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Kremlin Says 'Errors Are Possible' in Golunov Case

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Dmitry Peskov **kremlin.ru**

It's possible that mistakes were made during last week's arrest of prominent investigative reporter Ivan Golunov on large-scale drug trafficking charges, the Kremlin has said.

Anti-corruption journalist Golunov was detained and formally charged in a case that has drawn international attention to Russia's media climate. The Interior Ministry on Friday published nine photos that it described as showing narcotic substances and scales found in Golunov's apartment, which it later deleted after acknowledging that eight of the photos were taken at a different apartment.

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"Errors can never be ruled out. Mistakes are made, including by journalists, when they write certain materials, especially in large quantities," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said when asked whether the Kremlin's confidence in the Interior Ministry had changed.

Interior Ministry analysts said on Sunday that no traces of drugs had been discovered on Golunov's palms or fingernails following his arrest, said Pavel Chikov, head of the Agora human rights organization.

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Reports of rights violations during Golunov's detention, including him being barred from speaking to his attorney and his alleged injuries during detention, are a matter for the Prosecutor General's office, Peskov said.

The Kremlin's position on the Golunov case is based on official Interior Ministry information only, he added.

"The Kremlin has no right to comment on criminal cases, but we are very closely observing all the details. Because this case is resonating so much, it requires special attention," he said.

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Golunov's colleagues at the Meduza news website say the charges against him were likely fabricated as revenge for an investigation he had been working on.

In a joint statement published Monday, three of Russia's leading newspapers said evidence against Golunov was shaky, cast doubt over the legality of his detention and demanded a review of police behavior.

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