

Biden Calls Russia's Imprisonment of Evan Gershkovich 'Out of Bounds'

By [AFP](#)

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Jim WATSON / AFP

U.S. President Joe Biden on Tuesday called Russia's imprisonment of American journalist Evan Gershkovich on spying charges "out of bounds."

Biden, who made the comments as he departed Washington for a trip to Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, also told reporters that The Wall Street Journal correspondent's jailing was "totally illegal."

The U.S. president said he had tried unsuccessfully on Monday to contact Gershkovich's family and would now "try them from the plane."

On Monday, the State Department formally classified the reporter as "wrongfully detained" — a status that puts the case in the hands of the U.S. special envoy for hostages, Roger Carstens.

Gershkovich, an experienced reporter for The Wall Street Journal in Russia, was detained in Russia's fourth-largest city Yekaterinburg. He is currently being held at Moscow's notorious Lefortovo Prison where he is expected to remain pending his trial on May 29.

Despite Gershkovich's arrest taking place nearly two weeks ago, U.S. embassy staff in Moscow say they have still not been allowed to meet with him, something that has often been the case with American citizens arrested in Russia in the past.

Last week Russia's Foreign Ministry spokesperson, Maria Zakharova, said that Russia would grant consular access to the journalist in due course.

Russian news agencies reported on Friday that Gershkovich had been charged with espionage, an allegation denied by both The Wall Street Journal and Gershkovich himself.

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