

## Nigerian military threatens journalist for not revealing sources

NEW YORK, USA - The Nigerian military should cease threatening freelance journalist Ahmad Salkida with prosecution for not acting as an informer, the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) said last week. The military has said the journalist could face terrorism charges if he does not provide it with information he gained in the course of his reporting on the militant group Boko Haram.



In a statement carried by Nigerian news websites on 14 August 2016, military spokesman Colonel Sani Kukasheka Usman declared Salkida and two civil-society workers, Aisha Wakil and Ahmed Bolori, were "wanted for interrogation" regarding the location of over two hundred school girls Boko Haram abducted in April 2014.

In the statement, Usman invoked the 2011 Terrorism Prevention Act, under which, "Nigerians could be punished for failure to disclose information about terrorists or terrorists' activities". He said, "We are also liaising with other security agencies for their arrest if they [fail] to turn up." Salkida has lived in the United Arab Emirates since August 2013.

"Journalists must sometimes rely on the trust of dangerous people. Coercing them to become informants risks putting all journalists under suspicion and in danger," CPJ West Africa representative, Peter Nkanga, said. "Nigeria's military should not threaten Ahmad Salkida and instead ensure that he is free to work."

On 16 August, Nigerian director of Defence Information, Brigadier General Rabe Abubakar said that the military was only inviting Salkida and the two civil-society workers for questioning. "We are only inviting them to shed light on pending issues that will support current military efforts, and not to arrest them," Abubakar said, in remarks quoted by the broadcaster Channels Television.

Salkida told CPJ that he believed the military was trying to punish him for his persistent reporting on Boko Haram since 2006. He said that he had returned to Nigeria three times since May 2015 at the invitation of various federal government agencies.

Salkida told CPJ that he feared for his life, and that anonymous callers had threatened him about his articles and posts to social media websites and his contacts with Boko Haram. Salkida has received similar threats in the past, CPJ reported at the time.

Salkida has been covering Boko Haram since mid-2006. Police detained him in 2009 over his reports on the activities of the militant group when he was a reporter for the independent *Daily Trust* newspaper. He fled his home in the northern Nigerian city of Maiduguri in July 2011 after callers identifying themselves as Boko Haram members threatened him with death, following the publication of his profile of Boko Haram's first suicide bomber.

Boko Haram has claimed responsibility for attacks that have killed thousands of people, including Nigerian television journalist Zakariya Isa, who the organisation claimed was a spy for the government.

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