

For Immediate Release

AMDISS welcomes reopening of Al Watan Newspaper and calls on President Kiir to return proposed security amendment bill to parliament for review

Juba, July 12, 2024—The Association for Media Development In South Sudan (AMDISS) welcomes the reopening of the Al Watan Arabic Daily Newspaper after nearly 8 months of forced closure.

Al Watan Newspaper was shut down on November 24, 2023, after it published a letter of condolence in relation to the Israel-Hamas conflict. Since then, AMDISS has been in touch with concerned authorities and calling for the reopening of the newspaper to continue serving its readers with accurate, reliable, and credible information.

For eight months now, the readers of Al Watan have been in total darkness due to a lack of information following the shutdown of their favorite newspaper. Today, we are relieved after receiving the good news that Al Watan has been given the green light to resume its publication. The reopening of the newspaper at this critical time is a sign that the government acknowledges the importance of the media in South Sudan.

As the transitional period draws to an end and subsequent preparations for anticipated general elections begin, the thirst for credible information increases, and the public heavily depends on the media for information and to share their views on the civic and political matters in the country.

In light of current security sector reform matters, AMDISS takes this opportunity to express its deep concern about the National Security Act 2014 Amendment Bill 2024 recently passed by the Transitional National Legislative Assembly maintaining Sections 54 and 55 which embolden the security agency to arrest people without warrants of arrest.

AMDISS calls on His Excellency President Salva Kiir Mayardit to return the bill to the parliament for further scrutiny and possible removal of the sections in question to encourage public participation in the democratic process and decision-making.

AMDISS is a not-for-profit member-based media organization founded in 2003 by South Sudanese senior journalists to address the news and information void in the country and to improve the capacity of local journalists to respond to the crucial issues of human rights, good governance, freedom of expression and democracy in this great nation.

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