

Russian Court Rejects Gershkovich Arrest Appeal

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U.S. journalist Evan Gershkovich at a court hearing in Moscow. **Natalia Kolesnikova / AFP**

The Moscow City Court rejected Tuesday an appeal against the arrest of Wall Street Journal reporter Evan Gershkovich, the first foreign journalist to be charged with espionage in Russia since the Cold War.

The hearing was the first time Gershkovich has been seen in public since his arrest in the Ural Mountains city of Yekaterinburg last month.

The WSJ reporter was [dressed](#) in a plaid shirt and blue jeans and did not say anything to journalists.

The arrest of Gershkovich has sent relations between Washington and Moscow to a new low, with U.S. President Joe Biden telling Russia that the journalist should be released immediately.

The United States' ambassador to Russia, Lynne Tracy, was one of those present at the

hearing.

"It was hard for me to see an innocent journalist being held in such conditions. Yesterday I was allowed to see him for the first time in the pre-trial detention center and he is healthy and holding on despite the circumstances," Tracy told journalists at the hearing, independent outlet Mediazona [reported](#).

"We will continue to help him and demand consular access."

Embed:

Video of [@evangershkovich](#) listening to the court's rejection of his detention appeal. He was detained over two weeks ago on absurd espionage charges and is facing up to 20 years in prison if convicted. [#JournalismIsNotACrime](#)
pic.twitter.com/P5PhMtSdPN

— Mary Ilyushina (@maryilyushina) [April 18, 2023](#)

Accused of espionage for the United States, Gershkovich was detained in Yekaterinburg on March 29.

Gershkovich's defense team has denied all the accusations against him.

About 30 Russian and foreign journalists were present at the appeal, but not all were allowed into the courtroom.

Gershkovich was represented in court by lawyers Tatiana Nozhkina and Maria Korchagina, independent media outlet Meduza reported.

A few hours before the start of the appeal, reports suggested that activist Yaroslav Shirshikov, who first reported Gershkovich's detention and who apparently helped Gershkovich with reporting in Yekaterinburg, had been [detained](#) on terrorism charges.

A few days after Gershkovich's detention, the Federal Security Service (FSB) [announced](#) the arrest of a couple who worked at tank factory Uralvagonzavod in Nizhny Tagil — also reportedly visited by Gershkovich shortly before his arrest — on allegations of assisting Ukrainian intelligence.

Surveillance of Gershkovich was [managed](#) by the FSB's counterintelligence department, which sent a special team to Yekaterinburg to carry out his arrest.

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