

Beat: Travel

Nigeria`s military releases 2 Al Jazeera journalists held for nearly 2 weeks

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USPA News - Two Al Jazeera journalists who were detained by Nigeria`s military last month while reporting on military operations against the Islamist extremist group Boko Haram have been released, the network confirmed on Sunday, just days after the channel commenced legal action. Ahmed Idris and producer Ali Mustafa were detained at their hotel in Maiduguri in northeastern Nigeria on March 24 after they returned from covering a story on military operations against Boko Haram.

Al Jazeera said the story, which was part of the channel`s election coverage, had been done with "the full cooperation" of the military. But the journalists had their equipment confiscated when they returned and both were kept restrained in their hotel for nearly two weeks, with a military statement accusing the men of operating "without protection, accreditation or due clearance." The network, however, claimed that both journalists had been accredited by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) to report from anywhere in Nigeria. An emailed statement from Al Jazeera on Sunday said both Idris and Mustafa had been allowed to leave their hotel, after which they completed their journey back to Al Jazeera`s bureau in Abuja. The news came just three days after Al Jazeera commenced legal action at Abuja`s high court to declare the continued detention as "illegal and unconstitutional." "We`re pleased for Ahmed and Ali that their ordeal is over. They`re looking forward to spending some time with their families and loved ones," Salah Negm, director of news for Al Jazeera English, said in Sunday`s statement. "I know that both of them want to thank everyone that helped secure their release, including NGOs, politicians and fellow journalists."

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Editorial program service of General News Agency:

United Press Association, Inc.
3651 Lindell Road, Suite D168
Las Vegas, NV 89103, USA
(702) 943.0321 Local
(702) 943.0233 Facsimile
info@unitedpressassociation.org
info@gna24.com
www.gna24.com