

Russia Upholds U.S.-Israeli Woman's 7.5-Year Airport Marijuana Sentence

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Moscow airport authorities had found 9.6 grams of cannabis in Issachar's luggage during her layover from New Delhi to Tel Aviv in April. **Artyom Geodakyan / TASS**

A court in Moscow has [upheld](#) U.S.-Israeli tourist Naama Issachar's seven-and-a-half year prison sentence on drugs charges Thursday in a case that has strained ties between Russia and Israel.

Naama Issachar, 25, was [found guilty](#) of drug possession and smuggling in October. Moscow airport authorities had found 9.6 grams of cannabis in Issachar's luggage during her layover from New Delhi to Tel Aviv in April.

Related article: [Russia Sentences U.S.-Israeli Woman to 7.5 Years Over Airport Marijuana Possession](#)

A Moscow District Court judge ruled to reject Issachar's appeal Thursday evening.

Issachar told the court that the authorities who detained her in April did not provide her with a translator or a lawyer, The Associated Press [reported](#). In her last word, Issachar called the accusations “completely absurd” because she had no access to her luggage and asked the court to overturn her sentence, the Mediazona news website [reported](#).

“I’ve been behind bars for nearly nine months in an unknown, alien country, deprived of the most basic rights and needs,” she was quoted as saying.

Russia in October had asked Israel to [swap](#) a suspected Russian hacker for Issachar. Israel, however, extradited the suspected hacker to the U.S. to face charges of credit card fraud.

“Despite the disappointment of the court verdict – I am not giving up,” Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu told Issachar’s mother, his office [tweeted](#).

“I will continue to do everything to bring Naama back home,” Netanyahu said.

President Vladimir Putin could personally decide Issachar’s fate, possibly after January, Bloomberg [reported](#) in November. He is scheduled to travel to Israel for talks with Netanyahu next month.

Netanyahu is considering a 19th-century plot of land built for Russian pilgrims visiting Jerusalem as a “gift” to Putin in exchange for his help with releasing Issachar, The Jerusalem Post [reported](#) Friday.

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