

Russia Arrests U.S. Citizen on Drug Charges

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Robert Woodland. **Robert Woodland / Instagram**

Russian authorities have brought drug-related charges against U.S. citizen Robert Woodland, who was detained by law enforcement agents earlier this month, a Moscow court said Tuesday.

"On January 6, the Ostankinsky District Court of Moscow ordered Robert Romanov Woodland to be placed in detention for a period of two months, until March 5, 2024," the court said.

Woodland is accused of the "illegal acquisition, storage, transportation, manufacture, processing" of drugs and could face 10-20 years in prison.

According to Interfax, police caught Woodland purchasing 4.5 grams of an unidentified drug with the intent of selling it later. He was reportedly found in possession of the synthetic narcotic mephedrone.

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Woodland holds dual Russian-U.S. citizenship and lives in Moscow, the news agency reported, adding that he was born in central Russia's Perm region.

In 2020, the Russian tabloid Komsomolskaya Pravda [interviewed](#) Woodland, who said he was adopted from a Perm region family at the age of 2 and decided to return to Russia 27 years later after local volunteers helped locate his biological mother.

"I always understood that I was Russian, but I didn't do much to learn the history of my homeland," Woodland said at the time.

"Now I'm here. I've decided to stay in my home country forever," he added.

Russian authorities have arrested several U.S. citizens in recent years, with critics accusing Moscow of using detainees as bargaining chips in exchange for Russians jailed in the United States.

Among the Americans detained in Russia is Paul Whelan, a former marine who was sentenced to 16 years in prison on spying charges that he denies.

In March, Wall Street Journal reporter Evan Gershkovich became the first Western journalist to be held on espionage charges in Russia since the Soviet era.

AFP contributed reporting.

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