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Panama Refuses Entry To Washington Post Correspondent

by Deborah Tyroler

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At a Jan. 11 press briefing, State Department spokesperson Phyllis Oakley said the US has labeled as "unwarranted" the Panamanian government's treatment of Washington Post reporter Julia Preston when she attempted to enter the country on a reporting assignment Jan. 10. Preston, Post correspondent for the Caribbean and Central America, was held incommunicado for several hours Sunday by Panamanian authorities and then expelled from the country. Oakley said that such actions "will only complicate Panama's current political situation." Oakley said, "We understand Miss Preston was refused admission to Panama on a claim of lack of proper documentation, that that she was held incommunicado for a period of time before being placed on a plane to Miami."

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