

Sudan security agents ban newspaper

State security agents in Sudan on Wednesday ordered a daily newspaper to stop publishing, its owner-editor said, bringing the number of papers banned in the country to four.

"I got a phone call from the security service a few minutes ago informing me that our newspaper has been suspended," Muzamil Abualgasim, who founded Al-Youm Al-Taly earlier this year, told AFP.

The National Intelligence and Security Service (NISS) gave no reason for the ban but had already confiscated all copies of Wednesday's edition after they had been printed, he said.

The Communist Party's newspaper Al-Midan was banned earlier this year.

Al-Tayar, an independent daily, and Rai Al-Shaab, the newspaper of the opposition Popular Congress Party, were ordered shut by the intelligence service more than a year ago and have not resumed publishing.

Apart from the banned publications, Paris-based watchdog Reporters Without Borders (RSF) recorded more than 20 cases of newspapers being seized after printing last year.

The state minister of information and culture, Mustafa Tirab, told AFP in a May interview that the government "will do our level best to provide freedom of expression and freedom of speech for all those who are inside Sudan".

The country ranks near the bottom, at 170 out of 179, in the RSF 2013 World Press Freedom Index.