

Reporters Without Borders

<http://www.rsf.org/libye-tv-journalist-shot-dead-in-10-08-2013,45041.html>

Middle East/North Africa - Libya

Dangerous environment

TV journalist shot dead in Benghazi

10 August 2013

Reporters Without Borders condemns in the strongest terms the murder in Benghazi yesterday of **Azzedine Kousad**, a presenter on the Libyan satellite TV station *al-Hurra*. Three gunmen opened fire on his car, fatally wounding him with six shots, before fleeing.

The 25-year-old journalist, a qualified doctor and respected sheikh in the east of the country, was reported to have received a telephone call a few days earlier threatening his life if he delivered a speech celebrating Eid al-Fitr, the festival marking the end of Ramadan. He was shot dead a day after he gave the speech. Kousad had worked for the radio station *al-Manara FM* before joining *al-Hurra* television.

Despite the fact that he had several different professions, Reporters Without Borders believes that his role as a journalist could have been a reason for his murder and calls upon the Libyan authorities to not to put aside the professional lead and undertake an investigation as quickly as possible to find the perpetrators and the motive for this criminal act.

The press freedom organization is deeply concerned by the increasingly dangerous and unstable environment in which those in the media are forced to work and the threats and other abuses they face.

Kousad is the first Libyan journalist to have been murdered since the end of Muammar Gaddafi's dictatorial rule, which was characterized among other things by systematic censorship and gagging of the media typical of authoritarian governments.

This heinous crime marks a serious and regrettable turning point in Libya's difficult transition to democracy and illustrates the blatant lack of security in the country, which the transitional government must rectify.

Reporters Without Borders stresses that a state without free, independent, transparent and pluralistic media able to function in a secure climate is a state devoid of checks and balances, which presents a serious danger to the proper functioning of a democratic society.

The Libyan authorities must comply with their national and international obligations regarding freedom of expression and information. They must quickly enact legislative and judicial measures allowing the establishment of a media system that guarantees these basic freedoms and protects the rights of journalists, as well as preventing impunity from prevailing in the new Libya.
