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Russia Charges British Man Captured Fighting in Kursk With ‘Terrorism’

By AFP

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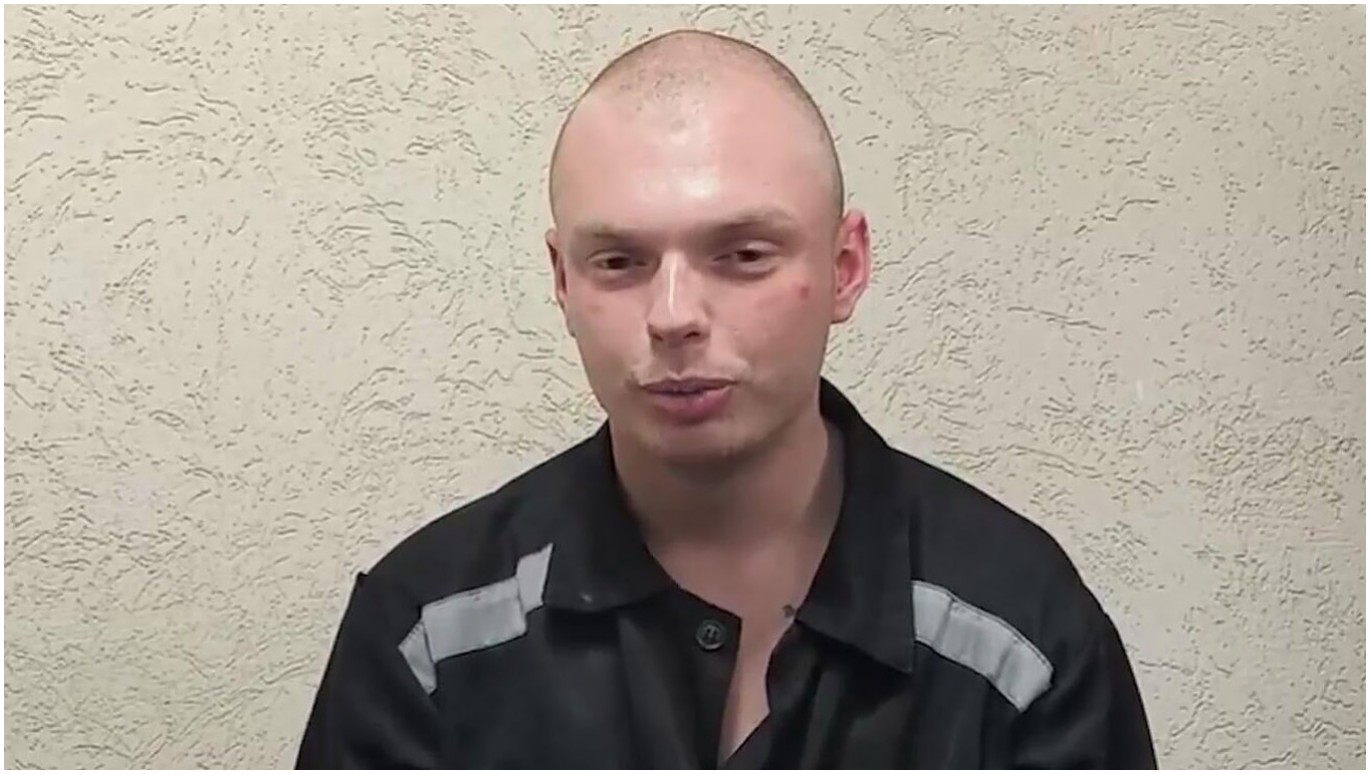

James Scott Rhys Anderson. **Video grab**

Russian law enforcement authorities said Monday that a British man captured fighting alongside Ukrainian forces in the southwestern Kursk region faces charges of "terrorism" and acting as a "mercenary."

James Scott Rhys Anderson, 22, was captured in November while fighting with Ukrainian forces in Kursk. He is being held in custody in Russia.

Russia's Investigative Committee, which probes major crimes, said it completed its investigation and determined that Anderson was "directly involved in an armed conflict on Russian territory for material gain."

He was charged with "committing a terrorist act" as part of an organized group causing "significant property damage" and operating as a mercenary in an armed conflict.

The first charge carries a prison sentence of up to 20 years, the second an additional 15 years.

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Investigators accused Anderson of illegally crossing the border into Russia while armed and "committed criminal acts against civilians," causing "significant harm to property" and "destabilizing the activities of the authorities."

Anderson has spoken in several videos filmed by Russian officials after he was taken prisoner late last year, appearing with his hands tied and in a prison uniform with his head shaved.

In a video released by pro-Kremlin Telegram channels in November, he said he went to fight for Ukraine's International Legion after being sacked from the British army. He told Russia's Izvestia newspaper he was paid $400 a month and about $60 a day while on combat missions.

Moscow typically considers foreigners traveling to fight in Ukraine as "mercenaries." This enables the authorities to prosecute them under its criminal code rather than treating them as captured prisoners of war with protections and rights under the Geneva Convention.

British Foreign Minister David Lammy said in November that his government would offer Anderson "all the support that we can."

In 2022, a court in Russian-occupied eastern Ukraine sentenced two British fighters to death for fighting for Ukraine, although they were later released in an exchange.

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