

Russia Extends Drug Arrest of U.S. Basketball Star Griner – Reports

By [AFP](#)

March 18, 2022



Griner was detained in Moscow airport earlier this month on charges of carrying vape cartridges that contained cannabis oil in her luggage. [УГМК / Wikimedia Commons](#)

A Russian court on Thursday extended the arrest on drug charges of U.S. basketball star Brittney Griner, Russian state media reported.

Griner, a two-time Olympic gold medallist and WNBA champion, was detained in Moscow airport earlier this month on charges of carrying vape cartridges that contained cannabis oil in her luggage.

A court in the town of Khimki outside Moscow on Thursday extended Griner's arrest until May 19, the state news agency Tass reported, citing court officials.

Ria Novosti, another Russian government news agency, reported that Griner's lawyers sought to contest her arrest, calling the measure unlawful and overly harsh.

"However, they essentially did not contest the drug trafficking charges themselves," the agency reported.

The arrest came as tensions between Moscow and the West hit rock bottom over Russia's military operation in Ukraine.

Following the arrest, USA Basketball, which oversees the Olympic teams, said on Twitter that it was "aware of and closely monitoring the legal situation facing Brittney Griner in Russia."

It added: "Brittney has always handled herself with the utmost professionalism during her long tenure with USA Basketball and her safety and well-being are our primary concerns."

Griner, 31, led the Phoenix Mercury to the franchise's third WNBA title in 2014 and a surprise return to the WNBA finals in October.

The 6-foot-9-inch (2.06m) center has played for UMMC Ekaterinburg during the WNBA offseason since 2015, helping the club to three Russian domestic titles and EuroLeague Women championships in 2016, 2018, 2019 and 2021.

Griner is among a majority of the 144 players on WNBA rosters who have played overseas in the North American league's offseason.

Original url:

<https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2022/03/18/russia-extends-drug-arrest-of-us-basketball-star-griner-local-media-a76982>