

Reporters Without Borders

<http://www.rsf.org/cote-d-ivoire-armed-men-ransack-set-fire-to-21-08-2012,43255.html>

Africa - Côte d'Ivoire

Ransacked and torched

Armed men ransack, set fire to opposition newspaper company

21 August 2012

Reporters Without Borders firmly condemns last weekend's attack on the headquarters of Cyclone, a company that publishes the opposition dailies *Le Temps* and *Lg Infos* and the cultural review *Prestige Magazine*. Several armed men broke in and started a fire that caused significant damage.

"Even if the views voiced in *Le Temps* and *Lg Infos* are partisan and often virulent, as they are in most of the Ivorian print media, there are no grounds for an act of such vandalism against a news organization," Reporters Without Borders said. "We hope the evidence gathered by forensic investigators at the scene allows the authorities to identify those responsible."

The attack on Cyclone, located in Riviera Bonoumin, in the Abidjan district of Cocody, was carried out by six men armed with steel bars, clubs, an automatic pistol and a can of inflammable liquid, who scaled its perimeter fence at around midnight on 18 August. After tying up the caretaker, they broke into the offices, removed computers and other equipment, and then set fire to the building, which was badly damaged.

The police examined the scene of the crime the next morning and opened a formal investigation. Cyclone has filed a complaint against persons unknown.

The attack came just when *Le Temps* was suspended for 20 issues – later reduced to ten – by the National Press Council (CNP), which regulates the print media. The newspaper was suspended for a "grave violation" of the press law.

In a separate development last weekend, **Saint Claver Oula**, the editor in chief of the opposition daily *Le Nouveau Courrier d'Abidjan*, and assistant editor **Emmanuel Akani** received SMS messages and phone calls containing death threats.

All of the so-called "blue" newspapers that support former President Laurent Gbagbo – *Notre Voie*, *Lg Infos*, *Le Quotidien d'Abidjan*, *Le Nouveau Courrier d'Abidjan*, *Aujourd'hui*, *Le Temps* and *Bol'Kotch* – have announced that they will suspend publication on 24 and 25 August as a "protest" and "alert" about these acts of intimidation.

A Reporters Without Borders delegation meanwhile had a working meeting on 16 August with the CNP and its president, Raphael Lakpé, to discuss the way it works and enquire about the reasons for the recent sanctions against opposition newspapers.

Reporters Without Borders points out that Cyclone CEO **Ousmane Sy Savané** has been detained since 27 March, when he was arrested by the Directorate for Territorial Surveillance (DST), a government intelligence agency. He is currently being held in Abidjan's main prison on a charge of endangering state security. [More information](#).
