

Flygtningenævnets baggrundsmateriale

Bilagsnr.:	269
Land:	Nigeria
Kilde:	Committee to Protect Journalists
Titel:	Attacks on the Press in 2012 – Nigeria
Udgivet:	14. februar 2013
Optaget på baggrundsmaterialet:	25. april 2013



Attacks on the Press in 2012 - Nigeria

Publisher [Committee to Protect Journalists](#)

Publication Date 14 February 2013

Cite as Committee to Protect Journalists, *Attacks on the Press in 2012 - Nigeria*, 14 February 2013, available at:
<http://www.refworld.org/docid/512b79cc28.html> [accessed 25 April 2013]

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Key Developments

- Press faces a severe new threat from Boko Haram.
- Journalist murders on the rise; government fails to bring justice.

President Goodluck Jonathan struggled to maintain stability as Boko Haram, an Islamist militant group based in northern Nigeria, carried out a wave of terrorist attacks against churches, government buildings, and, for the first time, news outlets. In April, the group staged coordinated attacks on offices of three newspapers in two cities, and threatened reprisals against 14 news outlets it accused of misrepresenting its activities. The threats forced many journalists to relocate from northern Nigeria. The press corps also faced persistent harassment at the hands of the government: CPJ documented more than 100 assaults, cases of obstruction, and other anti-press actions by security forces and officials. Jonathan also came under fire for his decision to suspend consumer fuel subsidies, which prompted a nationwide strike and street protests in this top oil-producing nation. Protesters surrounded the studios of the national public broadcaster Nigerian Television Authority and the private Africa Independent Television, two prominent outlets seen as pro-government, to demand more coverage of their concerns. The anger spread to social media with the #OccupyNigeria hashtag trending globally on Twitter.

[Refworld note: The sections that follow represent a best effort to transcribe onto a single page information that appears in tabs on the CPJ's own pages, which also include a number of dynamically-generated graphics not readily reproducible here. Refworld researchers are therefore strongly recommended to check against the original report: [Attacks on the Press in 2012](#).]

Anti-press attacks: 143

Though Boko Haram posed the most severe threats against the press, government officials and security forces accounted for more than three-quarters of the anti-press attacks documented by CPJ through December 31, 2012.

Behind the attacks:

113: Government, security forces
23: Boko Haram
2: Niger Delta militants
5: Others (civilians and unidentified)

News outlets bombed: 2

On April 26, a suicide bomber rammed an explosives-packed vehicle into the offices of the daily *ThisDay* in the capital, Abuja, while another attacker detonated bombs at a building housing the offices of *ThisDay*, *The Sun*, and *The Moment* in the northern city of Kaduna. Boko Haram claimed responsibility for the attacks and justified them by accusing the Nigerian press of misrepresenting its activities, according to news reports.

Anti-press bombings over time:

October 19, 1986: Parcel bomb kills Dele Giwa, editor of *NewsWatch*.

December 24, 2010: Explosion kills Augustine Sindyi, a photographer for the state-owned weekly *Standard* newspaper, as he walks home from work.

April 26, 2012: Suicide bomber attacks *ThisDay* offices in Abuja.

April 26, 2012: Bomber attacks offices of *ThisDay*, *The Sun*, and *The Moment* in the northern city of Kaduna.

Outlets threatened: 14

In a chilling video released shortly after the April 26 attacks, Boko Haram accused local and international news outlets of "offenses detrimental to Islam," in their reporting and vowed to "take revenge."

Targeted by Boko Haram:

11: Local outlets (*ThisDay*; *Punch*; *Daily Sun*; *Vanguard*; *Guardian*; *Nation*; *Tribune*; *National Accord*; *Leadership*; *Daily Trust*; *Peoples Daily*)

3: International outlets (Radio France Internationale; *SaharaReporters*; VOA Hausa-language service)

Murders with impunity: 5

Illustrating the rise of deadly anti-press violence in Nigeria, unidentified gunmen shot reporter Enenche Akogwu of independent Channels TV as he reported on the aftermath of terrorist attacks in the northern city of Kano. No suspects were arrested in the case, the latest in a string of five unsolved journalist murders since 2009, CPJ research shows.

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