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Russia Puts Elderly American on Trial for 'Fighting' in Ukraine

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General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine

A Moscow court has begun hearings into a 72-year-old American man accused of fighting as a mercenary in Ukraine, state media reported Friday.

The state news agency RIA Novosti identified the man as Stefan Hubbard, though another possible spelling of his name could be Stephen Hubbard.

In May, a Facebook user named Trisha Hubbard Fox claimed that her brother, Stephen James Hubbard, had been "kidnapped" in Ukraine nearly three years ago by Chechen soldiers, who allegedly beat him on video.

Both Russian state media and the Facebook user identified the man as a 72-year-old Michigan native. According to RIA Novosti, Hubbard moved to Ukraine in 2014 where he lived "with a woman whom he called his wife."

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If convicted of participating in mercenary activities, Hubbard could face up to 10 years in prison, according to the state-run news agency TASS, which listed his age as 73.

A Moscow court has reportedly approved the prosecution's request to hold Hubbard in pre-trial detention until March 26, 2025. The next court hearing is scheduled for Oct. 3.

In a statement to The Moscow Times, the U.S. Embassy in Moscow said it was "aware of the reports of the arrest of an American citizen in Russia."

"Due to privacy restrictions, we are unable to comment any further," the emailed statement read.

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