

CPJ calls on South Sudan to reopen newspaper

The Committee to Protect Journalists this week called on authorities in South Sudan to immediately reopen the *Nation Mirror* newspaper. Security services ordered the independent daily to close last week, according to news reports.



Image by 123RF

The newspaper's editor, Aurelions Simon Cholee, told Reuters that security officials summoned editors and accused them of "engaging in activities that are incompatible with [the newspaper's registration] status," but did not offer further explanation.

Cholee said that authorities ordered the *Nation Mirror* closed and did not specify when it would be able to resume publication. The paper's website appeared to be last updated on September 13, 2016.

President Salva Kiir's government should immediately allow the *Nation Mirror* to resume publication

In its most recent edition, the *Nation Mirror* covered a report by The Sentry, a Washington advocacy group, which alleged that President Salva Kiir and his rival, the former vice president Riek Machar, had amassed enormous wealth and invested it in multimillion dollar properties abroad - while a conflict triggered by a dispute between the pair has left many citizens in South Sudan living in poverty.

"President Salva Kiir's government should immediately allow the *Nation Mirror* to resume publication," said Murithi Mutiga,

CPJ's East Africa representative. "South Sudan needs more, not fewer, independent and critical voices. Preventing professional journalists from doing their work will not advance efforts to build a democratic and stable South Sudan."

Paul Jacob Kumbo, South Sudan's director general of information, told CPJ he did not know why the paper was closed or how long it would remain shuttered. "This was a decision by the security officials and I am still waiting for more information on it," he said.

The *Nation Mirror* was closed before. In February 2015, CPJ documented how National Security Service agents seized a print run and issued a publishing ban after the paper was accused of printing anti-government reports.

The media environment in South Sudan has deteriorated in recent months. CPJ reported in July that the major daily, *Juba Monitor*, was ordered closed and its editor, Alfred Taban, was arrested after he wrote a column critical of both Kiir and Machar.

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