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Russian Court Rejects U.S. Reporter Gershkovich's Appeal of Extended Detention

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Evan Gershkovich. **Alexander Avilov / Moskva News Agency**

A Moscow court on Tuesday rejected U.S. reporter Evan Gershkovich's appeal against the three-month extension of his pre-trial detention on spying charges, media reported Tuesday.

Gershkovich, a reporter for The Wall Street Journal and former Moscow Times journalist, had challenged the judge's August decision to extend his custody until Nov. 30.

The Moscow City Court ruled Tuesday to uphold its initial ruling, according to the independent news outlet Sota.

Independent journalist Vasily Polonsky showed footage of Gershkovich inside a glass enclosure for defendants awaiting the court hearing.

Polonsky said the hearing was held behind closed doors.

Under Russian law, individuals convicted of espionage face a maximum sentence of 20 years in prison.

Embed:

Gershkovich was detained in March during a reporting trip to the Urals and accused of spying — charges that he, the U.S. government and The Wall Street Journal vehemently deny.

His case marks the first time a Western journalist has been arrested on espionage charges in Russia since the end of the Cold War.

Russia has made it more difficult for journalists from the West to obtain accreditation and work in the country since launching full-scale hostilities against Ukraine last year.

Several U.S. citizens have been handed heavy sentences in Russia in recent years. Washington accuses Moscow of using them as bargaining chips to obtain the release of Russians held in the U.S.

AFP contributed reporting.

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