

# Russia Sentences U.S.-Russian Journalist Alsu Kurmasheva to 6.5 Years in Prison – AP

July 22, 2024



Alsu Kurmasheva. AP / TASS

A court in the republic of Tatarstan has sentenced Russian-American journalist Alsu Kurmasheva to six-and-a-half years in prison for spreading “fakes” about the army, the Associated Press [reported](#) on Monday, citing court records and a court spokeswoman.

Kurmasheva, a dual U.S.-Russian citizen who works for Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL), was [arrested](#) in October of last year for failing to register as a “foreign agent.” She was later [charged](#) with “spreading knowingly false information” about the Russian army.

A court in the Tatarstan capital of Kazan on Friday found Kurmasheva [guilty](#) of spreading “spreading false information” about the Russian military and sentenced her to six-and-a-half years in prison, according to court records seen by the Associated Press. A court spokeswoman confirmed that sentencing to the news agency.

No other details about the case were made public, the Associated Press noted, and the trial was held in secret.

The ruling against Kurmasheva came on the same day as a court in the Russian city of Yekaterinburg sentenced Wall Street Journal reporter and U.S. citizen Evan Gershkovich to 16 years in prison for espionage. Both Kurmasheva's and Gershkovich's employers, families and lawyers deny all charges against them.

#### **Related article: [Russia Refuses to Release Journalist Alsu Kurmasheva](#)**

Kurmasheva lived in the Czech Republic with her husband and two children and was arrested in Kazan while visiting her elderly mother last year. No trial date for the journalist was ever publicly announced, and her lawyers had called for her to be released and put under house arrest pending trial.

"I think this was done in the style preferred by Putin's regime: with no prior warnings. [The Kremlin] always looks to catch the liberal public by surprise," Tatar political analyst and journalist Ruslan Aysin told The Moscow Times.

"I expected a longer sentence given Alsu's profile, the sheer number of criminal cases that they initiated against her and the publicity surrounding the trial," Aysin added.

State-affiliated media in Russia reported last year that the case against the U.S.-Russian journalist [surrounded](#) a 2022 book of interviews and stories from Russians impacted by the war in Ukraine, which was edited by Kurmasheva and published by her employer, RFE/RL's Tatar-Bashkir service Idel.Realii.

Following the news of her jail sentencing on Monday, Kurmasheva's husband, Current Time director Pavel Butorin, [wrote](#) on X (formerly Twitter): "My daughters and I know Alsu has done nothing wrong. And the world knows it too. We need her home."

Moscow has been accused of targeting U.S. citizens to use as leverage to secure the release of its own nationals held by Washington. Following the sentencing against Gershkovich last week, observers believe Washington and Moscow may soon reach a deal on exchanging the journalist with Russian nationals jailed in the West.

"We shouldn't forget that [Kurmasheva's] sentencing happened right after that of Evan Gershkovich... I think [the Russian government] is trying to link these two cases somehow," analyst Aysin said, adding that he "doesn't rule out" the possibility of a prisoner swap between Moscow and Washington involving Kurmasheva.

Original url:

<https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2024/07/22/russia-sentences-us-russian-journalist-alsu-kurmasheva-to-65-years-in-prison-ap-a85790>