LONDON — A former researcher working in the U.K. Parliament and another man have been charged with spying for China, British prosecutors said Monday.

Police said Christopher Cash, 29, and Christopher Berry, 32, were charged with “providing prejudicial information to a foreign state, China." They will appear at Westminster Magistrates’ Court on Friday.

Police allege the two men collected, recorded or communicated information “prejudicial to the safety or interests of the state” and violated the Official Secrets Act between late 2021 and February 2023.

“This has been an extremely complex investigation into what are very serious allegations,” said Dominic Murphy, head of the Metropolitan Police counterterrorism command.

Authorities did not release details about the two men. But Berry is reportedly an academic based in Oxfordshire, and The Sunday Times reported last year that Cash was a parliamentary researcher who worked with senior lawmakers from the governing Conservatives.

Cash's colleagues included Alicia Kearns, who now heads the powerful Foreign Affairs Committee, and her predecessor in that role, Tom Tugendhat, who is now security minister.

House of Commons Speaker Lindsay Hoyle confirmed Monday that one of the suspects was a parliamentary pass holder at the time of the alleged offenses.

British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak said last year that he raised the issue with Chinese Premier Li Qiang, saying he voiced [*“very strong concerns”*](https://apnews.com/article/uk-china-spying-claims-sunak-li-f2a1e5ee83af0cc3f85850c2cb2fe377) about interference in British democracy.

At the time, Cash issued a statement through his lawyers maintaining his innocence.

The Chinese Embassy called the allegations “completely fabricated” and “malicious slander,” and urged the U.K. to “stop anti-China political manipulation.”

Also on Monday, [*three people were arrested in Germany*](https://apnews.com/article/germany-china-intelligence-spying-arrests-cc5348b2f83c8430d8e143c09cf26655) on suspicion of spying for China and arranging to transfer information on technology with potential military uses.

British intelligence authorities have ratcheted up their warnings about Beijing's covert activities in recent years.

In 2022, the head of the MI5 domestic intelligence agency, [*Ken McCallum*](https://apnews.com/article/islamic-state-group-al-qaida-iran-china-london-2c197134fb02864427f75cabb1ac5a38), named China, Russia and Iran as the leading security threats to the U.K. He said that Chinese authorities' attempts to shape British ***politics*** included targeting and influencing a range of people in ***politics***, including those early in their political careers.

Last month, several British lawmakers, including leading China critic and former Conservative Party leader Iain Duncan Smith, told reporters they had long been subjected to attempted hacking and impersonation attempts by hackers linked to the Chinese government.

The lawmakers were speaking as American and British authorities announced a new [*set of sanctions and criminal charges*](https://apnews.com/article/uk-china-cyberattacks-parliament-election-770e7b00454b63ad424000feecddd0c1) against hackers linked to the Chinese government who are accused of targeting a huge range of officials and corporations in a sweeping state-backed operation.