

Moscow Court Upholds 12.5-Year Sentence for U.S.-Russian Man on Drug Charges

By [AFP](#)

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Robert Woodland in court. **Alexander Zemlianichenko / AP / TASS**

A Moscow court on Tuesday upheld a 12-and-a-half year prison sentence for a U.S.-Russian man, Robert Woodland, convicted earlier this year on drug charges.

At an appeal hearing at the Moscow City Court on Tuesday, Judge Irina Khorlina ruled to leave the original sentence "unchanged," an AFP journalist reported from the courtroom.

Woodland, 32, took part in the hearing via video link from the detention center where he is being held. His lawyer, Stanislav Kshevitsky, asked the court to reduce the sentence, saying Woodland pleaded partially guilty.

Woodland was arrested in January for trying to hide 47 grams of mephedrone. A judge sentenced him to jail in July.

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Prosecutors claimed the U.S.-Russian man had picked up the drugs from a forest on the outskirts of Moscow, brought them to his apartment and repackaged them for sale. Woodland's lawyer rejected those accusations.

"Woodland pleaded guilty to possession of drugs, but denies distribution. He is a drug addict... who stole from another drug addict and wanted to hide them for his own personal use," Kshevitsky told reporters after the hearing.

Woodland was born in Russia and then adopted by an American family in the early 1990s. He decided to return to Russia in 2020 to reconnect with his birth mother, Russian state news agencies reported.

His story and emotional reunion was featured on a TV show in Russia.

Kshevitsky told reporters after the hearing that Woodland will again appeal the decision.

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