

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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### FoP Statement on Frenchie Mae Cumpio.

The FCCJ calls on the Philippine government to immediately release journalist Frenchie Mae Cumpio. A young investigative reporter who focused on abuses by the military and police in the Eastern Visayas region, Cumpio faces up to 40 years in prison on what Reporters San Frontiers (RSF), the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) and other media watchdogs and human rights organizations have called trumped-up terrorism charges. She has already been held in detention for over four years. Cumpio is due in court today (Nov 11<sup>th</sup>) in Tacloban city.

<https://rsf.org/en/philippines-ahead-landmark-trial-rsf-calls-release-detained-journalist-frenchie-mae-cumpio-who>

<https://cpj.org/2022/05/cpj-calls-on-president-elect-marcos-to-protect-press-freedom-in-the-philippines/>

Cumpio was arrested in 2020 on charges of “financing terrorism” and “illegal possession of firearms”. Human rights organizations have criticized her detention and say the police planted a gun and a grenade apparently found in her home. RSF says her framing is an example of “red-tagging”, in which dissidents and campaigning journalists are targeted for arrest or worse by the authorities.

A motion tabled in the UK parliament last month demanding the release of Cumpio also said the evidence used to arrest her was fabricated. It added: “The treatment of Cumpio is an attempt to silence messengers of truth and a clear violation of press freedom.” It said her incarceration is “yet another indication of the shrinking democratic space in the Philippines...and therefore supports the National Union of Journalists and International Federation of Journalists in calling on the Government to use every diplomatic effort to secure Cumpio’s release”.

<https://edm.parliament.uk/early-day-motion/62688/detention-and-trial-of-frenchie-mae-cumpio>

The Philippines is one of the world’s most dangerous countries for journalism, with at least 200 murders of media workers since 1986. It ranks 134th out of 180 countries in the latest RSF World Press Freedom Index.

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

The FCCJ, Asia’s oldest press club, urges the Philippine government to protect journalists doing their jobs and to free Frenchie Mae Cumpio.