The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Brittney Griner Says it's 'so Good to Be Home' After Release From Russian Jail

By AFP

December 16, 2022



Sofia Sandurskaya / Moskva News Agency

U.S. basketball star Brittney Griner made her first remarks since being released from a Russian prison on Friday, saying that it was "so good to be home" and vowing to play again for the WNBA's Phoenix Mercury.

Griner, in a message on Instagram, thanked a long list of people for securing her release with a "special thank you" to U.S. President Joe Biden.

"It feels so good to be home!" Griner said. "The last 10 months have been a battle at every turn."

Griner, who was arrested in Russia in February on drug charges, said she would do "whatever I can" to help secure the release of Paul Whelan, another U.S. citizen held in Russia.

Griner said she planned to be back on the court.

"I also want to make one thing very clear: I intend to play basketball for the WNBA's Phoenix Mercury this season," she said.

Griner was swapped last week for Viktor Bout, a notorious Russian arms dealer known as the "Merchant of Death," and taken to a U.S. Army base in Texas for a medical check-up.

It was not immediately clear from her post if she had already left the military base, but she said she would be "home to enjoy the holidays with my family."

Her Instagram post was accompanied by a picture of Griner stepping off a plane on US soil and another of her embracing her wife, Cherelle Griner.

At the time of her arrest, Griner had been playing for a professional team in Russia, as a number of WNBA players do in the off-season.

She was accused of possessing vape cartridges with a small quantity of cannabis oil and sentenced in August to nine years in prison.

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

Griner testified that she had permission from a US doctor to use medicinal cannabis to relieve pain from her many injuries.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2022/12/16/brittney-griner-says-its-so-good-to-be-home-after-release-from-russian-jail-a79724