

# Reporters Without Borders

<http://www.rsf.org/niger-al-jazeera-crew-released-after-18-06-2013,44816.html>

---

Africa - Niger

Administrative misunderstanding

## Al-Jazeera crew released after being held for three days

18 June 2013

---

Reporters Without Borders is relieved to learn that three *Al-Jazeera* journalists and their driver were released yesterday, two days after being arrested near the eastern city of Zinder for "travelling without accreditation".

"We were worried about these four *Al-Jazeera* employees and we are pleased that a favourable outcome was found," Reporters Without Borders said. "It is shocking that an ordinary administrative problem could result in nearly three days of detention for these journalists, the seizure of their equipment and the temporary confiscation of their mobile phones."

"Despite persistent problems, Niger has displayed a great deal of respect for journalists and freedom of information in recent years. We urge the authorities to continue policies that help the media, despite legitimate concerns about security issues."

Justice minister and government spokesman Marou Amadou said the journalists had visas but had not requested official accreditation from the authorities. He insisted that they were not arrested – just detained for the time it took to inspect their equipment.

Communication minister Salifou Labo Bouché took the same position when interviewed by *Dounia TV*, a local station. See the videos:

The three *Al-Jazeera* journalists were **Yvonne Ndege**, a British reporter normally based in the Nigerian city of Abuja, Congolese cameraman **Romuald Luyindula** and producer **Mohamed Abubakar**.

They and driver **Rabiu Abdullah** were arrested by gendarmes at around 9 a.m. on 15 June at a checkpoint at the exit to the town of Goure and were taken to Zinder.

In a statement yesterday, Qatar-based *Al-Jazeera* said the journalists had been accused of "espionage". The station added that they had been doing a report on a wave of refugees from neighbouring Nigeria. The *Al-Jazeera* crew returned to Nigeria on 18 June.

Niger is ranked 43rd out of 179 countries in the 2013 Reporters Without Borders [press freedom index](#).

---

You can download those documents on our website :

- , (JPEG - 40.4 kb)
-