

Deripaska Can't Call Russian Crime Expert in \$3Bln Suit

By [The Moscow Times](#)

October 10, 2010



Deripaska says his ex-business partner was running a protection racket. **Simon Dawson**

LONDON — Billionaire Oleg Deripaska on Friday lost a London court ruling over presenting expert evidence about Russian organized crime in a lawsuit brought against him by a former business partner.

Michael Cherney, also known as Mikhail Chernoi, is suing Deripaska for at least \$3 billion in the High Court, claiming he failed to honor an agreement concerning stakes in two aluminum companies. Deripaska is CEO and a co-owner of United Company RusAl, the world's biggest aluminum company.

Cherney was a "representative of Russian organized crime," who infiltrated his business as part of a "protection racket," Deripaska's lawyer Ali Malek said at the hearing. Malek said a judge should hear evidence from an organized crime expert at a trial over the dispute, scheduled to take place in 2012. The expert would testify on the "endemic" criminality that

infected Russian business in the 1990s, he said.

Justice Nigel Teare ruled that expert evidence on the issue was not necessary, as information about the nature of organized crime did not help to determine whether Cherney was "part and parcel" of it.

Cherney's lawyer, David Foxton, said after the hearing that his client denied the allegations and had "nothing to do" with organized crime.

"Mr. Cherney claims to have been a business partner of Mr. Deripaska and alleges he is entitled to a stake in RusAl, for which he is seeking compensation," Deripaska's spokesman David Osborn said in an e-mailed statement. Cherney's claim is "baseless, riddled with holes and contradictory."

Deripaska will continue to pursue his application to allow evidence about organized crime to be introduced, the spokesman said.

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