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<http://www.rsf.org/libya-news-providers-again-at-heart-of-21-05-2014,46319.html>

Middle East/North Africa - Libya

Upsurge in violence

News providers again at heart of Libyan security chaos

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With Libya in the throes of a major political and security crisis that began on 16 May, Reporters Without Borders voices deep concern about the fate of the country's journalists, who are yet again the targets of violence.

The radio station of the Islamist group Ansar Al-Shariaa, located in the eastern Benghazi district of Al-Lithi, was the target of bomb just as Retired Maj. Gen. Khalifa Haftar launched his "Operation Dignity" in Benghazi on 16 May. The explosion, which was not claimed, seems to have caused [no injuries](#).

According to one of its spokesmen in Benghazi, "Operation Dignity" – which is supported by several army units in eastern Libya and part of the air force - aims to "purge the city of terrorist groups."

Ayub Gweider, a Benghazi-based cameraman with the privately-owned satellite TV station *Libya International*, was kidnapped by an armed group at around 2 p.m. on 16 May as he was covering clashes resulting from "Operation Dignity" in the southern Benghazi district of Al-Hawari.

His abductors called him a traitor, confiscated his mobile phone and then released him. Gweider has received death threats in the past.

Abdallah Doma, *Agence France-Presse's* photographer in Benghazi, was the target of a shooting attack as he returned to the city from Tripoli at around 6 a.m. on 17 May. A total of 32 shots were fired next to his car as he was getting out of it in order to enter his home. By chance, he was not hit.

According to official sources, more than 70 people have been killed in Benghazi as a result of Gen. Haftar's military offensive, which the central government has condemned as [illegitimate](#).

Two days after the start of the operation in Benghazi, the Tripoli headquarters of the General National Congress (GNC - the transitional parliament) was the target of an attack on 18 May by apparent members of the Zintan brigades, who are well-known for being opposed to Islamist groups.

While the link between the "Operation Dignity" in Benghazi and the attack on the GNC is still unclear, around 60 people were reportedly injured and two were killed in the course of the [clashes](#) in Tripoli on 20 May.

Two rocket-propelled grenades exploded a few dozen metres from *Libya International's* headquarters in Tripoli at around 10 p.m. on 18 May, shortly after the station broadcast a live programme in which Abdallah Naker, a former head of the Tripoli Revolutionary Council, a powerful Zintan brigade known for being firmly opposed to the Islamists, commented on recent events.

A *Libya International* employee said a woman called the station during the broadcast and said: "If you don't stop the programme at once, you will see what will happen!" No one was injured by the attack.

Reporters Without Borders urges all civilian, military and political actors taking part in the clashes to immediately end all attacks on civilians, including all journalists operating in Libya. News providers have a fundamental role to play in the new Libya, especially in the overall process of building a viable and democratic state for the long term. Violence against media personnel must be stopped without delay.

Reporters Without Borders also reminds Libya that it is party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, article 19 of which enshrines freedom of expression and information.

In its General Comment No. 34 (on article 19), the UN Human Rights Committee said that under no circumstance "*can an attack on a person, because of the exercise of his or her freedom of opinion or expression, including such forms of attack as arbitrary arrest, torture, threats to life and killing, be compatible with article 19.*"

The committee also said: "*All such attacks should be vigorously investigated in a timely fashion, and the perpetrators prosecuted, and the victims, or, in the case of killings, their representatives, be in receipt of appropriate forms of redress.*"

RWB points out that Libya is required by national and international obligations to respect freedom of information. These obligations are enshrined in the 2011 Constituent Covenant and in various international treaties to which Libya is party.
