

South Sudan arrests Juba Monitor editor

Authorities in South Sudan should immediately and unconditionally release South Sudanese journalist Alfred Taban, the Committee to Protect Journalists said this week. Taban, editor-in-chief of the independent English-language daily Juba Monitor, has been held without charge since July 16, according to colleagues and media reports.



The day before his arrest, Taban published a column calling on President Salva Kiir and Vice-President Riek Machar to step down from power.

Anna Nimiriano, the paper's editorial director, who was summoned to security headquarters on July 16 alongside Taban, told reporters that members of the National Security Service said that a column Taban published was incitement. Taban has not been charged, Nimiriano told reporters.

"We urge South Sudanese authorities to release Alfred Taban immediately and allow the Juba Monitor to publish freely," said CPJ Africa program coordinator Angela Quintal. "It is unacceptable that Taban is in jail for publishing his view of current events, which is the media's role."

Nimiriano said that officials from the National Security Service called her early on July 16 to say they were looking for both her and Taban. When the two editors arrived at the security service headquarters in Juba, Taban was immediately detained, Nimiriano told the *Sudan Tribune*. Nimiriano said she was neither questioned nor held, but was asked to leave without her colleague, Radio Tamazuj reported.

Authorities also ordered editors at the paper to stop publishing, according to media reports. CPJ was unable to determine the details of the order forcing Juba Monitor to cease publishing. The newspaper announced on its website that it would resume publication tomorrow, but provided no further details.

The day before his arrest, Taban published a column calling on President Salva Kiir and Vice-President Riek Machar to

step down from power for failing to improve the security situation in the capital Juba, reports said. The column came in the wake of unrest. Dozens of people were killed and thousands have been uprooted from their homes in a renewed round of fighting between supporters of Kiir and Machar on July 11.

The power struggle between the president and vice-president set off a civil war in 2013. After a peace deal was signed in December 2015, Machar recently returned to his role.

CPJ has reported on efforts by the government in South Sudan to muzzle the press this year, including the beating and arrest of journalists and the closure of several newspapers.

CPJ is an independent, nonprofit organisation that works to safeguard press freedom worldwide.

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