

## Press harassment hinders Niger's development, watchdogs warn

Press freedom groups agree that an increase in arrests, intimidation and harassment of journalists in Niger is impeding development in one of the poorest countries in the world.

At least 14 journalists were arrested in Niger in 2007. Four of them are still in prison awaiting sentencing. Among them are the Niger correspondent of Radio France Internationale, the head of a Nigerien newspaper, and two French journalists who visited the country in December to report for a French television channel.

According to the Nigerien government, the four current detentions are related to reporting of an ongoing rebellion in the northern part of the country, which the government has banned all national and international journalists from covering.

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