

# Moscow Court Rejects U.S. Journalist Gershkovich's Appeal

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Evan Gershkovich at a court hearing in Moscow on Thursday. **Yaroslav Chingaev / Moskva News Agency**

A Moscow court has rejected Wall Street Journal reporter Evan Gershkovich's appeal against the three-month extension of his arrest on spying charges, state media [reported](#) Thursday.

Gershkovich, 31, became the first Western journalist accused of espionage in modern Russia after the Foreign Ministry-accredited reporter was detained in late March during a reporting trip in central Russia. He and his employer have strongly denied the accusations against him.

Moscow's Lefortovo District Court last month ruled to [extend](#) Gershkovich's pre-trial detention until Aug. 30 in a closed-door hearing.

No date has been set for his trial.

The Moscow City Court ruled Thursday to uphold the Lefortovo District Court's decision, the state-run news agency RIA Novosti reported.

"The court considered the complaint brought by Gershkovich's defense against the decision to extend his ... detention, and ruled that the initial decision should be left unchanged and the complaint of the defendant's defense should not be satisfied," the judge said.

Gershkovich appeared in a glass cage in the Moscow court and made a heart symbol with his hands to other journalists in the room.

#### **Embed:**

Evan laughing and joking in court today with his parents. A wonderful moving moment of an otherwise sad day, as his arrest is upheld until at least August 30.  
[#istandwithevan pic.twitter.com/NvgVbaSk58](https://pic.twitter.com/NvgVbaSk58)

— Matthew Luxmoore (@mjluxmoore) [June 22, 2023](#)

He faces up to 20 years in Russian prison if found guilty of espionage.

The United States has designated Gershkovich as wrongfully detained and called for his immediate release.

Gershkovich's parents, who in 1979 emigrated from the Soviet Union to the U.S. where he was born, were seen speaking to their son in the courtroom.

They declined to speak to assembled reporters.

Journalists and members of the public were removed from the courtroom for the hearing and informed of the ruling via video link in an adjacent room.

"We were extremely disappointed by the denial of his appeal," U.S. Ambassador to Moscow Lynne Tracy said, addressing journalists outside Moscow City Court.

"Despite Russian officials' public assertions about Evan's activities, let me reiterate the U.S. government's firm position: the charges against him are baseless," she added.

"He's an innocent journalist, who was carrying out journalistic activities and has been wrongfully detained."

**Related article:** [The Torture of Isolation: Inside the Russian Prison Housing U.S. Journalist Evan Gershkovich](#)

She said Russian authorities have rejected three consular visits to Gershkovich, partly over a visa dispute for Russian journalists in the United States.

On Thursday, Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov said Moscow was [considering](#) Washington's latest request to visit Gershkovich.

Gershkovich worked as a reporter for The Moscow Times from 2017 to 2020.

*AFP contributed reporting.*

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