New Zealand runner Zane Robertson faces rape charges in Kenya

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New Zealand’s Olympic runner Zane Robertson was arrested at his home in Iten, Kenya. | Photo Credit: AP  
  
  
  
Banned New Zealand long-distance runner Zane Robertson has appeared in a Kenyan court to face charges including attempted rape, police said.  
  
  
  
Robertson, who is serving an eight-year ban for a doping offence, is also accused of possessing an unlicensed firearm as well as unspecified drugs.  
  
The 33-year-old was arrested on Wednesday in his adopted hometown of Iten in northwestern Kenya after police officers were called to his house.  
  
Robertson denied the charges when he appeared before the Iten court on Thursday, and was ordered to be detained for a further few days to allow police to complete their investigations.  
  
“Not guilty,” Robertson said as he covered his face with his hands.  
  
The next court hearing is due on September 28.  
  
  
  
He is alleged to have attempted to rape a woman after a birthday bash in his house on Tuesday night, according to police.  
  
The woman made a night-time escape from the house and reported the matter at the local police station, Keiyo county Police chief Tom Makori told AFP.  
  
Police said the disgraced athlete, who has lived in the high-altitude training hub of Iten for several years with his twin brother, was found in possession of an AK47 rifle and drugs which are to be tested to determine their substance.  
  
“The rifle, the magazine and the ammunition found will be taken to the government forensic lab for ballistic analysis,” said a prosecution statement presented in court.  
  
The prosecution said investigators would visit the immigration department in Nairobi to ascertain Robertson’s status.  
  
In March this year, Robertson was banned for eight years by the Sports Tribunal of New Zealand for two doping offences — being in possession of the performance-enhancing Erythropoietin (EPO) and tampering with evidence.  
  
He won a bronze medal in the 5000m at the 2014 Commonwealth Games in Glasgow.