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U.S. Reporter Gershkovich to Stand Trial in Russia on June 26

By AFP

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An electronic billboard at New York's Times Square. **Timothy A. Clary / AFP**

Wall Street Journal reporter Evan Gershkovich will stand trial on espionage charges in the Urals city of Yekaterinburg on June 26, the court overseeing the process said on Monday, adding that the proceedings will take place behind closed doors.

Gershkovich was arrested in March 2023 while on a reporting trip in Yekaterinburg and has been held in Moscow's notorious Lefortovo prison since. He is the first Western journalist since the Soviet era to be arrested in Russia on spying charges.

Last week, Russia's prosecutor general accused him of working for the CIA and "collecting secret information" about the tank manufacturer Uralvagonzavod in the Sverdlovsk region where he was arrested.

Washington said the charges had "zero credibility" and the Wall Street Journal slammed

Russia's announcement as "outrageous." Moscow had not previously provided any public details of its case against Gershkovich, saying only that he was "caught red-handed."

On Monday, the Sverdlovsk regional court handling Gershkovich's case said in a statement that the trial would start on June 26 and be held behind closed doors.

The 32-year-old faces up to 20 years in prison if found guilty.

Gershkovich, his family, his employer and U.S. officials have denied the charges against him, insisting that he was simply doing his job.

"Evan Gershkovich is facing a false and baseless charge. Russia's latest move toward a sham trial is, while expected, deeply disappointing and still no less outrageous," the Wall Street Journal's chief editor Emma Tucker and top executives said in a statement.

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