# US-Russian dual citizen on trial in Russia for alleged treason over charity donation



Ksenia Karelina, a 33-year-old US-Russian dual citizen residing in Los Angeles, has been arrested in Russia and is currently on trial for allegedly committing treason. Her trial, which began on June 20, 2024, in the city of Yekaterinburg, involves accusations of donating $51.80 to a Ukrainian charity, Razom for Ukraine, which Russian authorities claim was used to support the Ukrainian military.

Karelina, an amateur ballerina and spa employee in Beverly Hills, California, was detained earlier this year while visiting her grandparents. Her arrest was reportedly delayed in notification to the US, which only learned of it on February 8, 2024. The Russian Federal Security Service (FSB) has tied her donation to "public actions to support the Kyiv regime."

The trial is being held behind closed doors in the Sverdlovsk regional court, and the next hearing is scheduled for August 7, 2024. If convicted, Karelina faces up to 20 years in prison. Her boyfriend, Chris Van Deerden, who had bought her tickets for the trip, asserted that she was unaware of the political implications of her actions and expressed hope that "America will bring her back."

The case has heightened tensions amid ongoing geopolitical strife, including the trial of Evan Gershkovich, a Wall Street Journal reporter, also arrested in Yekaterinburg on espionage charges. Organizations and individuals have condemned Karelina's detention, asserting it as part of a broader strategy by Moscow to leverage US citizens in diplomatic negotiations.