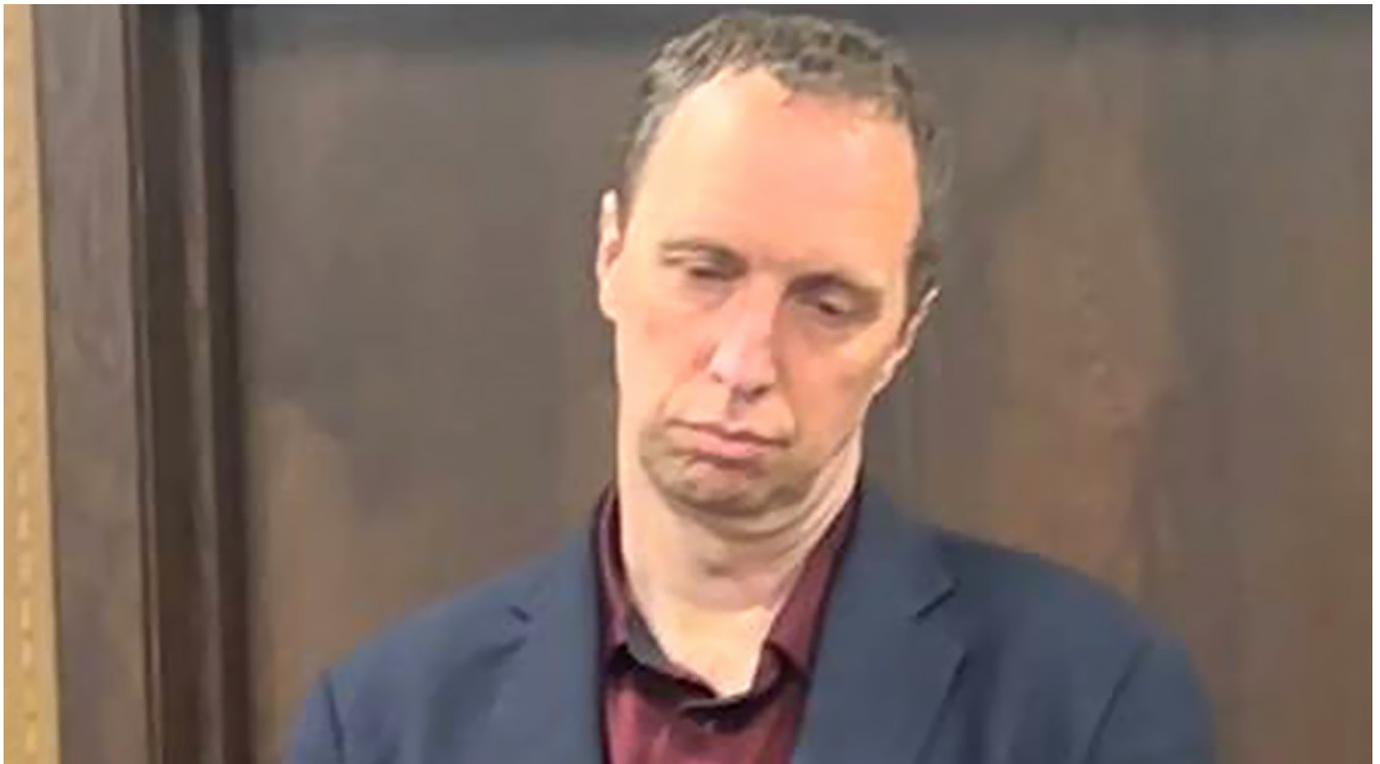


American Rejects U.S. Citizenship in Russian Court, Russian Media Says

By [AFP](#)

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Joseph Tater. t.me/moscowcourts

An American rejected his U.S. citizenship in a Moscow court on Thursday, saying he was the victim of political persecution in the United States, Russian state news agencies reported.

Joseph Tater was in court after being accused of assaulting a police officer after abusing staff at a hotel in the Russian capital last month.

In an appeal hearing at the Moscow City Court, he criticized the U.S. government and media outlets, demanded two embassy officials leave and said he had been targeted by the CIA for years.

“My life is being threatened in the United States,” Russian state news agencies quoted Tater as saying in court.

He alleged the CIA killed his mother while she was in the hospital, and that he had been

arrested in the U.S. on false charges. His lawyer told the judge he had come to Russia "with the purpose of obtaining political asylum in connection with persecution by the relevant authorities in the United States."

Related article: [Putin Signs Decree Granting Residency to Foreigners Who Share 'Traditional' Russian Values](#)

Addressing two U.S. embassy staff in the court, Tater was quoted as saying: "I am no longer a U.S. citizen, I ask you to leave the courtroom." He also demanded American journalists — "especially CNN" — and "journalists from Ukraine" leave the hearing, the agencies reported.

The court rejected his appeal against being held in pre-trial detention until at least October. He faces up to five years in prison.

Russia has arrested several U.S. citizens in recent years on charges ranging from espionage and criticizing the Russian army to petty theft and family disputes.

Last month, President Vladimir Putin [signed](#) a decree allowing foreign citizens and stateless individuals to apply for temporary residency in the country if they share "traditional Russian spiritual and moral values," even in cases when a person does not speak Russian.

The United States is among a group of 46 other countries, accused by Moscow of pursuing a "destructive neoliberal ideological agenda," whose citizens can apply for temporary residency under the new scheme.

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