# Espionage Trial of U.S. Journalist Evan Gershkovich in Russia Sparks International Concern



**Espionage Trial of U.S. Journalist Evan Gershkovich to Start in Russia**

Evan Gershkovich, a U.S. journalist working for the Wall Street Journal, will face an espionage trial starting June 26, 2024, in Yekaterinburg, Russia. The trial will be held behind closed doors, as per a statement from the Sverdlovsky Regional Court, where the case will be heard.

Gershkovich, 32, was detained in March 2023 by the FSB, Russia’s federal security service, while on a reporting trip in Yekaterinburg. He is accused of gathering secret information for the CIA regarding Uralvagonzavod, a military equipment factory. The Russian Prosecutor General’s office has approved the indictment, which could lead to a 20-year prison sentence if he is convicted.

Since his arrest, Gershkovich has been held in Moscow's Lefortovo Prison. Both the U.S. government and the Wall Street Journal have denied the charges, designating him as wrongfully detained. U.S. State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller has called the allegations "false" and argued for his immediate release. The case has added to the strained relations between the U.S. and Russia, already impacted by conflicts such as Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Russian President Vladimir Putin has suggested that a deal might be possible, hinting at a potential prisoner swap after the trial. This follows historical instances of similar negotiations, such as the 1986 detention of U.S. journalist Nicholas Daniloff during the Cold War.

Gershkovich, who is fluent in Russian, is the son of Soviet emigres and began his journalism career in Russia with The Moscow Times in 2017 before joining the Wall Street Journal in 2022. U.S. Ambassador Lynne Tracy has deemed the charges as “fiction,” asserting that Gershkovich is being used by Russia to achieve political aims.

The upcoming trial continues to draw significant international attention, given its far-reaching implications for journalism and geopolitical relations.