

Reporters Without Borders

<http://www.rsf.org/nigeria-newspaper-editor-held-illegally-19-02-2013,44097.html>

Africa - Nigeria

Finally freed

Newspaper editor released after eight days

25 February 2013

Reporters Without Borders is relieved to learn of *Al-Mizan* editor **Musa Muhammad Awwal's** release on 22 February and urges the authorities to stop harassing him. His family was never told why or where he was being held after the State Security Service arrested him on 14 February.

19.02.2013 - Newspaper editor held illegally again

Reporters Without Borders firmly condemns *Al-Mizan* editor **Musa Muhammad Awwal's** illegal detention since his arrest without a warrant by heavily-armed security operatives five days ago. Neither his family nor his colleagues know why he was arrested or where he is being held.

This is the second time Awwal has been detained illegally in the past two months. He was held without being charged for week in December after his newspaper accused the authorities of carrying out illegal arrests in their drive to combat Islamist terrorism.

"Without worrying about legal considerations, the Nigerian military and security authorities are trying to intimidate the press into regarding their human rights violations as off-limits," Reporters Without Borders said.

"This cannot go on. We call for Awwal's immediate release and we urge the authorities to give public undertakings that journalists will not be arrested when they raise questions about the activities of the security services."

Witnesses say Awwal was arrested at his home in the north-central city of Kaduna at 3 a.m. on 14 February by members of the State Security Service (SSS) and Joint Task Force (JTF), who seized his computer and mobile phone.

The security operatives said they were acting on orders from the capital, Abuja, where the security services have their headquarters.

Awwal and an *Al-Mizan* reporter were detained by the SSS for eight days in December shortly after the newspaper ran a story accusing the JTF, a special unit created to combat terrorism by the [Islamist group Boko Haram](#), of detaining 84 people illegally.

[Nigeria is ranked 115th out of 179 countries in the 2013 Reporters Without Borders press freedom index.](#)

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