

# Reporters Without Borders

<http://www.rsf.org/russia-norwegian-tv-journalists-07-11-2013,45433.html>

Europe/Ex-USSR - Russia

Surreal persecution

## Norwegian TV journalists repeatedly harassed in Sochi region

7 November 2013

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Reporters Without Borders is shocked by the way [the Russian police repeatedly harassed two Norwegian TV journalists](#), reporter **Oystein Bogen** and cameraman **Aage Aune**, while they were visiting the Sochi region from 31 October to 2 November to cover problems related to preparations for next February's Winter Olympics.

Bogen and Aune, who work for Norway's privately-owned TV2 channel, say the police stopped them six times in the space of three days, interrogated them in detail about their work and their local contacts and, at one point, even took them into custody for several hours.

"Arbitrary arrest, violation of the confidentiality of journalists' sources, seizure of journalistic material – this string of breaches of freedom of information suggests a strategy of all-out harassment," Reporters Without Borders said.

"The ordeal that these two journalists underwent bodes ill for the [drastic security measures that will be applied in the run-up to the games](#). Combatting terrorist threats is obviously necessary but it does not justify such excesses. We hope the Norwegian authorities will quickly obtain the explanations they have requested from their Russian counterparts."

"The international media must not be intimidated by this episode. There is nothing criminal about covering the preparations for the Winter Olympics or meeting local journalists and activists. We reiterate our appeal to foreign reporters to take advantage of the spotlight on Sochi to look beyond the Olympic facade and to meet local civil society representatives.

"At the same time, we urge visiting journalists to take the necessary precautions to protect the confidentiality of their sources and to avoid [surveillance of their communications](#). To this end, we have made [a 'digital survival kit'](#) available to them."

Bogen and Aune had proper accreditation and used a rental car to travel around Krasnodar, the region where Sochi is located, and to visit the neighbouring autonomous Republic of Adygea.

They were first questioned about their plans and the people they were interviewing on 31 October. They were questioned again, twice, on 1 November in Maykop, Adygea's capital. At the end of the second session on 1 November, other policeman suddenly arrived, accused Bogen of taking drugs and made him accompany them to a nearby clinic for a drug test. This episode ended after an hour and a half, when a person identifying himself as the local police chief released the two journalists and apologised for the "mistake."

The next day, they were stopped again and interrogated for an hour between Maykop and Sochi. And they were questioned again in the early evening near Tuapse, a town in the Krasnodar region. This time they were taken into custody without any explanation and were put in a cell with other suspects.

Their equipment was temporarily confiscated and their repeated requests to be allowed to call their embassy were ignored. They were freed at around 10 p.m. but, as they reached the outskirts of Sochi, they were stopped again.

After searches and a security check, they were taken to the nearest police checkpoint, where an officer questioned Bogen about his private life and his work, going so far as to ask him for a list of the people he planned to meet in Sochi and the places where he planned to film. After being forced to sign a statement without being given a copy, they were finally allowed to

continue their way at around 1 a.m.

The Russian foreign ministry gave the two journalists a formal apology yesterday for the "series of unwarranted actions" and said the police responsible would be punished for "abusing their authority."

Reporters Without Borders published [an in-depth report in early October about the state of freedom of information in the Sochi region](#).

*(Photos: TV2 / Oystein Bogen, Aage Aune)*

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- , (JPEG - 201.7 kb)
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