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Russian Court Upholds U.S. Journalist Gershkovich's Extended Detention

October 10, 2023



U.S. journalist Evan Gershkovich. **Natalia Kolesnikova / AFP**

A Moscow court has rejected Wall Street Journal reporter Evan Gershkovich's appeal against the extension of his pre-trial detention on widely criticized spying charges, Interfax reported Tuesday.

Gershkovich, 31, a U.S. citizen and former Moscow Times journalist, was in August ordered to stay in pre-trial detention until Nov. 30. He challenged that ruling, having lost two previous appeals in April and June.

Judge Yuri Pasyunin at Moscow City Court ruled to "keep (the detention) without changes" until Nov. 30, an AFP reporter at the court said.

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Reuters' Moscow bureau chief posted photographs of Gershkovich inside the courtroom's

glass enclosure for defendants before the closed-door hearing.

Individuals convicted of espionage in Russia face a maximum prison sentence of 20 years.

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

He is the first Western journalist to be arrested on espionage charges in Russia since the collapse of the Soviet Union.

The Moscow City Court last month deferred a ruling on Gershkovich's pre-trial detention and later sent the case to Moscow's Lefortovo Court.

Russia has made it more difficult for Western journalists to obtain accreditation and work in the country since invading Ukraine 19 months ago.

The United States accuses Moscow of using several U.S. citizens jailed in Russia in recent years as bargaining chips to secure the release of Russians held by Washington.

AFP contributed reporting.

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