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FCCJ Freedom of the Press Committee Statement

The Foreign Correspondents' Club of Japan and its Freedom of the Press Committee condemn new charges against Rappler founder and CEO Maria Ressa in the Philippines and call for them to be dropped.

Ressa has already been convicted in a separate “cyber libel” charge in June and faces a possible six-year prison sentence unless that case is rejected on appeal. The latest charge followed a complaint by businessman Wilfredo Keng that she had tweeted a screenshot of a 2002 newspaper article about him.

The FCCJ supports a statement [rsf.org]

<https://rsf.org/en/news/holdtheline-coalition-calls-new-cyber-libel-charge-be-dropped-and-pressure-ceased-against-maria>

issued by Reporters Without Borders expressing alarm at the baseless charges against Ressa, which followed her critical reporting of the government of President Rodrigo Duterte and its war on drugs.

She faces at least eight open legal cases against her, and a possible prison sentence of up to seven years on the latest charge alone.

In a statement [[doughtystreet.co.uk](https://www.doughtystreet.co.uk)]

<https://www.doughtystreet.co.uk/news/maria-ressas-international-legal-team-call-new-criminal-cyberlibel-charges-against-her-be>

issued by her legal team, Ressa said “The legal acrobatics to harass and intimidate me continue, but these moves only convince me that we have to fight back and demand justice.”

As RSF notes, the latest move against Ressa takes place in the context of an overall deteriorating media freedom climate [rsf.org]

<https://rsf.org/en/philippines>

on 14 November.

Ressa spoke to the FCCJ in June in defence of democracy and press freedom in the Philippines. You can watch a recording of that address here.

[[youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com)]

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KRS9U4H-qug>

The FCCJ believes the charges against Ressa represent an assault on press freedom and an attempt to stifle any reporting that is critical of Duterte's administration.

We strongly believe she should be allowed to go free and to continue her important journalistic work.

Foreign Correspondents' Club Of Japan

Isabel Reynolds, President

Simon Denyer and Justin McCurry, Co-Chairs of the FCCJ Freedom of Press Committee