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ARTICLE 19

For immediate release – 9 December 2008

Sudan: Juba Declaration of Concern by the Sudan National Roundtable

The National Roundtable meeting on democratic media legislation in Sudan held under the auspices of the Sudan Consortium ‘*promoting freedom of expression and civil society involvement in the development of democratic media legislation in Sudan*’, which met in Juba, South Sudan on 1st to 2nd December, 2008, have expressed their alarm at the deteriorating state of freedom of expression and media freedom in Sudan in a declaration of concern.

The National Roundtable comprised of Sudanese media stakeholders, including Sudanese journalists and editors, Sudanese and international media development and human rights organisations, was opened by the Government of South Sudan’s Minister of Information and Broadcasting, Gabriel Changson Chang. The roundtable discussed the in-force and draft National media legislation, and highlighted the need for urgent reform of National and Southern Sudan media legislation, ahead of the scheduled 2009 national elections.

The roundtable also discussed issues surrounding self-regulation of the media in Sudan, agreeing to develop a national code of ethics that was in line with international best practice and to be drafted and adopted by the Sudanese media.

The meeting was deeply concerned by the crackdown on journalists, media professionals and media houses throughout the country, and most particularly in Khartoum. The increasing of censorship of newspapers, the harassment, detention and torture of media practitioners has reached alarming levels in Sudan.

The National Roundtable has issued a ‘*Juba Declaration on the Deteriorating State of Freedom of Expression and Media Freedom in Sudan*’ calling on the Government of National Unity, the Government of Southern Sudan and the International Community to ensure these abuses of fundamental human rights and media freedoms cease.

ARTICLE 19 is a member of a consortium ‘*promoting freedom of expression and civil society involvement in developing democratic media legislation in Sudan*’; in partnership with Khartoum Centre for Human Rights and Environmental Development, the Association for Media Development in South Sudan, the Olof Palme International Center, International Media Support and Norwegian People’s Aid.

NOTES TO EDITORS:

- The Juba declaration is available online at: <http://www.article19.org/pdfs/press/sudan-juba-declaration.pdf>

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- The consortium is supported by the European Commission and Norwegian Ministry for Foreign Affairs.
- ARTICLE 19 is an independent human rights organisation that works around the world to protect and promote the right to freedom of expression. It takes its name from Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which guarantees free speech.