

APPEAL OF THE 80

“Military authorities are obliged to respect rights of journalists in the Sahel”

We, journalists, directors of media outlets and press freedom advocacy organisations, established and working in Africa, have received reports of numerous attacks on press freedom since the National Council for the Safeguard of the Homeland (CNSP) seized power in Niger on 26 July 2023.

1. Two days after the coup, unidentified individuals attacked crews from Nigerien radio-TV broadcaster *Anfani* and damaged a camera from private TV channel *Bonferey*. They were covering a press conference by women from the political party of deposed president Mohamed Bazoum.
2. Journalist **Soufiane Maman Hassan**, publisher of the newspaper *Le Témoin de l'Histoire*, reported being stopped in the street by masked men. They threatened to come to his house “very soon,” to take him away. They told him to watch out for what he published in his newspaper and on his social media.
3. On 29 July, a member of the CNSP support committee called publicly for the indefinite suspension of western media. On 3 August, the TV channel *France 24* and radio broadcaster *RFI* were shut down until further notice.
4. While covering demonstrations, international media correspondents have been threatened on multiple occasions by people hostile to their presence. On 19 August three of them were attacked physically, with two of them injured. They had been covering a recruitment ceremony for Volunteers of the Homeland (VDP).
5. On 4 August, journalist and blogger Samira Sabou received an intimidating phone call by a member of the military close to the junta after she had shared on social media, as a news item, a post by deposed president Bazoum. She condemns a “*denial of the right to practice the profession ethically.*”

Amid multiple calls to the CNSP to respect press freedom by the *Maison de la presse* of Niger, by those who stand in solidarity with Nigerien journalists and international correspondents, we reiterate the need, in this moment of crisis, for diverse and reliable coverage of events, based on respect for the ethical standards of the profession. We demand that the junta respect the right to information, and to media pluralism and independence.

Specifically, we call on the CNSP to:

1. Safeguard the safety of local and international journalists:

- End verbal attacks and threats against journalists, including by CNSP members, and to publicly condemn such attacks when they occur.
- Remove all obstacles, of whatever kind, to criminal investigation of threats and attacks on journalists, which must be undertaken in order to identify and prosecute those responsible, whoever they may be.

2. Respect media-protection legal provisions:

- The 2010 ruling on press freedom ends prison sentences for press crimes.
- Since 2022, the cyber-crime law no longer includes imprisonment for crimes committed by electronic media outlets, including slander or defamation by journalists. However, provisions of this law against crimes of treason, terrorism and threat to state security pose the risk of unwarranted repression of journalists. We call on the CNSP to commit publicly to not invoke against journalists, because of their journalistic work, laws on treason, terrorism and state security.

3. Respect citizens' right to be informed:

- Preserve and respect citizens' right to be informed.
- Lift the suspension of media outlets such as *RFI* and *France 24*.
- Maintain internet platforms and social media open, protected, inclusive and accessible.

4. Respect media pluralism, diversity and independence

- The CNSP must treat information as a public good and respect the pluralism and independence of independent media.
- Media access to adequate and stable financing must not encounter obstacles.

Our appeal is also directed to other States in the Sahel controlled by the military. We remind them of their duty to respect the rights of journalists, especially the right of access to information, in the interest of inhabitants of the Sahel.

SIGNATORIES

Organisations

1. **Africtivistes**
2. **Article 19 West Africa**
3. **Association of African Communication Professionals (APAC/Niger)**
4. **Association of Online Media of Chad**
5. **Norbert Zongo Cell for Investigative Journalism in West Africa (CENOZO)**
6. **Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ Africa)**
7. **Federation of African Journalists (FAJ)**
8. **Media Foundation for West Africa (MFWA)**
9. **Journalists in Danger (JED)**
10. **Panos Institute of West Africa (IPAO)**
11. **International Press Institute (IPI)**
12. **Maison de la Presse du Niger**
13. **National Union of Somali Journalists (NUSOJ)**

14. Union of Journalists of West Africa (UJAO)
15. Union of Journalists of the African Free Press (UJPLA)
16. Reporters Without Borders
17. South Africa National Editors Forum (SANEF)

Journalists

Niger:

17. Ibrahim Abdou - Editor of news site infoniamey.com
18. Moussa Aksar - Editor of l'Événement newspaper
19. Soufiane Maman Hassan – Publisher, Le Témoin de l'Histoire
20. Oumarou Kane - Editor in Chief of satirical newspaper Le Hérisson
21. Moussa Moudi – Editor in Chief of ANFANI Group and Secretary General of SYNATIC
22. Moussa Naganou – Editor of private daily Mourya, the Voice of Niger, and president of the Nigerien Association for Defence of the Right to Information and Development (ANDDID-Niger)
23. Samira Sabou – Editor of Mides Niger
24. Amina Niandou, Président of APAC Niger
25. Mahamadou Tahirou - Président of Journalists Forum for Promotion of Good Governance
26. Ibrahim Tikire – President of Journalists Network for Human Rights

Burkina Faso:

27. Aimé Nabaloum – Editor in Chief of newspaper Le Reporter
28. Serge Atiana Oulon- Editor of bimonthly L'ÉVÉNEMENT
29. Ousséni Ilboudo – News Director of l'Observateur Paalga

Benin:

30. Fiacre Viginhou - Director FV Partners Group
31. Raoul Hounsounou – Managing Editor of Kori Actu
32. Cherifou Riwanou – Editor of publication Matin Libre

Burundi:

33. Abbas Mbazumutima – News Director, Iwacu Press Group

Cameroon:

34. Emmanuel Ekouli – Editor of publication La voix du Centre
35. Haman Manan – Editor of daily Le Jour.

Cape Verde:

36. Nélío Santos – Editor of Public Radio of Cape Verde

Djibouti:

37. Mahamoud Djama - Investigative Journalist and production director of La Voix de Djibouti

Gabon:

38. Désiré Ename – Publisher, Echos du Nord

The Gambia:

39. Pap Saine – Co-publisher, The Point

Ghana:

40. Linda Asante-Agyei - Ghana News Agency and Vice-President of the Ghana Journalists Association

41. Araba Koomson – Editor of Joy News

Guinea:

42. Nouhou Baldé – Founder and general manager of news site, guineematin.com

43. Mohamed BANGOURA – Editor of news site, www.mosaiqueguinee.com

Liberia:

44. Sam O. Dean – Editor of newspaper, The Independent

45. Jimmey Fahngon – Editor in Chief of newspaper, The News

Mali:

46. Boubacar Diarra – Editor of newspaper, La Référence du Mali (general newsweekly)

47. Freddy Matar Sylla – Editor of satirical weekly, Mindiss

48. Abdoul Majid Thiam – Editor of newspaper, Le Focus (general news and investigative weekly)

Madagascar:

49. Rakotonirina Gérard – Editor of daily, Basy Vava

50. Fernand Cello, Editor, radio Jupiter

Malawi:

- 51. Lloyd Mbwana - Managing Editor Maravi Post
- 52. Winston Mwale – Editor in Chief, Africa Brief

Mauritius:

- 53. Richard Le Bon- Editor in Chief, Business Magazine

Nigeria:

- 54. Samuel Ogundipe – News director, Peoples Gazette
- 55. Agba Jalingo- Publisher, Cross River Watch

Republic of the Congo:

- 56. Marna Mankene – Editor in Chief, Vox Tv
- 57. Fortunat Ngolali – General Manager, Tsieleka Tv

Democratic Republic of the Congo:

- 58. Tshivis Tshivuadi, President, Journalists in Danger (JED)
- 59. Gilbert KYUNGU, Coordinator, Network of Associated and Community Media of Katanga
- 60. Blaise Zahinda Ntole, Journalist, editor, Lengonyalengi.net
- 61. Philippe MAKOMERA- Programme Director, Radio Moto Butembo-Beni.

Senegal:

- 63. Momar Dieng – Director of online news site, impact.sn
- 64. Ibrahima Lissa Faye – Editor in Chief of news site, Pressafrik
- 65. Faydy Dramé- Journalist, Project Manager, regional outlet, Ouestaf news
- 66. Abdoulaye Thiam- Président UPF Sénégal

Seychelles:

- 67. Vel Moonien- Editor in Chief, Today in Seychelles
- 68. Patsy Canaya- Editor, Seychelles Nation
- 69. Rassin Vannier- CEO Seychelles News Agency.

Sierra Leone:

- 70. Stephen Douglas – Editor of newspaper, NewsWatch
- 71. Lawrence Williams – Editor and news director of newspaper Fritong Post

South Africa:

- 72. Branko Brkic- Editor in Chief Daily Maverick
- 73. Adriaan Basson- Editor News 24

South Sudan:

- 74. Peter Louis- Head of Kanga Africa Media for Production and Investment.
- 75. Oyet Patrick- Head of Union of Journalists in South Sudan

Chad:

- 76. Sony Mekondo – Editor in Chief, FM Liberté
- 77. Olivier Monodji – Editor in chief of weekly, Le Pays
- 78. Djimet Wiche- Editor in Chief, Alwihda Info

Togo:

- 79. Médard AMETEPE – Editor in Chief, newspaper Liberté
- 80. Isidore Kouwonou – Editor in Chief of investigative biweekly, L'Alternative