

Who is Evan Gershkovich and what did he do?

American journalist ends up facing a hefty sentence for suspicion of espionage against Russia.

All around the world, there are laws set in place to protect journalists from being harmed and arrested, so how did a Wall Street journalist become the first foreign journalist to be arrested for espionage in Russia since the Soviet Union? [Evan Gershkovich was arrested](#) on suspicion of espionage in March 2023 while on a trip to report about Russia's war with Ukraine, he is now being held in [Lefortovo prison](#). He lived in Russia for 6 years before the arrest and even wrote for the Moscow Times from 2017 to 2020 with full press privileges from Russia's Foreign Ministry. [Gershkovich has a lot of love for Russia](#) and knows Russian as his parents are Soviet-era immigrants from the country. Even after all these years of building relationships and his reputation he is being falsely accused by the country he loves.



People [protesting for the release](#) of Evan Gershkovich.

Gershkovich being imprisoned under false accusations isn't uncommon for Russia to do to silence people who speak against Russia. Many times before people have opposed Russia and [ended up dying](#) in mysterious circumstances such as Alexei Navalny who was a Russian lawyer who was notoriously known for speaking out against the corruption in the government. Before this though he had been randomly poisoned in 2020 and left in serious condition. In 2024 he was imprisoned and [died in prison due to natural causes](#) Russia claims but his family disagrees with this. It's a terrifying time to be in opposition to the government over there and a lot of people are even scared to speak about the smallest things for fear that it could be seen as extremism. Evan Gershkovich is not an extremist though and simply reports on matters as they happen which does not go against Russia's recent 2022 bill that [made it illegal](#) to spread false information about Russia's invasion of Ukraine.



### [Alexei Navalny memorial](#)

Russia knows that he didn't go against that bill but they were able to put charges of espionage against him instead, this is a big accusation as he doesn't work against the Russian government. The definition of espionage is a country ordering a person to reveal secret information about a government or military which is not what he did as he was simply reporting on a war that was going on and not reporting on hidden military operations. [Putin has suggested](#) a prisoner swap which they have done before when [WNBA player Brittany Griner](#) was arrested and the USA gave them the Russian arms dealer known as "the merchant of death", [Viktor Bout](#), in exchange for her. U.S. officials [declined to speak](#) on Russia's offer for a prisoner exchange but did say "Evan Gershkovich never should have been detained in the first place,".

It's hard to say if the U.S. would go through with yet another prisoner exchange with Russia but it is known that our nation is going to keep fighting to get Gershkovich back home. He has done his job as a journalist and reported on matters unbiasedly he did his job well and lost his freedom but doing a task that a lot of journalists may be scared to do. Even though he is facing a [sentence of up to 20 years](#), his mother, Ella Milman who has been able to visit him since his arrest says "He's smiling. He understands what's going on," and further stated "And I have to say, under all the circumstances, he's doing really well.". Evan Gershkovich is a model of what a determined journalist does and fights for, hopefully, he will gain his freedom back in the near future.



Evan Gershkovich in [Russian court](#) smiling at the camera.