

Russian Court Reduces Sentence for Jailed U.S. Army Soldier

By [AFP](#)

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Gordon Black. [EPA / TASS](#)

A Russian court has reduced the prison sentence of U.S. Army Staff Sergeant Gordon Black, who was convicted of threatening to kill his girlfriend and stealing from her, state media reported Monday.

Black was sentenced in June 2024 to three years and nine months by a court in Vladivostok, but an appeals court cut the sentence to three years and two months, according to the state-run TASS news agency.

His lawyer had asked the court to drop the charge of making threats to kill his girlfriend and downgrade the theft charge, the *Kommersant* business newspaper reported.

Black was arrested in May 2024 while visiting Alexandra Vashuk, a Russian woman he had dated while stationed in South Korea. She accused him of stealing 10,000 rubles (about \$118)

and physically assaulting her after an argument.

Black pleaded "partially guilty" to theft but denied threatening Vashuk, Russian media reported at the time.

Related article: [Russian Court Rejects Jailed U.S. Soldier's Sentence Appeal](#)

The reduced sentencing comes amid signs of thawing U.S.-Russia relations, with U.S. President Donald Trump seeking to move away from his predecessor's isolation policy over the full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

In February, Russia freed another U.S. citizen, Kalob Byers, days after detaining him at a Moscow airport for carrying cannabis-laced gummies.

Several Americans remain jailed in Russia, including dual national Ksenia Karelina and retired teacher Stephen Hubbard.

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