

White House Calls Basketball Star's Russia Court Hearing a 'Sham'

By [AFP](#)

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TASS

The White House on Tuesday described an upcoming appeals hearing for jailed U.S. basketball star Brittney Griner in Russia as a "sham."

Griner, who was sentenced to nine years prison in August for possessing vape cartridges with a small quantity of cannabis oil, is due to go back to court on October 25.

White House Press Secretary Karine Jean-Pierre said "we are aware of Russia's announcement that Brittney Griner will be forced to undergo another sham judicial proceeding. She should be released immediately."

In August, Moscow said it was ready to discuss a prisoner swap for Griner, sparking hopes of a rapid resolution. However, talks have apparently since dried up with the White House saying that it has not received an answer to its "serious" proposal.

When she was arrested, the two-time Olympic basketball gold medallist and Women's NBA champion had been in Russia to play for the professional Yekaterinburg team, during her off-season from the Phoenix Mercury.

She pleaded guilty to the charges, but said she did not intend to break the law or use the banned substance in Russia.

Griner had testified that she had permission from a US doctor to use medicinal cannabis to relieve pain from her many injuries, and had never failed a drug test.

The use of medical marijuana is not allowed in Russia.

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