

Re-arrest of editor Jones Abiri in Nigeria

A federal court today charged Jones Abiri, the publisher and editor-in-chief of the *Weekly Source*, under Nigeria's cybercrimes act, anti-sabotage act, and terrorism prevention act for crimes allegedly carried out in 2016, and ordered the journalist to be detained, according to his lawyer, Samuel Ogala, and charge documents seen by CPJ.



Nigerian journalist Jones Abiri, left, and Alagoa Morris, pictured in Abuja after Abiri's release from detention in 2018. A court on May 22, 2019 charged Abiri on three counts and ordered him detained. Credit: CPJ/Alagoa Morris.

The charges match accusations made against Abiri in 2016, when the Department of State Security held him without charge and without access to his family or a lawyer, from July 2016 to August 2018, according to [CPJ research](#).

"The re-arrest of Jones Abiri showcases once again the brazen willingness of the Nigerian government to intimidate and harass the press," said CPJ Africa program coordinator Angela Quintal, in Durban, South Africa. "Nigerian authorities should immediately release Jones Abiri and permit him to continue his work without fear of retaliation."

Abiri pleaded not guilty to terrorism, economic sabotage, and fraud, according to the charge documents and the [Premium Times](#). Abiri was earlier this week summoned to Abuja from Bayelsa state, where he lives, by the Department of State Security, his lawyer, Ogala, and local activist Alagoa Morris, who have both spoken with the journalist, told CPJ. Ogala said he is preparing a bail application. Abiri was previously summoned for questioning by Department of State Security in March and April, according to [CPJ research](#) and Morris.

response on a messaging app today, Afunanya said he was in a meeting and would "hopefully" respond. Calls and messages to Garba Shehu, a spokesperson for President Muhammadu Buhari, went unanswered. Lai Mohammed, Nigeria's minister of information, asked for communication via text message, but CPJ's subsequent messages to Mohammed went unanswered.

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