



International Federation of Journalists - Africa Office

**His Excellency Mr. Mamadou Tandja
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November 23, 2007

President Tandja Mamadou,

Dear Mr. President,

On behalf of the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ), the global organisation representing over 600,000 journalists in 120 countries worldwide, I am urging you to take strong action for the release of two journalists accused of criminal offences following their coverage of the Tuareg rebellion in Niger.

We are very worried about the continued detention of our colleagues and the serious charges they face stemming from their professional work.

Moussa Kaka, Niger correspondent of Radio France International (RFI) and director of privately-owned Radio Saraouniya, was arrested on 20 September by police officers and has been held since then.

Kaka was charged with “involvement in a plot against the state's authority” for suspected links with the Tuareg-led rebels Niger Movement for Justice (MNJ). The maximum sentence he faces if found guilty is life imprisonment.

The authorities have been tapping Kaka’s telephone conversations with MNJ members. RFI management said in a statement that his contact is in line with “the normal work of a journalist doing his task in the rigorous respect of the rules of the profession.”

On November 16, a magistrate decided not to accept as evidence the tapes of Kaka’s conversations with the rebels as they were not obtained legally. This was the only evidence the prosecution had in its case. Without any further evidence against him there is no longer any reason for Moussa to be charged or detained.



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Journalist Ibrahim Manzo Diallo, editor of the private newspaper *Air-Info* has also been detained since his arrest by police on October 9 and was charged with “criminal association” on accusations that he has links with the MNJ.

The IFJ believes that these charges are also baseless and should be dropped immediately. We are supporting the Nigerien journalists who have been expressing their solidarity with their imprisoned colleagues.

We ask you to take immediate action to secure the release of Kaka and Diallo and to ensure that all the charges against them are dropped. We also call on you to ensure that journalists reporting on all issues related to the rebellion can work in total safety and independence and report from every part of the country.

We look forward to your response on this matter.

Yours sincerely,

Gabriel Baglo,

Director of IFJ Africa Office.

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