

Reporters Without Borders

<http://www.rsf.org/cote-d-ivoire-action-not-words-needed-in-missing-15-04-2015,47777.html>

Africa - Côte d'Ivoire

11-year mystery

Action not words needed in missing journalist investigation

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Reporters Without Borders is disturbed by the continuing lack of progress in the investigation into French reporter Guy-André Kieffer's abduction 11 years ago in Abidjan and urges the French and Ivorian authorities to keep their promises to shed light on the case.

[Tomorrow is the 11th anniversary of the disappearance of Kieffer](#), who also had Canadian nationality. In all these years, Reporters Without Borders has never stopped pressing the authorities to find out what happened to him.

When French President François Hollande visited Côte d'Ivoire in July 2014, Reporters Without Borders asked him to request the creation of a special commission of enquiry or the formation a joint judicial investigative unit by the French and Ivorian judges in charge of the case.

In a written reply on 20 October, the Elysée Palace said solving the case continued to be a "priority for France" and promised to monitor "the progress of this investigation being conducted by the judicial authorities of the two countries concerned, France and Côte d'Ivoire."

When a Reporters Without Borders team visited Côte d'Ivoire in May 2014, President Alassane Ouattara undertook to do everything possible "to ensure that light is shed on this case and to find out what happened." He also asked the justice ministry and the public prosecutor to keep him abreast of any developments in the investigation.

Since then, the investigating judge who replaced Patrick Ramaël as judge in charge of the French investigation complied with requests for continued legal actions made by the registered civil parties (the Kieffer family and Reporters Without Borders). He submitted letters rogatory to the Ivorian authorities in November 2014. They have yet to respond.

"We welcome this formal request for action by the Ivorian authorities, which means that the case remains open, but we are concerned by their silence," said Cléa Kahn-Sriber, the head of the Reporters Without Borders Africa desk. "This case must not be forgotten and must not go unpunished. Those who masterminded this disappearance must be identified and brought to trial."

Investigation with many pitfalls

When Kieffer went missing in Abidjan on 16 April 2004, he was investigating questionable practices in the production and sale of cocoa, of which Côte d'Ivoire is the world's leading producer. Twelve days later, his family filed a complaint in France accusing unidentified persons of kidnapping him. Reporters Without Borders registered as civil party in this case a few days later.

The investigation launched by French judge Patrick Ramaël was hampered by the fraught relations between France and the Ivorian government, then headed by President Laurent Gbagbo, by the difficulty of investigating in Côte d'Ivoire, and by the pact of silence observed by those suspected of involvement, who were all close to Gbagbo.

After Gbagbo's fall, Reporters Without Borders hoped that the investigation would make some progress.

Eleven years of international campaigning

During the eleven years since his abduction, Kieffer's family and international supporters have never ceased to draw attention to his disappearance and the climate of impunity blocking the investigation.

In April 2014, on the tenth anniversary of his disappearance, Reporters Without Borders and his local support committee organized a poster campaign in Abidjan to press the authorities to keep their promise to ensure that "no one will be protected."

[Kieffer's wife, Osange Silou-Kieffer, and Reporters Without Borders were received by President Ouattara in Abidjan in 2012.](#)

A news conference with Kieffer's family and representatives of his support committees was organized at Reporters Without Borders headquarters in Paris on 15 April 2010, while a poster campaign was under way for the first time on the streets of Abidjan.

Other events organized by Reporters Without Borders in Paris have included painting stencil portraits of Kieffer on street walls in 2007 and a "What did Guy-André Kieffer know?" protest at Côte d'Ivoire's stand at the Chocolate Exhibition in 2006.

Reporters Without Borders, the Truth for Guy-André Kieffer Association and the Guy-André Kieffer Breton Support Committee dumped liquid cocoa and fake dollars outside the Côte d'Ivoire embassy in Paris in 2005

Côte d'Ivoire is ranked 86th out of 180 countries in the [2015 Reporters Without Borders press freedom index.](#)
