Russian 'Mercenary' Trial of 72-Year-Old American Made Secret

By [AFP](AFP)

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The Moscow City Court. **Pelagia Tikhonova / Moskva News Agency**

A Moscow court ordered that the trial of a 72-year-old U.S. citizen, accused of fighting as a mercenary for Ukraine, proceed in secret on Thursday.

The man, identified as Stefan Hubbard of Michigan, appeared in court wearing a black hat and beige jacket, walking slowly and dragging his feet, an AFP journalist reported from the court.

He faces up to 10 years in prison for fighting as a mercenary on the side of Ukraine, Russian news agencies reported.

At the start of a hearing, prosecutors requested the trial be moved behind closed doors — standard practice for high-profile or politically sensitive trials in Russia.

The defense did not contest the request, so the judge asked journalists and U.S. embassy officials to leave the courtroom.

Prosecutors allege that Hubbard was paid at least $1,000 per month to join a Ukrainian territorial defense unit. They say he underwent training, was given a combat uniform and "took part in the armed conflict" in Ukraine.

Related article: [Elderly American Pleads Guilty to Fighting in Ukraine Against Russia](#)

They say he was captured on April 2, 2022, weeks after Russia launched its full-scale invasion.

Russia's state-run TASS news agency said Hubbard had been living in the Ukrainian city of Izium in northeastern Kharkiv region since 2014.

Russian forces took control of the city shortly after ordering troops into Ukraine, before being ousted in September 2022 in a lightning counter-offensive by Kyiv.

Russia has arrested several U.S. citizens in recent years, including for alleged offenses related to its war in Ukraine.

They include Ksenia Karelina, a joint U.S.-Russian citizen, who was arrested while visiting family in Russia and later sentenced to 12 years in jail for donating around $50 to a Ukrainian organization.

Two Colombian citizens are also being held in Russia on charges of being "mercenaries" for Ukraine.