

# Bout Will Not Appeal 25-Year Sentence

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Convicted Russian arms dealer Viktor Bout will not appeal his 25-year sentence to the U.S. Supreme Court, Bout's attorney, Alexei Binetsky, told reporters at a press conference hosted by Interfax on Friday.

Binetsky explained to reporters that a Supreme Court appeal would be futile, and the discrepancies between U.S. and Russian law made Bout's extradition impossible.

"Unfortunately, the transfer of Bout is not possible at the moment," he said, explaining that under Russian law an individual cannot be convicted for the intent to commit a crime. This prevents his extradition to the Russian Federation because such an exchange can only take place "if it is a crime in the country in which the individual is a naturalized citizen."

Previous contradictory statements on the matter were conscious attempts at disinformation, said Binetsky, adding that "We sought to make our legal opponents believe that we do not know what we actually want."

Instead of a direct appeal to the U.S.'s highest court, Bout and his legal advisors have chosen

a different tack. Binetsky stated that he was unable to elaborate further on what form his client's new strategy would take, saying only that it would involve some form of legal proceedings accompanied by lobbying efforts, and that the immediate next step would be to raise money to hire a new team of U.S.-based lawyers.

In 2008, a team of DEA agents executed an intricate sting operation in Thailand resulting in Bout's arrest. DEA agents posing as buyers for the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Columbia, or FARC, met Bout in a Bangkok hotel conference room. Not long after the meeting began, the DEA team intervened and arrested Bout, beginning a two year legal wrangle over his extradition in a Thai court.

In the end, Thailand agreed to facilitate Bout's extradition to the U.S., and in November 2010, DEA officials retrieved Bout from Bangkok and transported him directly to New York to stand trial.

In November 2011, Bout was officially convicted for conspiring to kill U.S. citizens and officials, as well as sell surface-to-air missiles and other weapons to a foreign terrorist organization, FARC. For these offenses, Bout received the minimum sentence of 25 years.

The Russian government protested the conviction, and has since made repeated attempts to characterize him as a political prisoner — a claim echoed by his legal team and associates.

Attempts to appeal the sentence have been unsuccessful. In September 2013, the Second U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in New York upheld the Manhattan federal court's November 2011 ruling.

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