Sudan detains local journalist, confiscates newspapers following reporting on protests

Sudanese authorities should immediately release al-Jarida reporter Ahmed Jadein, cease confiscating newspapers, and allow journalists to report on matters of public interest without fear of reprisal, the Committee to Protect Journalists said today.

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Sudan's National Intelligence and Security Services (NISS) arrested Jadein on January 31 while he was reporting on anti-inflation protests in the city of Bahri in Khartoum state, according to news reports and the independent Sudanese Journalists Network. Yesterday, NISS confiscated all copies of *al-Jarida*, which is privately owned, and the Communist Party's daily newspaper *al-Midan*, according to news reports.

Ashraf Abdelaziz, *al-Jarida*'s editor-in-chief, said the newspaper told the NISS press relations office that Jadein was on assignment at the time of his arrest, according to news reports. Jadein has been held without charge, Abdelaziz said, according to the same reports.

Abdelaziz also told journalists that, before yesterday's issue went to print, he received a call from someone who identified himself as an NISS officer, asking whether the issue contained any coverage of the protests.

After Abdelaziz confirmed, NISS agents confiscated all copies from the printers, according to him and to a statement published on *al-Jarida's* social media accounts. All copies of *al-Midan* were also confiscated after printing, according to news reports.

"Responding to critical coverage of protests by jailing a journalist and seizing newspapers undercuts the already narrow margin of freedom in which the Sudanese press operates," CPJ's Middle East and North Africa program coordinator Sherif Mansour said from Washington D.C. "We call on Sudanese authorities to immediately release Ahmed Jadein and cease their absurd attempts to silence the press."

The Sudanese government's decision to devaluate the local currency in January and rising bread prices sparked ongoing protests across the country, which have resulted in police killing at least one protester and arresting dozens of activists, according to news reports.

NISS arrested freelance journalist Amal Habbani on January 16 while she was covering the protests in Khartoum state, and have held her for 17 days without providing details about her detention, according to news reports and her husband, Shawky Abdelazim, who spoke to CPJ.

In January, the Sudanese authorities confiscated multiple editions of at least four newspapers, including *al-Jarida* and *al-Midan*, for their coverage on anti-inflation protests, CPJ reported at the time.