Sudan’s intelligence agency persecutes two women reporters

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Reporters Without Borders

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Reporters Without Borders is extremely concerned about the way Sudan’s National Intelligence and Security Service (NISS) is harassing two women newspaper reporters in Khartoum, Eiman Mustafa of Al-Jareeda and Hiba Abedazeem of Al Sudani.

Mustafa was arrested in the Khartoum district of Ondurnam on 6 September and has been summoned for questioning at NISS headquarters every day since then. For three days in a row – on 8, 9 and 10 September – she was forced to spend more than 12 hours each day there.

The NISS has been questioning her about an article published on 4 September on the conflicts of interest of certain politicians who have been blocking a proposed agriculture law in parliament since 2010.

She is also being questioned about her political affiliations and links with youth movements because, when arrested, she was with young people involved in organizing activities to commemorate the September 2013 protests. It is not yet clear if she was with them because of her journalistic activities.

Abedazeem was arrested on 10 September when she went to Afra Mall on the south side of Khartoum to meet with a source and instead found four NISS vehicles awaiting her. She was taken to NISS headquarters and was interrogated for more than two hours there about a 2 September article on water pollution in Khartoum state.

“Arresting journalists for interrogation is only too common in Sudan, where the NISS enjoys complete freedom to do whatever it wants,” said Cléa Kahn-Sriber, the head of the Reporters Without Borders Africa desk.

“These two reporters simply wrote well-sourced, balanced articles that drew attention to the practices of certain Sudanese politicians and, for this, they are being persecuted. We call for an immediate end to these summonses and interrogations as they are a completely unwarranted form of harassment that does the government’s image a great deal of damage.”

Ranked 174th out of 180 countries in the [2015 Reporters Without Borders press freedom index,](https://index.rsf.org/#%21/) Sudan is notorious for hounding its journalist and news media. Arbitrary arrests, seizures of newspaper issues and forced closures are all often used to control news and information.