

Reporters Without Borders

<http://www.rsf.org/algeria-two-journalists-assaulted-as-21-03-2012,42174.html>

Middle East/North Africa - Algeria

Police brutality

Two journalists assaulted as police violence becomes a habit

21 March 2012

Reporters Without Borders strongly deplores assaults within days of each other on the photographer **Mohamed Kadri** and the journalist **Hanane Driss**. In both cases, the police were responsible.

"Such acts of violence are unacceptable. The authorities must undertake independent investigations and punish those responsible," the press freedom organization said, noting with concern repeated and frequent instances of attacks on photographers and cameramen.

Kadri, a news photographer for the daily *Waqt Al-Djazair*, was beaten up by the police three days ago outside the People's National Assembly in central Algiers, near the As-Safir Hotel in rue Hussein Aasaba, during an unauthorized demonstration by ex-soldiers demanding an increase in their pensions. The protest quickly degenerated into a clash with the police.

About 11 a.m. as he was taking pictures of the security forces assaulting and arresting demonstrators, three officers rushed at him and hit him several times on the back and chest.

They verbally abused him and threatened to arrest him if he continued taking photographs. He was able to remove the memory card from his camera before police confiscated his equipment. They found no incriminating shots and his camera was returned to him some 15 minutes later.

[Several photographs](#) taken at the scene confirm the violence of the assault.

Kadri lodged a complaint yesterday alleging assault and battery and the journalists' union has officially associated itself with the case, calling on the authorities to take "serious and effective steps" to end police brutality.

According to information gathered by Reporters Without Borders, the police were said to have apologized to the photographer and assured him that those responsible would be punished.

The next day, Driss, a reporter for the French-language daily [Tribune des lecteurs](#), was also beaten up by a police officer while she was covering the pensions protest by former soldiers outside the People's National Assembly building.

Since the appointment of a new head of the National Police, Major-General Abdelghani Hamel, official procedures are meant to be more respectful towards those who work for the media. However, besides lip service and a slight relaxation by the authorities, intimidation and assaults continue in Algeria.

According to witness accounts gathered by Reporters Without Borders, photographers are regularly interrogated by security forces who continually ask to see their assignment orders.

Reporters Without Borders condemns the growing instances of violent assaults by security forces

against journalists, particularly photographers and cameramen who are easily identifiable at demonstrations.

Ramzi Boudina, a news photographer, told the organization he had been assaulted and interrogated by civil and paramilitary police. Each time, they use the same method: officers surround small groups of photographers and journalists, cutting them off from others attending the demonstration in order to rough them up out of sight of video cameras.

He and several colleagues were arrested by police during the riots in Algeria in February last year.

Arabic version:

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- [Two journalists assaulted as police violence becomes a habit - arabic version, \(PDF - 290.4 kb\)](#)
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