

Japan Denies Spying Claims After Russia Arrests Journalist

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Detention of Yuki Imai. **FSB**

Japan's Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi on Thursday [denied](#) Russia's allegations of espionage after the FSB security service arrested a Japanese journalist.

"There is no such fact," Takaichi told reporters when asked about Moscow's claims that the reporter was acting on behalf of Japanese intelligence.

She said details remain sparse surrounding the [arrest](#) of Yuki Imai, a correspondent for the northern Japanese newspaper Hokkaido Shimbun, in Far East Russia's Sakhalin region.

Chief Cabinet Secretary Minoru Kihara said Wednesday that Japan had not been able to contact the individual and did not know about the arrest until the official announcement from Moscow.

The FSB accused Imai of collecting and storing information on Russia's defense capabilities for intelligence purposes that it said could be used against Russian security.

Russia's Ambassador in Tokyo Nikolai Nozdrev, who was summoned by Japan's foreign ministry to lodge its protest, [hit back](#) Thursday with his own accusations that Japan enlists reporters into intelligence gathering.

Nozdrev said it was "unacceptable that Japanese special services recruit private persons, including Japanese journalists accredited in Russia, for 'collaboration' through the collection of classified information."

Related article: [Russia Arrests Japanese Journalist on Suspicion of Spying](#)

Takaichi said Tokyo intended to focus on "the protection of Japanese nationals." The Hokkaido Shimbun said the reporter's safety was its top priority.

The case adds to long-running tensions between Russia and Japan, which have yet to sign a formal World War II peace treaty due to a territorial dispute over the Kuril Islands, known in Japan as the Northern Territories.

Imai's arrest comes days after Japanese law enforcement in Osaka apprehended a 28-year-old Russian national linked to the international ransomware group Qilin and [extradited](#) him to Germany to face cybercrime charges.

AFP contributed reporting.

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