looting and vandalism of the newspaper's headquarters and the destruction of its files, records and equipment.

7/ Attacking homes by bombing, looting and vandalism

- Forces affiliated with the Rapid Support Forces stormed the home of Professor Ali Shamou, former Minister of Culture and Information, Director of Radio and Television, and Professor of Media at Sudanese universities. In addition to cars, belongings were looted from inside the house.

In a statement, the Syndicate of Journalists warned of the seriousness of this, given that Professor Ali Shamou's library contains a huge historical legacy represented in documents and photographs that document important stages of the history of Sudan in general, and the history of his media work, which constitutes an important asset for future generations.

- The house of a colleague was bombed in the city of El-Geneina, killing 3 members of her family.
- In addition, regular SAF forces attacked the homes of a number of male and female journalists in various regions of the capital, which raises concerns that there is a systematic targeting of male and female journalists and their property.
- We have listed the names of 20 other journalists whose homes were looted during the last period, without giving name details for security reasons:

In its repeated statements, the Syndicate warned of the danger of targeting civilians in general and journalists in particular, and of the dire effects of destroying the cultural and media heritage of the Sudanese.

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