

#FreeFrenchieMaeCumpio: International coalition of NGOs welcomes dismissal of trumped-up case against community journalist

November 7, 2025—The international coalition of press freedom NGOs welcomes the [decision](#) of the Laoang Regional Trial Court Branch 21 to grant the motion to quash the baseless murder charge filed against community journalist Frenchie Mae Cumpio. This ruling marks a significant step forward after years of relentless [campaigning](#) for her release. On top of two other charges, Cumpio was facing accusation of participating in an ambush that killed two soldiers; these claims were revealed to be flimsy as an [investigation](#) has shown.

Earlier this week, the Court of Appeals [dismissed](#) the civil forfeiture case against Cumpio of the seizure of nearly \$10,000 in a ruling that the court found no evidence linking her to terrorist groups.

With these positive developments, the coalition renewed its call for the remaining charges of illegal firearms possession and financing terrorism against Cumpio to be dropped immediately. Cumpio has been detained for almost six years even though she has not been convicted of any crime, a grave injustice and a blatant violation of her rights.

The coalition, including the National Union of Journalists of the Philippines and AlterMidya in Manila, along with global press freedom organizations Reporters Without Borders (RSF), the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), and Free Press Unlimited (FPU), has repeatedly raised concerns about Cumpio's physical condition and [violations](#) of her legal rights.

Detained for nearly six years,, Cumpio's case [raises](#) serious concerns over prolonged pretrial detention and [allegations](#) that authorities planted the weapons that led to her arrest. The 26-year-old journalist has been [behind bars](#) since she was [arrested](#) in February 2020, [along with](#) four human rights defenders. As executive director of the Eastern Vista news website and a radio news anchor, Cumpio [frequently covered](#) alleged police and military abuses as well as community welfare issues prior to [her arrest](#).

Cumpio's trial is nearing its conclusion, with the promulgation of judgment in the illegal firearms possession case set for January 22, 2026. The resolution for the Formal Offer of Evidence of the defense in the terrorism financing case is still pending. She faces a maximum sentence of 40 years in prison.

"We welcome the quashing of the trumped-up murder case against Frenchie Mae Cumpio, but emphasize that full justice will only be served if the community journalist is immediately released from prison and all remaining charges against her are dropped. We urge the Philippine authorities to ensure her prompt release and to uphold their commitment to press freedom."

— #FreeFrenchieMaeCumpio Coalition

Spokespeople are available for interviews in English/Filipino:

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