# Trial of Wall Street Journal reporter Evan Gershkovich for alleged espionage begins in Russia



The closed-door trial for Wall Street Journal reporter Evan Gershkovich is scheduled to commence on June 26, 2023, in Russia's Sverdlovsky Regional Court in Yekaterinburg. Gershkovich, a U.S. citizen, was arrested in March 2023 and faces a potential 20-year prison sentence if convicted of espionage charges. He has been detained in Moscow's Lefortovo prison since his arrest.

Gershkovich, 32, is accused of gathering classified information on the Uralvagonzavod facility, which produces military equipment, under CIA orders. Both Gershkovich, his employer, and the U.S. government deny these allegations, with Washington designating him as wrongfully detained. The U.S. State Department and journalists' associations have condemned his arrest, asserting that journalism is not a crime.

Russian authorities, primarily the Federal Security Service (FSB), allege that Gershkovich was trying to collect state secrets, though they have not provided evidence. President Vladimir Putin has suggested that a prisoner swap could be possible after the trial, hinting at a potential exchange involving Vadim Krasikov, a Russian national imprisoned in Germany.

Gershkovich is the first American journalist charged with espionage in Russia since the Cold War. His detention has raised concerns among international journalists and human rights organizations. U.S. ambassador Lynne Tracy has called the allegations "fiction" and accused Russia of using Gershkovich as a political pawn.