

Sudan - Media Landscape

Author(s): Eman Eltigani

Copyright © European Journalism Centre (EJC) 2018 - MediaLandscapes.org

Table of contents

- Introduction
 - Media
 - Print
 - Radio
 - Television
 - Digital Media
 - Social Networks
 - Opinion Makers
 - Sources
 - Organisations
 - Trade Unions
 - Journalist Associations
 - News Agencies
 - Audience measurement organisations
 - Sources
 - Policies
 - Media legislation
 - Accountability systems
 - Regulatory authorities
 - Sources
 - Education
 - Universities and schools
 - Professional development
 - Sources
 - Conclusions
 - 5.1 Conclusion
 - 5.2 References
-

Overview

The media landscape in Sudan has been developed and re-shaped by the political arena since the country's independence in 1956. Historically, the country has had only two democratic governments since its independence and both elected

governments were quickly overthrown by the military. The military rulers of the past have been swift to crack down on the freedom of expression and the current military regime continues to impose the same tactics of control and censorship. The ultimate goal for the government is a one-party state and one media voice to communicate with the public.

A free media remains elusive and represents a big challenge as the country continued to have a poor ranking score in the International Media Report by Freedom House in 2017. The political control of the media has been introduced through legislation and practice by the highest security institution in the country, the National Intelligence Security Service (NISS). Although the press and media laws must be passed by the parliament, the current regime issues bills that do not need any approval from MPs or any other institution. More recently, in November 2017, Sudanese journalists protested against a tentative law that had been drafted, allowing the government to confiscate and close down newspapers, terminate a journalist's license to practice and other restrictive measures to control the exercise of freedom. The protesters succeed in postponing the work on the draft, however, the discussion is continuing behind closed doors.

One of the strategies employed by the government is to silence all the voices except its own and to force the opposition parties to spend exorbitant resources to operate their media outlets. Although there are more than eight opposition political parties, at present none of them have official television or radio channels. Some of the parties manage to own newspapers such as the Umma National Party and the Communist Party, but regular confiscation, economic sanctions and the arrest of journalists are leading those parties to close their newspapers. At present, only the Communist Party's newspaper *Almidan* manages to reflect its party's views, but the regular targeting by the government has affected the paper's circulation and it appears that its closure is imminent.

Social media is, however, growing as independent platform attracting large audiences in Sudan, especially among the younger generation. The online platforms benefit from the freedom found in the Internet and more activists, politicians and journalists are using this space to express their views. A recent debate about the new press law showed that the regime apparently wishes to restrict online contents and hold journalists accountable for their contributions to any social media which criticizes or targets the government. Other risk factors include telecommunication companies that are owned by the regime supporters or business people who will embrace and support local regulations to avoid financial loss.

To reduce tension and to silence the calls for a free press and media, the regime plans to control the economic resources and gain ownership of most of the media outlets, especially television and radio. Although the National Television and Radio Corporation (NTRC) is considered a public broadcasting organisation, the regime has total control of content, budget and editorial views of both institutions at the NTRC. Moreover, since the regime supporters own other private radio and television outlets, this facilitates the ruling party's control over the production and recruitment of the staff working in the media ensuring a message and a voice for its policies. The NTRC has benefited from the state's resources and support as 18 administrative regions have local radios and televisions in addition to some broadcasting houses which were allocated for the regions.

These institutions, however, would be prone to high risk during times of instability as the opposition would target them in the process of gaining control and changing the regime in the country. Finally, the overall restrictive policies of the regime continue to crackdown on all media outlets having a negative impact on the freedom of the press, limiting competition in the marketplace and increasing the need for new platforms. The media market in Sudan is very weak and the restrictive environment limits the competition between different media outlets. The government's surveillance policies and regular confiscations have negatively impacted the circulations market. The absence of democracy and the one-party system affect the freedom of both political parties and media professionals. Although the government controls both television and radio, the investment in the media sector is very limited and the training for staff is not sufficient. A recent project funded by the British Council assessed the media participant's capacity and recommended more training for the media outlets. The current NTRC has been in the same building with no major development for more than 50 years. The monopoly and the control of other

media outlets impacts the production and performance of journalists. A journalist does not need to have high qualifications to join the government-controlled media such as the National Radio and Television, as an affiliation with the ruling party is more important. At the same time, a qualified journalist has limited career aspirations in the press sector as there are no guarantees about the future of the newspaper which may be confiscated or closed without notice. The print media focuses on survival more than staff development and as a result many qualified Sudanese journalists are leaving the country to work for media companies in the Gulf. The restrictive media environment silences voices, hinders professional development and limits the creativity of journalists.

Media

Print

Although the print media is oppressed, the press still plays a noteworthy role in analysing the political situation and promoting freedom of expression in the country. The historical change in press ownership highlights the crackdown on freedom of expression and the political and economic influence that the regime uses to control the press. For example, *Alintibaha* and *Sudan Vision* are both pro-government papers, therefore, they are rarely confiscated and they receive the most commercial advertisements. While *Almidan* and *Alayaam*, a Communist Party affiliate, are targeted by the National Intelligence and Security Service (NISS) and have their papers regularly confiscated. In addition, government business groups do not use their papers for advertisements.

In the period between 2005 and 2011, the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) article 10.4 between South Sudan and Sudan brought some stability in the country and allowed a free press empowering many independent and opposition parties to establish newspapers during the period of the CPA moving towards the Southern Sudan Referendum.

During the 5 years of the agreement, the government maintained its control over the NRTC, but the agreement also introduced private media outlets such as a UN radio to promote the peace agreement. The print media, however, had the biggest advantage from the agreement and its progress moved the country's rating from 86 to 76 according to the Freedom House Annual Report. The country recorded 10 percent less than the overall rating in the past 10 years compared to the scores of the top free countries in the world. Between 2012 and 2017, the situation has continued to worsen and the regime's systemic oppressive approach increased, affecting both the print media and the journalists. The country's press freedom rate went up from 78 in 2012 to 86 in 2017.

The declining situation in media freedom has affected overall consumption, the market and the performance of journalists. Media consumption is very centralised and the government controls the market forces to promote the message that serves the regime's interest. Therefore, the public seeks alternative sources of information in social media, diaspora channels and the foreign media. The market control, press censorship and economic hardship in the country have affected the consumption and production of newspapers. In 2016, the Press Council stated that newspaper distribution had declined by 21 percent and highlighted that the distribution rate was 69 percent and comprised of only three newspapers. The daily circulation during this period was 24 to 25 thousand copies for the same three newspapers. This percentage of distribution and circulation, however, might not reflect the actual readership and consumption, as consumers tend to exchange the papers to avoid the cost of buying them due to the economic hardship that the country is experiencing. For example, one person may buy a paper, but ten people may read it.

Based on the 2017 newspaper circulation report, there are 45 newspapers (ie, 29 political newspapers, 10 sports newspapers and 6 entertainment newspapers). Unjustified confiscation of newspapers and the arrest of the journalists creates huge financial losses for the newspapers. Absenteeism due to arrests and the fear of arrest results in lower individual production and forces many journalists to look for new jobs in other sectors away from print media. For example, in 2016, during a period of ten days, seven newspapers were confiscated causing financial losses to owners, most of whom were not ruling party affiliates.

Therefore, due to these restrictions over the media in general, it is very hard to find information about revenue, also because of the complicity of the ownerships and their relationship with the regime. Also, the current economic policy to lift the fuel subsidies has created an increase in production and distribution of the newspapers.

For example if the highest circulation is 25,000 copies per day for one paper and the cost of a newspaper is SD7, the revenue per day is SD175,000. Given the recent spike in the inflation rate of the Sudanese currency (ie , \$1= 42 SDG), daily revenue would be less than \$5,000. Again this is not a scientific or accurate estimation as the advertisement is not included, but it demonstrates the scale of printing revenues.

In the public discourse of the media, revenue in general is declining as social media is taking over. However, media revenue in Sudan is questionable as there are no industry or market studies of the economic environment of the press. Most of the papers make their revenue from advertisements and few have subscriptions with institutions as individuals buy directly from distributors. These institutions often support the regime policies and only buy those papers that support them. Therefore, opposition papers or independent papers suffer, as most private sector companies are committed to the regime's message. Accordingly, the annual circulation of political papers in 2016 indicated that 57.7m papers were printed, however, only 36.2m papers were distributed due to press censorship. Specifically, 7 non-government newspaper were confiscated and some papers were blocked more than one time. Although the number of the newspapers increased from 43 in 2016 to 45 papers in 2017, the government continues to control the market and pro-government newspapers record the highest levels of distribution. For example *Alintibaha*, a pro-government newspaper, had a high level of distribution in 2017(i.e., 19,347 daily newspapers), however, its popularity is attributed to the regular subscriptions of government institutions, agencies, offices. Accessibility to the non-government newspapers remains weak and there is no scientific research, but the annual circulation for newspapers in 2017 suggests that the reading percentage across the country is 7 newspapers for every 1000 people.

Radio

The National Radio Corporation (NRC) was established in the 1940s during the colonial era to act as a public broadcasting body and it has continued to be the government's official news channel. Since the independence of Sudan, the government has continued to invest in NRC maintaining its structure as a governmental institution with a clear political agenda and national strategy.

The regime's rigid policies and strong restrictions have impeded audience research or consumer research of market needs. There is no available or accessible data about usage and consumption and no transparency about the revenue of the NRC. However, in 2014 the National Ministry's Central Bureau of Statistics and its UN partner, collected data about household ownership of televisions and radios as a measure of access to mass media and of mobile phones/telephones as an indicator of access to efficient means of communication. The survey results showed that 35.2 percent of the households own a radio and that urban households are more likely than rural households to own a television (71.1 percent compared with 26.3 percent respectively).

These results could reflect the effect of current policies in the centralisation of services and media consumption

geographically. The economic distribution of resources affects the decision of rural people to access information or purchase means of communication leaving them with the one signal, voice and message of the NRC. The discrepancy between the ownership of radios in rural areas versus urban areas might not necessarily represent listenership or consumption as rural communities tend to listen in groups. There are more than 18 state radio stations and they are funded and supported by the government.

The primary outreach is through FM radios and their main focus is in commercial- and advertisement-based education and entertainments products. The religious-based channels also receive a lot of advertisement revenue as there are less restrictions over them as some of them are supporters of the ruling party and disseminate messages that resonate with current regime policies. Stations tend to air music and entertainment programming, such as the popular *Mango 96 FM*, and avoid material that would likely attract censorship. One exception is *Khartoum FM*, which is owned by the former Minister of Finance Abdel Rahim Hamdi and serves as a talk show discussing economic issues from a pro-government position. Any attempt to cross government policy lines or to design content that interferes with its interest, will result in the government closing the station.

To avoid the restricted media environment in the country, yet challenge the regime's political statements and stance, some opposition leaders and activists have made several attempts to establish television and radio channels outside the country. Also, media-based organisations specialising in peacebuilding reconciliation and rights advocacy have engaged in similar initiatives in an attempt to support freedom of expression in the country.

For example, *Radio Dabanga* and *Afia Darfur* were founded to support the political process in the country by allowing other views to evolve and increase the representation of unheard voices. *Radio Dabanga* is produced by an organisation based in the Netherlands and broadcasts via shortwave and the Internet, while *Afia Darfur* broadcasts live programming from the neighbouring country of Chad. A public debate is currently in place, where the government and its supporters try to discredit those stations, contending that the radio stations are "promoting the agendas of rebel groups", while the radio stations describe themselves as presenting unbiased information, and as bringing the news from unheard voices. Although the ruling party has tried to undermine these media groups, they have developed listenership and gained popularity especially in the regions affected by the conflict.

In some situations, private channels have been directly funded by foreign governments and this situation creates reluctance to listenership as a matter of principle in not involving foreigners in the internal politics of the country. Some of these initiatives, however, have been challenged by the lack of funding which is based upon the project's cycle and balances political interest and general audience interests. At the time of writing this report, news was circulating that the US government would not fund the *Afia Darfur* radio programme and the all-news and information program might announce its closure soon.

Television

The National Television was established in the 1960s and was supported by NRC expertise and facilitation. Through the years, the National Radio and TV have been branded as a national entity and are now referred to as the National Radio and Television Corporation (NRTC). The two institutions have unified management which has made it easier for the regime to control content and manage staff. The National TV maintains the same status of the National Radio as the government follows the same total control policies.

Officially there are 19 television stations operating in Sudan using the Nilesat satellite, but there are state television stations that also benefit from the national television's access to the same satellite. Although the television channels in Sudan are free

and there are no subscription fees or conditions applied to consumers, recently some private and national television stations have been moving to the new system called DVB-S2 which will block approximately half of the consumers who do not have access to the HD digital home satellite television receiver.

Private media lacks the freedom required to operate and compete in the local market. The advance of TV channels from other Middle East countries has attracted the Sudanese public for entertainment content more than the local TV stations. This lack of support creates instability in the market and leads to the closure of many private media channels such as *Harmony TV*.

Digital Media

As a prelude to digital media establishment it would be incumbent to consolidate the mobile network sector as it grants access to the Internet. The instability in the country has affected the telecommunication sector in the sense that most outlets are owned externally and therefore dependent upon foreign investment.

The main telecommunication operations are MTN, Sudani (ie , a Sudatel mobile unit), and Zain. There are also about 9 other providers for different telecommunication services including a bill collection company, however, all are regulated by the National Telecommunications Corporation (NTC)

Sudan's telecommunication infrastructure is equipped and comparable to other countries in the region. The country has most of the needed services such as a national fiber optical backbone, wireless fixed-line networks, but very limited fiber-to-home connections.

Zain is a Kuwaiti company and operates in eight countries across the Middle East including Sudan. The regime, however, maintains its influence over the company's operations in Sudan by securing the placement of its supporters and formal military personnel as part of the Zain management team. The company is having sustained growth in the country and revenues have steadily increased. In 2016 with the introduction of 4G service Zain increased its total number of customers to 12.5 million, the highest number of mobile users among all the providers in the country.

The close ties of the Zain Company with the regime facilitates its operations in the country and has also enabled it to increase the gap against its other competitors (ie , MTN and Sudani). While Zain was reporting increased profits, MTN indicted a loss in 2016 and announced its subscribers had decreased by 13.0 percent to 7.7 million.

Although it is easy to find the annual financial reports for the foreign investors such as MTN and Zain, there was no record or information about the Sudani company performance at its official website. The company's report published by external sources under the company group Sudatel indicates that the Sudatel telecom group reported profits is \$47m with 11.7 million subscribers 2016. This figure places the company second after Zain in terms of subscribers in the country.

The government has control over the connectivity and can block all of the Internet gateways in the country when the National Intelligence Security Service - NISS wants to slow down or block access to the Internet. There are frequent interruptions of the gateways and blockings of YouTube and the Freedom House has documentation of the incidents that happened in 2016 when connections were blocked for a period of time lasting for more than 13 hours.

Social Networks

The online media usage is flourishing as consumers are hungry for alternative sources of information. The usage remains novel in its approach, but human rights and political activists are finding greater benefit from the free online space than official journalists. The Diaspora platforms update regularly, while the domestic television and radio stations and newspapers which

now have online outlets, still don't update their pages regularly. As of now, there are only a few generating revenue from online content as most of the advertisement is by individual initiatives.

According to the Internet World Site, in 2017 out of a total population of 41.5 million, 28.6 percent accessed the Internet and 7.1 percent were Facebook users, while 7.76 percent were using Twitter which became popular among young people during civil disobedience actions. WhatsApp has created a popular platform not just for news consumption and government critique, but a social gathering for many people across the country and around the world to share entertainment and family news. Some news outlets are distributing their news via WhatsApp to distribute news to their readers. In 2014, 93 percent of the mobile users in Sudan used WhatsApp to communicate and share content for a variety of reasons.

The step forward towards the usage of digital media is challenged by the regime's interest and policies to control the online sphere as they are already controlling the traditional media. The regime has organised a systemic surveillance against the online writers and has arrested some bloggers, journalists and activists for producing content considered to be critical and threatening the national security. Journalists who were arrested confidentially shared their stories and stated that security staff read their emails and Facebook pages.

The Thomson Foundation Project Evaluation Report of 2016 found that a few of the National television and radio stations and some print media used the Internet for research or for publishing their content online. There are a few online newspapers such as *Sudan Tribune*, *Change Now*, *Sudanese Online*, *Hurriyat* and other activist platforms, but the majority of them are managed and operated outside of Sudan. Some of the journalists prefer to work for online media, but are concerned about the risk of working illegally and fear being arrested.

Opinion Makers

In spite of the limits in freedom of the control over the media, religious leaders, tribal leaders, student leaders and politicians remain strong public figures. During periods of civil unrest these figures use different platforms to mobilise the community's members and call for demonstrations in the mosques, universities and among the general public. In addition to these channels, opinion makers find alternative means to raise their voice of concern by mobilising the public through social media. Government control of information and restrictions in media research leads the public to seek alternative opinions.

Religion plays an important role in the internal politics of the country. The religious figures use the mosques as a platform to send the messages which mobilize the public and influence the opinions of the young generation. Some religious groups distant themselves from the political life as they have a relationship with the ruling party and sometimes they share similar interests. Some of these leaders influence public views toward support the regime, but others play a political role in the region and encourage the young generation to join Islamist groups in the region. Religious groups that have a close ties with the government have the permission and resources to operate TV and Radio channels. Their leaders use these channels to send their messages, but their media channels might not meet the professional standards of basic journalism values such as impartiality.

Tribalism is major issue in the social structure in the country and the voice of the public is often related to the tribe or region. This is especially the case in the areas affected by conflict such as Darfur, South Kordofan and Eastern Sudan. These groups have less interaction with the traditional media as they do not have access or resources. The current increase in the use of online media among the Sudanese facilitates greater dissemination of opinions via WhatsApp and Facebook.

Despite the restrictive environment, both activists and academics affect the decision making process. This group is actively engaged in social media, opinion spaces in newspapers and as columnists or bloggers, but access to national radio and television remain beyond their reproach.

Sources

Newspapers

- [Akhir-lahza](#)
- [Alintibaha](#)
- [Almghar](#)
- [Almidan](#)
- [Alsudani](#)
- [Altayar](#)
- [Alwan](#)
- [Alyoum altali](#)
- [Sudan Vision](#)

Television

- [Alshoroq TV](#)
- [Angham Music TV](#)
- [Blue Nile TV](#)
- [Khartoum TV](#)
- [S 24](#)
- [Sudan TV](#)

Radio

- [Arabaa94](#)
- [Capital FM](#)
- [FM104](#)
- [Radio Dabanga](#)
- [Medical Radio](#)
- [Omudrmam Radio](#)

Digital Media

- [Anilin](#)
- [Alrakoba](#)
- [Altaghyeer](#)
- [Hurriyat](#)
- [Sudan Tribune](#)

Statistic Databases

- [Freedom House](#)

- [Internet World State](#)
- [StateCounter](#)
- [The Statistic Portal](#)

Internet companies

- [MTN Company](#)
- [National Telecommunication Cooperation](#)
- [Sudani Company](#)
- [Zain Company](#)

Opinion makers

- [3ayin](#)
- [Sudan Tribune](#)
- [Sudanese Bloggers without Border](#)
- [Sudanese Online](#)

Organisations

Trade Unions

In comparison, the media industry in Sudan lags behind many countries in the region. The government's control over media limits competition and discourages potential investors away from the sector. All the print media industry is managed by the National Council for Press and Publication (NCP) and the Ministry of Information manages broadcasting stations and channels. Both government entities impose regulations and restrictions on the market. The only information relating to the market share of media outlets was provided by the Union of Chambers of Commerce regarding the printing and packaging only.

Many companies advertise their business through different media outlets, but those companies either belong to the government or follow its directives in allocating their advertisement to stations and channels supported by the government. For example, government institutions and companies were advised to subscribe and advertise in government papers such as *Alintibaha* which consequently increased its distribution and revenue. The lack of transparency of both national and private media institutions limits access to knowing the actual revenue or the identity of investors. There are some small media companies which provide training and assistance in are privately managed by journalists as in the case of Teeba Press, but these companies sometimes struggle to cover the cost of the operations. All the newspapers are companies approved by the NCP, as both print and broadcasting companies have to obtain the security clearances at some stage, especially foreign media companies.

Journalist Associations

There are many organisations that work in the media sector and some of them were created in response to the restrictive environment and to the lack of support to the sector from the governmental institutions. The National Council for Press and

Publication (NCCP) was established in 1993 and is considered to be the official regulatory agency for media practice. In some cases, the NCCP in agreement with the government could shut down newspaper for days, but that does not apply to television and radio as they are setup to implement the government policies.

The Sudanese Journalists Union was formed to represent the journalists, build the capacity of its members and advocate for their rights; but some journalists consider the union to be part of the government accusing it of not providing the needed support for the journalists. The union, however, sometimes issues statements urging the government to release arrested journalists and voice objection to laws that block the free press. In an unusual event, the union administration denied its association with the controversial 2016 legislation aimed at enforcing tighter restrictions on online content and ultimately broke its silence and campaigned against the legislation.

The journalists continue to search for the right body to coordinate and support them and one of the more successful initiatives has been the Sudanese Journalists Network (SJV). The network is actively represented and campaigns for journalists rights. In many occasions, it has organised strikes, protests and has issued statements calling for the journalists to be released or permitted to traveling. The network also produces a regular report about freedom and human rights violations across the country, which is used as a source of information about freedom of expression and human rights violations. The network, however, has limited resources and still does not have an official website. It also has led the recent campaign for the release of journalists who were arrested in February 2018.

The Sudanese Journalists Association for Human Rights (JHR) does not have an official website, but issues statements through different media outlets and also yearly reports about the media situation in Sudan.

News Agencies

The Sudanese News Agency (SUNA) was established in 1971 and continues to promote the government voice on television and radio. The government also appoints its supporters or party members to lead the agency. The dispute inside the ruling party as to who will control the agency has affected the agency and it is now perceived as lagging behind other media entities in the country. The agency recently introduced a French-language news service in addition to English and Arabic services. The government provides all the financial resources for the agency and there is no online information about SUNA's progress or profit.

There are some other agencies and online news sites such *Sudan Tribune*, *Sudanese Online* and *Change Now*, *Aayin* and other. These media outlets have created a strong platform attracting audiences inside and outside the country. These sites are not governmental and manage to represent the marginalised audience research and of institutions to support the measurement process is a big challenge facing media development plans in the country.

Audience measurement organisations

The cost of audience's research in such a restrictive environment discourages businesses from entering the market and the Thomson Foundation Media Project addressed the need for audience's research in the country. The Project evaluated the impact a three-year media training programme and analysed the content of different media outlets such as television, radio and print media. The analysis findings indicted that limited attention has been given to the audience's needs and interests. Adding to this lack of attention, media-based organisations such as BBC Media Action were banned from operating in the country due to the government's fear of media research organisations. Furthermore, a recent media content survey suggested that the interests of the Sudanese audience focus on foreign media products such as Egyptian drama and Turkish soap operas. A recent article suggested that the number of people working in the National Television and Radio Cooperation

may be actually higher than its viewing audience, with the exception of the annual Ramadan drama series.

As a result, audience market research for media outlets is very limited, as there are only a couple of regional media research companies active in Sudan. Telecommunication companies have resources to collect the needed data and they do have regular data collection operations after government approval; however, this does not appear to tangibly benefit the media sector.

Sources

- [Anilin News Agency](#)
- [Ministry of Information](#)
- [National Council for Press and Publication](#)
- [Sudanese Journalists Network](#)
- [Sudanese News Agency](#)
- [Sudanese Rasd Network](#)
- [Union of Chamber of Commerce](#)

Policies

Media legislation

Although the regulations and policies to develop and maintain professional media practices in Sudan are very old dating before independence of the country in 1930, many journalists feel that the recent regulations impose more restrictions and hinder their freedom of expression and force many to quit their profession.

Recently, in 2016, there was a debate about new legislation that was presented in the parliament and was aiming to enforce tighter restrictions on online content. Many angry journalists, mostly from printed media, protested the draft and organised demonstrations calling for the drafted legislation to be rejected. Although the specific content of the new legislation was not shared, the concerns of the journalists were made clear, but also demonstrated their vulnerability. In such a restrictive environment, the press does not have the resources to provide the needed support to protect journalists from detention, persecution or being charged with criminal offenses.

Accountability systems

The main regulator of media practice in the country is supposed to be the Press and Publication Council which leads the process of the drafting new laws and documenting all media work. However, during the ruling of the current government, four laws enacted in 1993, 1996, 1999 and 2009 were passed to enhance the regulation of the media in Sudan. The last legislation was introduced in 2009 abolishing the 2005 Act which was adopted during the Interim National Constitution as part of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) between the Khartoum government and the then insurgent Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM). The 2009 Act has increased the security control over the press and calls for maintaining close surveillance over all the publications to be assured that all printed materials do not contradict the government messages.

Regulatory authorities

There are systemic watchdog policies enforced by the National Intelligence Security Service (NISS) which severely hinder the freedom of press and force many publishers and editors to impose self-censorship approaches to avoid financial losses. For example, the owner of the Sudani Newspaper sold the paper to a government supporter after the paper was confiscated many times. Most media practitioners describe the laws as unfair in that they target journalists and criminalise reporting that critical of the government. Journalists with political colour have been imprisoned many times for their content and have been accused of various national security violations.

Sources

- [Article about Human Rights in Sudan, Theory and Practice](#)
- [Bills to Organise Press Work in Sudan](#)
- [Journalists Code of Conduct](#) (Arabic)
- [Laws Govern Media Practice, Research](#)
- [Press law 2009](#) (Arabic)
- [Sudanese Journalists Network Annual Report](#) (Arabic)
- [Sudan's Constitution of 2005](#)

Education

Universities and schools

There are around 21 universities and institutes that provide some form of academic certification in media in the country, however, the degrees and areas of specialization differ. Not every degree holder is a journalist and not every journalist has an academic degree. According to recent research, 65.2 percent of the journalists participating in the study had specialised training in journalism and/or communication. The degree holders have to complete 4 years at the university and for print media they have to pass the Press Registration Exam. The hiring procedures, however, are different and associated with the network of government contacts, especially in television and radio. The print media has different measures as non-degree holders prove themselves by practice and pass the National Press and Publication Exam.

Although the number of institutions providing media studies would seem sufficient, there is no unified curriculum or standard requirement for applicants or media professionals. The content analysis done by Thomson Foundation used a small sample as part of the media project and found that the basic journalistic standards were not well developed among most of the participants who are currently leading the media sector in the country. Only a few of them had the chance to practice before entering the media sector and most academic institutions do not have studios or provide time to practice, as all of them should wait for available space in the National Television and Radio facilities. According to the same Thomson Foundation Research, in general the lack of academic qualifications among managers of media institutes discourages young journalists and interested students from entering the field. Some of the research participants stated the university information was not useful in the practice as it confuses on media history. Khartoum University, however, appears to provide inclusive classes of media studies at the enter level as students receive information recent studies such as media for development.

Professional development

Self-development and journalistic training is pursued by individuals and sometimes institutions provide the needed training. In a recent initiative, the British Council in collaboration with Thomson Foundation funded a 3-year media development project in Sudan. The project evaluated the capacity of journalists from television, radio and print media. One of the main findings was that journalists needed more training to build their capacity on basic journalistic values.

There are no regular trainings or development programs for media, but the NTRC sometimes provides regional training. With the recent economic hardship in the country, many journalists have left the profession or left the country to work in the Gulf. Most of the digital activists do not have a media degree and you can clearly see the difference when reading their comments.

Sources

Universities/Schools of journalism

- [Alzhar University](#)
- [Future University](#)
- [International University of Africa](#)
- [Khartoum University, Faculty of Media](#)
- [Neelain University](#)
- [Omdurman Islamic University](#)
- [Sudan Open University](#)
- [Sudan University of Science and Technology](#)
- [The National Ribat University](#)
- [University of Bahri](#)

Professional development

- [Arab Journalists Union](#)
- [Arab Union for Radio and TV](#)
- [BBC](#)
- [British Council Sudan](#)
- [National for Press Journalistic Publication](#)
- [Sudanese Journalists Union](#)
- [Thomson Foundation](#)

Conclusions

Conclusion

The media landscape in Sudan reflects an extremely restrictive environment coupled with a lack of institutional support. The media outlets comprised of television, radio, print and recently social media endure restrictive policies and lack freedom of

expression, competition and sufficient market analysis. The media professionals are busy fighting for free media, looking for opportunities outside the country or searching for alternative ways of life and radio and allows a small space for stations focusing on entertainment drama and music. The media market and revenue is not developing as the government tends to control all business sectors in the country. Print media, however, has made some progress in challenging the government to give more free space and maintain some control of online content. The strong government control over media limits the creativity. There is no pluralism in Sudan and the government promotes the message of one party and one ruler.

References

- Alsudanalyoum.com, 2018. [Sudanese satellite channels are losing millions of viewers to the new broadcasting system.](#)
- British Home Office, 2017. [Country Policy and Information Note Sudan: Opposition to the government, including sur place activity.](#)
- Committee to Project Journalists 2018. [Sudan holds local journalist for 12 days, confiscates newspapers.](#)
- Daily Nation. Sudanese Journalists Protest against draft media law.
- Freedom House. [Freedom in the World 2017.](#)
- [Freedom of Press 2017. Press freedom suffers embattled led leaders cling to power.](#)
- [Helena Puig Larrauri](#), 2011. [Digital Activism in Sudan.](#)
- Janet Wasko University of Oregon, 2014. [The Study of the Political Economy of the Media in the twenty-first century.](#)
- Journalists for Human Rights. [JHR Annual Report 2016.](#)
- MTN Sudan Annual Revenue. [Annual Report.](#)
- National Sudanese Print and Press Council, 2016. [Annual Report about the newspapers circumlocution.](#)
- The Comparative Constitutions Project. [Sudan's Constitution of 2005.](#)
- Thomson Foundation Sudan Media Capacity Building Evaluation Report, 2016. [Annual Review.](#)
- UN, DFID and Ministry of Health, 2016. [Sudan Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2014, Final Report](#)