

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:

SOUTH KOREAN PRESIDENTIAL BAN ON PUBLIC BROADCASTER MBC

The Foreign Correspondents' Club of Japan stands with its sister organization in South Korea, the Seoul Foreign Correspondents' Club, in expressing concern about a recent incident in which South Korea's presidential office apparently blocked public broadcaster Munhwa Broadcasting Corporation (MBC) from boarding the presidential jet.

Multiple reports say MBC reporters were banned from boarding the plane during President Yoon Suk-yeol's visit to Southeast Asia. MBC has apparently incurred the ire of the president for reporting a 'hot-mic' incident two months earlier in which he had been caught on camera using a profanity when speaking about U.S. politicians during a trip to the United States.

The presidential office has responded to the controversy by saying: "There is important national interest at stake in overseas trips," suggesting that MBC's reporting was against South Korea's interests. However, it cannot be left to governments to decide what should and should not be reported and we agree with MBC that the decision to ban the broadcaster violates the freedom of the press and betrays the public interest.

We urge Yoon's government to maintain South Korea's hard-won press freedoms and ensure there is no repeat of this incident.

FCCJ Freedom of the Press Committee