The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

RT Shows Jailed American in Rare Russian Prison Footage

August 29, 2023

Paul Whelan in jail. **RT video grab**

Russian state-run broadcaster RT on Tuesday showed rare footage of former U.S. Marine Paul Whelan inside a penal colony, in what his brother said was his first public appearance in over three years.

The United States has designated Whelan — who is serving a 16-year sentence on espionage charges in Russia's remote republic of Mordovia — as "wrongfully detained."

RT's six-minute report showed Whelan, who was dressed in a black prison jacket and hat, along with other inmates inside a prison yard, a food hall and a workshop performing penal labor.

Whelan declined to be interviewed, telling RT correspondent Igor Zhdanov: "I can't answer any questions."

Related article: U.S. Explores 'Narrow' Sanctions Relief to Free Gershkovich, Whelan From Russia – Reports

His brother David said the footage was filmed in May, when prison staff retaliated against him for declining to participate in RT's interview, according to Reuters.

"Today was the first time I've seen what he really looks like since June 2020," the jailed American's brother said in an email.

The Biden administration has been exploring options to exchange Whelan and other Americans jailed in Russia for Russian nationals imprisoned in the United States and other allied countries.

A Moscow court found Whelan guilty of receiving classified information in 2018 and sentenced him to 16 years in a penal colony in June 2020.

Whelan, who is also a British, Canadian and Irish citizen, denies the charges.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2023/08/29/rt-shows-jailed-american-in-rare-russian-prison-footage-a82277