

公益社団法人 日本外国特派員協会

The Foreign Correspondents' Club of Japan

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FCCJ Statement on Arrest of Ronson Chan

The Foreign Correspondents' Club of Japan expresses its concern about reports that Ronson Chan, chairman of the Hong Kong Journalists Association (HKJA), has been charged with obstructing police. Reports say that Mr Chan was detained after being harassed by two plainclothes officers while he was reporting in Hong Kong.

While the FCCJ is not in a position to judge the exact circumstances of this incident, it is always concerning when police arrest journalists doing their jobs. We note that this incident fits in with a pattern of intimidation, harassment and imprisonment of media workers in Hong Kong since the enactment of the National Security Law.

In June 2021, Hong Kong's chief executive, Carrie Lam, used the law to close Apple Daily and to prosecute at least 12 journalists and media workers, including its founder Jimmy Lai. In December 2021, independent media Stand News announced it has shut down following the arrest of six current and former members of its team.

Press freedoms in the territory have plummeted to 148th in the world, according to Reporters Without Borders. The FCCJ's sister organization, The Foreign Correspondents' Club of Hong Kong, was forced to suspend its annual Human Rights Press Awards this year due to concerns it might violate the security law.

Mr. Chan was commended for this work this year by the FCCJ's Freedom of the Press Committee. Accepting a prize on behalf of journalists in Hong Kong, he quoted 2021 Nobel Peace Prize winner Maria Ressa: "Without facts, you can't have the truth. Without truth, you can't have trust. Without trust, we have no shared reality, no democracy, and it becomes impossible to deal with the existential problems of our times: climate, coronavirus, now, the battle for truth."

We urge the Hong Kong authorities to reflect on those words and to allow Mr. Chan and his colleagues to do their jobs without fear of prosecution.

Freedom of the Press Committee