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Africa - Nigeria

Double bombing

Government urged to protect media after two carbomb attacks on newspapers

27 April 2012

Reporters Without Borders is dismayed by yesterday's bombings targeting newspapers in the capital, Abuja, and the northern city of Kaduna and calls on the Nigerian authorities to reinforce security for news media, journalists and other media personnel.

Reacting to the two bombings, which killed at least nine people, President Goodluck Jonathan issued a statement stressing the government's commitment "to uphold citizens' constitutional rights to freedom of expression and press freedom in particular."

"While hailing President Jonathan's pledge to defend press freedom, we urge him to take full stock of the terrible dangers to which journalists are exposed," Reporters Without Borders said. "After yesterday's tragedies and the cold-blooded killings of at least two media personnel in recent months, there is no longer any doubt that the media and journalists are among the targets of those who carry out attacks and bombings in Nigeria." "In consultation with media owners and executives, the authorities should adopt concrete measures to ensure that journalists are protected and to reinforce security around news media buildings and offices."

In Abuja, a suicide bomber drove a jeep carrying explosives into the building housing the printing press of *ThisDay*, one of the country's most influential, privately-owned newspapers, killing himself and four other people and wounding dozens of others. *ThisDay* nonetheless said it had reinforced security around its premises in response to the violence that has killed at least 400 people since the start of the year.

At the same time, a car laden with explosives was stopped as it approached a building in Kaduna that houses the regional offices of *ThisDay*, *The Moment* and *The Daily Sun*. One of the two men in the car got out and detonated a bomb that killed at least four people and wounded around 20 others.

While the bombings were not immediately claimed, they bore the hallmarks of the Islamist group Boko Haram, which accused the national media a few weeks ago of reporting falsehoods about it. One of the two men involved in the Kaduna bombing, who was detained by witnesses and handed over to the police, reportedly identified himself as a Boko Haram member.

Photo : The premises of *This Day* in Abuja, after bomb attack (Pius Utomi Ekpei / AFP)

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