Russia Jails U.S. 'Mercenary', 72, for Nearly 7 Years

By [AFP](#)

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Stephen Hubbard. **t.me/moscowcourts**

A Russian court sentenced a 72-year-old U.S. citizen accused of fighting as a mercenary for Ukraine to nearly seven years in prison on Monday.

Stephen Hubbard was sentenced to six years and 10 months by the Moscow City Court. The bearded defendant stood uneasily as the sentence was read out.

He was convicted of serving as a "mercenary" in the war in Ukraine after a brief trial held largely behind closed doors.

The sentence took into account the fact that Hubbard has been in custody since April 2, 2022.

His case only became public on September 27, when the trial began in Moscow. Russia has not said where he was arrested.

Hubbard appeared in poor health at a hearing last week, when, at prosecutors' request, the court ordered the trial be behind closed doors.

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Prosecutors said that Hubbard was paid at least $1,000 a month to join a Ukrainian territorial defense unit. They say he underwent training, was given a combat uniform and "took part in the armed conflict" in Ukraine.

Russian news agencies reported that the defendant pleaded guilty.

Westerners in custody

Russia's state-run TASS news agency said Hubbard had been living in the Ukrainian city of Izium in the northeastern Kharkiv region since 2014.

Russian forces took control of the city of 45,000 shortly after ordering troops into Ukraine, before being ousted in September 2022 in Kyiv's counteroffensive.

Russia has not given any details on the circumstances of Hubbard's arrest.

A video posted on pro-Russian YouTube channels in May 2022 — during the Russian occupation of Izium — showed a man who said his name was Stephen James Hubbard, that he was born in Big Rapids, Michigan and came to live in Ukraine in 2014. In the video, he looked disheveled, with a long beard and dirty nails.

Another U.S. citizen was convicted in Russia on Monday. Robert Gilman was handed a term of seven years and one month in a maximum security penal colony. He was found guilty of attacking prison staff and a criminal investigator, Russian news agencies reported.

Related article: [Russian 'Mercenary' Trial of 72-Year-Old American Made Secret](#)

He was previously convicted in 2022 of attacking a policeman while drunk in the western city of Voronezh and sentenced to four years and six months in prison, but it was later reduced to three and a half years on appeal.

While in jail, prosecutors alleged that he punched members of prison staff "in the head" on two separate occasions and attacked a criminal investigator.

Russia has arrested numerous Westerners in recent years on charges ranging from espionage to petty theft, with some cases related to Moscow's war in Ukraine.

They include Ksenia Karelina, a dual US-Russian citizen who was arrested while visiting family in Russia and sentenced to 12 years in jail for donating around $50 to a Ukrainian organization.

Two Colombian citizens are also being held in Russia on charges of being "mercenaries" for

Ukraine.

Russia and the West held the largest East–West prisoner swap since the Cold War on August 1. Russia traded journalists, including Wall Street Journal reporter Evan Gershkovich, and Russian dissidents for several Russians, like arms trader Viktor Bout, imprisoned for murder, espionage or other crimes.

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