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Russian Military Court Jails British Man 19 Years for Fighting in Ukraine

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A Russian court sentenced a British man to 19 years in prison on charges of terrorism and acting as a mercenary while fighting for Ukraine, authorities in southwestern Russia's Kursk region said Wednesday.

James Scott Rhys Anderson, 22, was detained in November while fighting with Ukrainian forces in Kursk. British authorities at the time pledged to offer him "all the support we can."

The Second Western District Military Court in Kursk heard the case behind closed doors. As part of the sentence, Anderson will serve five years in prison, followed by 14 years in a maximum-security penal colony. Prosecutors had sought a 20-year sentence.

Anderson pleaded guilty to the charges, which his defense argued should be considered a mitigating factor. His verdict is subject to appeal.

Videos shared by court authorities showed Anderson being escorted through the courthouse

and placed in a glass defendant's cage. In one clip, he nods as an interpreter reads the verdict.

Russia classifies foreign fighters in Ukraine as "mercenaries," allowing their prosecution under its criminal code rather than granting them prisoner-of-war protections under the Geneva Conventions.

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