公益社団法人 日本外国特派員協会
The Foreign Correspondents' Club of Japan
100-0005 Japan, Tokyo-to, Chiyoda-ku, Marunouchi 3-2-3, Marunouchi Nijubashi Building 5F
https://www.fccj.or.jp E-mail: front@fccj.or.jp Tel:+81-3-3211-3161 Fax:+81-3-3201-0677

Statement

UPDATE, Nov 13:

One month after Hokkaido Shimbun journalist Yuki Imai (34) was detained by Russia on espionage charges, FCCJ continues to monitor the situation. We welcome the news from the Japanese Embassy in Moscow, which met him on October 26 and reported that he is in good health.

The Kremlin has said that the investigation is ongoing, and that Imai's fate would depend on its results. FCCJ joins the Japanese government as well as domestic and international media organizations in calling for Imai's fair, humane treatment and prompt release.

Here's the PDF. https://www.fccj.or.jp/sites/default/files/2026-10/Revised%20FCCJ%20Statement%20Hokkaido%20Shimbun%20Journalist.pdf

Statement

Oct 14, 2026

The FCCJ expresses utmost concern over reports that Russia has detained a Hokkaido Shimbun journalist on allegations of spying and calls on the Russian authorities to clarify their reasons for holding him.

The Russian Federal Security Service said it had detained a male journalist from the Hokkaido Shimbun on suspicion of espionage, according to a statement issued by the newspaper on Oct. 14th. The statement says the Russian state news agency TASS and other Russian media are reporting that the Japanese journalist was attempting to provide information to Japanese intelligence agencies with the intent of threatening Russian security.

State television channel "Russia 24" spoke to an official who said the journalist was "collecting information on mobilized and contract soldiers from the Kuril Islands (Northern Territories and Kuril Islands) who participated in special military operations in Ukraine."

The journalist had obtained a journalist's visa and was reporting in Russia, including in Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk in the Sakhalin Oblast of the Russian Far East. According to TASS, the reporter was scheduled to leave the country on the 13th but detained at a hotel in Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk. Reports are that he will be transferred to Moscow for interrogation. According to Russian media, a Moscow court has ordered that he be detained for two months.

Reporters Without Borders has warned that since Russia's large-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, almost all independent media have been banned, blocked and/or declared "foreign agents" or "undesirable organisations" and that all others are subject to military censorship.

Oct. 14 Statement from Hokkaido Shimbun (original Japanese)
<https://www.hokkaido-np.co.jp/article/1388778/>

FCCJ Freedom of the Press Committee