Moscow court rules US journalist Evan Gershkovich must stay in detention until late August

June 22, 2023

By [Olivia Land](https://nypost.com/2023/06/22/wsj-reporter-evan-gershkovich-appears-in-moscow-court-to-appeal-extended-detention/)

The New York Post

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A Moscow court rejected [detained US journalist Evan Gershkovich’s](https://nypost.com/2023/05/23/russia-extends-detention-of-us-journalist-evan-gershkovich-by-3-months/) appeal for release on Thursday and ordered the Wall Street Journal reporter to remain in custody on espionage charges through late August.

Gershkovich, 31 — who was [arrested during a reporting trip to Yekaterinburg, Russia](https://nypost.com/2023/04/07/russia-charges-wall-street-journal-reporter-evan-gershkovich-with-espionage/)in late March — looked tense in a black T-shirt and blue jeans during the run-up to the proceedings at Moscow City Court.

The Bowdoin College graduate paced and chatted with his parents while waiting for the hearing to begin. US Ambassador Lynne Tracy was also present.

Other journalists were eventually escorted from the courtroom, and the proceedings took place behind closed doors. Reporters were able to watch the ruling on two screens outside.

Speaking to the media after the hearing, Tracy said she was “extremely disappointed” by the court’s decision.

Gershkovich is an “innocent journalist” facing baseless charges from the Russian government, she said.

“Evan continued to show remarkable strength and resiliency in these very difficult circumstances,” she noted.

“Such hostage diplomacy is unacceptable, and we call on the Russian Federation to release him.”

Gershkovich was hauled into custody on espionage charges while on a reporting assignment in Yekaterinburg in late March. His detainment marked the first time an American journalist was arrested on allegations of spying since the Cold War, [Al Jazeera said at the time](https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/3/30/russia-arrests-wsj-reporter-evan-gershkovich-on-espionage-charges).

Although the Federal Security Service accused Gershkovich of gathering information on a classified military factory, officials have not disclosed any specific evidence.

Gershkovich and the Wall Street Journal [denied the charges](https://nypost.com/2023/04/07/russia-charges-wall-street-journal-reporter-evan-gershkovich-with-espionage/), and the US government has [repeatedly demanded his release](https://nypost.com/2023/04/02/antony-blinken-demands-release-of-wsj-reporter-evan-gershkovich/).

Late last month, the Moscow court[extended Gershkovich’s detention](https://nypost.com/2023/05/23/russia-extends-detention-of-us-journalist-evan-gershkovich-by-3-months/) by three months and ordered him held at Lefortovo prison – which is notorious for its harsh conditions – through Aug. 30.

His lawyers appealed the decision, which was upheld on Thursday.

Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov told reporters the ministry is considering another visit request from the embassy.

At the time of his arrest, Gershkovich had been working as a London-based correspondent for WSJ for just over a year.

The [son of Russian Jewish immigrants](https://nypost.com/2023/03/30/who-is-wsj-reporter-evan-gershkovich/), he was raised in New Jersey and previously worked at the Moscow outpost of Agence France-Presse and the Moscow Times.

His final report from Moscow before being taken into custody focused on Russia’s economic downturn amid Western sanctions imposed following the invasion of Ukraine in Feb. 2022.

In a letter to his family in early April, Gershkovich expressed optimism about his condition.

“I want to say that I am not losing hope,” he wrote.

“I read. I exercise. And I am trying to write. Maybe, finally, I am going to write something good.”